

University Governance Models. July 28th 2021

SPEAKERS

Pedro Barrias, Head of Cabinet to the Portuguese State Secretary for Science, Technology and Higher Education

Ruaidhri Neavyn, Special Adviser on Higher Education Policy Development with the HE Authority (HEA) in Ireland.

Paulo Resende da Silva (Moderator), Martina Zipoli (Moderator).

Martina Zipoli

Good morning or good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to our second webinar for the INSPIRE project. I think most of you have attended also our very first webinar on university autonomy, why and how autonomy is applied in the universities in Italy and Portugal. Today's webinar will focus on the concept and the application of university governance.

Paulo Resende da Silva

Firstly, we want to address a special grateful to our two invited speakers, Prof. Pedro Barrias and Prof. Ruaidhri Neavyn, to accept and share their visions and opinions from one side, and their political involvement in university governance in the past and the nowadays from the other side.

Martina Zipoli

We start with a short presentation of our key speakers. I will introduce Prof. Pedro Barrias. He's currently the head of the cabinet to the Portuguese State Secretary for science, technology, and higher education. So prior to that experience, he was the adviser to the Minister of Science, Technology, and higher education, consultant to the Portuguese universities Foundation, and to the Association of University of the Portuguese language. He's an advisor to the Portuguese conference of rector's advisor to the Secretary of State for science, technology, and education, and advisor to the secretary of state of rural and forest development. When he was a student, he was manager and president of the Students Union and a student national representative. He has a bachelor's in law and his master is in public administration and is currently doing his Ph.D. in public policies.

Paulo Resende da Silva

Prof. Pedro Barrias is currently employed as a special advisor on higher education policy, the development with the Higher Education Authority in Ireland. This activity in higher education policies development has included enterprise engagement activities. Industry linked its higher education programs, higher education system performance frameworks, and international collaborative networks. Prior to this appointment as an advisor of EA for the service-related of two Institute of Technology in Ireland, namely the Waterford Institute of Technology at the Institute of Technology Carol. Before this appointment, he served in several senior management positions in the Limerick Institute of Technology, including the sister, head of the department, and head of the science faculty. During this career, he was also served on numerous national and international boards and committees. He has been an expert advisor for the OECD and the Europe Union on numerous international identifications reviews and is currently a member of the Portuguese higher education advisory council and the share of the OECD group for a national expert on higher education. He is one of the co-designer and founders of the EU and he is a member of his management and coordinators models.

Let's start with our conversations about university governance.

Martina Zipoli

We can start with the concept “what is University governance in a general perspective?”. I would ask Prof. Pedro Barrias to answer our main first question.

Pedro Barrias

First, I would like to thank you for the invitation. It's very good to be here with you and Prof. Ruaidhri Neavyn. We are both members of the OECD, a group of experts on higher education. I would like to share my view with you regarding the governance issue.

In my view, university governance is a very large concept that includes smaller aspects within it but as a concept, I see University governance as the framework conditions, the regulations, the decision making, and the implementation processes that govern the way that education institutions operate. Of course, many times this type of discussion goes to a smaller aspect, that it's important, but it's the aspect of the governing bodies and the appointment of external representatives to the higher education institutions. But I see that the governance, the concept, it's much wider than that because when higher education institutions have to discuss the governing bodies, they have a framework within which they must adapt, and they have that framework is predefined by the government. So governance, it's not only the discussion about the governing bodies within the institutions, but it's also the discussion between the legal framework or the regulatory framework that the government allows the institutions to operate. We should not discuss the governing issues inside institutions without having this in mind because many times the governance models are predefined by the government. Thus, the education institutions have a short power to determine what type of governance structure they want. They can do. For instance, in Portugal, they can adopt several bodies or the dimension of the bodies, but several mandatory bodies must be predefined. For instance, in the ministry, we only allow institutions, or we will only consider illegal, the status of the institutions that are that have the governing bodies that national law demands it. So, the discussion on governance should not be only about the bodies inside the institutions, but also the extension of the bodies that the government allows them to have insight into institutions because many of the bodies are mandatory consultative bodies are less relevant within the institutions. So, they have to work within this national framework.

Martina Zipoli

Thank you. I would like to invite Prof. Ruaidhri Neavyn to share his view about the university governance.

Ruaidhri Neavyn

First of all, thank you for the invitation. I suppose maybe to give a little bit of history about governance about why you need governance in higher education institutions. And it's a very simple reason. If you look at the history of higher education institutions, they have tended in some ways to be a law unto themselves, and indeed, they created ivory towers and walls behind which they didn't necessarily connect with society or community. And I give you a wonderful example. My good friend, Prof. Pedro Barrias took me on a tour of higher education institutions in Portugal many years ago and he brought me to one of their most famous and oldest institutions, which was the University of Coimbra. It had a fantastic and wonderful library but underneath the library, it had its prisons when it was established, like the way a long time ago about the 1600s. Effectively, the University was allowed to have its laws and rules and indeed, the students were governed by those laws and rules, to the point that if a student committed a crime, no matter what it was, they did not serve their sentence. In a normal prison, they served their sentence in the university prison. So effectively, you have universities, and this is a common occurrence around the entire globe, universities have their laws, and this is kind of an issue because effectively if the state is investing in universities, which we are, they do want to get good value for their money. Hence, they need to be assured that there is good governance, that people are doing the right things in the right way for the benefit of the state and to ensure national and regional strategies are being implemented. So, in that regard, I think governance historically, the reason why it's developed has been in some ways to ensure, there is a balance between institutional autonomy and accountability. I think that's important. When you think about governance, think about two things. Governance allows you to be autonomous, within legislative frameworks, but at the same time to be accountable. So, I call a double A or A squared. That's the first point. The second

point about governance, I would like me, it's about the implementation of the strategy. It's about implementing an institutional strategy, and about implementing national and regional strategies, and good governance structures, which involve the appropriate stakeholders can ensure that your university will be able to meet both its strategic objectives, but also national and regional strategic objectives. The third point I want to make about governance and the reason why you should have it in the first place is what I would call the Triple C and that is communications, connectivity, and commitment. Appropriate governance ensures that you are good communication across the stakeholders within the university. It ensures that you have connectivity with the state in terms of following the legislative requirements. It also shows if you have good governance that you are committed to ensuring that your institution is not only autonomous but is accountable and can achieve the required strategic objectives. Have you found the law in whatever country you reside in there?

Paulo Resende da Silva

From the past ever-present, my university had a special prison for the students but nowadays no. when you look at the concept, and some of the ideas that both of you expressed, we will look into a little bit deeper during this webinar. But when I looked at the literature, you can watch the existence of a kind of epistemology of the concept. From the end of the 16th and 17th centuries, have appeared very strong works about the balance between state control and academic oligarchy. We can see more organizational researchers studying University as an organization, and in some way to destroy that ivory tower that was University in the past. Even some of them are not directly from the concept of university, we have the question of organization anarchy by Michael Cohen and James March, as a loosely coupled system, the concept of professional bureaucracy with Henry Mintzberg, and the concept of adequacy. Also, Burton Clark was one of the most famous developers of the researchers about university governance. Thus, how do these several topics describe and define the way universities choose? What is their general orientation relating to the concept of university governance? How do these different concepts "anarchy, adequacy, professional bureaucracy, loosely coupled systems" affect and connect with the university governance model?

Ruaidhri Neavyn

I think what you're saying is, how do you achieve a balance between the accountability and the autonomy of higher education institutions? And my answer is, What you need most important, I think, in organizing your governance, within a higher education institution is to have good codes of practice, good guidance for your governing body members. And well thought through codes of practice, which take on board, your legislative requirements, financial requirements, the financial planning requirements, and your strategic planning requirements. They are the key elements in your code of practice for good governance. So you will have legislation within your country which defines how a higher education institution should function and how much work you have national policy objectives, which will define future strategies to kind of put some order on that. And to ensure the appropriate balance between autonomy and accountability, you need to have practice. My suggestion is to share with you the codes of practice we have for Irish higher education institutions code of practice for our governing body members. Also, we could share with you the code of practice for our nearest neighbors in the UK, in terms of the type of instruction and guidelines that are given to governing body members to help them work through the very complicated understanding and workings of a higher education institution, which has to take onboard teaching and learning activities, research, development and innovation activities, regional engagement activities, international activities, teacher training and development activities, academic planning exit, so because it is such a complicated structure, and you're involving so many different stakeholders to ensure that you have the right balance to ensure you can deliver on your strategies, it's important that the pedal to propel to have good corporate governance codes of practice that will ensure your governing body members are well educated and trained. And I would suggest this to the Iraqi colleagues to develop in a training program for governing body members will be very useful. That's what helped him to better understand the complex nature of the complex governance structures that exist in higher education institutions. Please feel free to share the links that I sent with colleagues.

Pedro Barrias

Regarding your question, I was thinking about how useful it's this type of governance codes. We don't have it in Portugal and sometimes people complain about the complexity of the regulations, and all issues must be known by the

application managers. Coming to your initial question, how the concepts that you presented, and they are mixed to the general orientation of the institutions? I think that concepts that you presented on professional bureaucracy, the entrepreneurial University, all of them are analysis that came with the evolution of the public administration. Many of the issues that are analyzed by those concepts are things in higher education institutions because they were already the public administration. I will refer to the revolution after mid last century. The higher education institutions, today, are the sense of the Napoleonic higher education institutions in which the power was very concentrated in the state and on universities that was much more based on the institutional individual freedom of the researcher. In the last century, I think the main concept that you did not describe, it's the new public management. The type of approach that the new public management brought to the public administration, was placed in higher education institutions. They are not an ivory tower because the rest of the public administration took some steps. If we were expecting that higher education institutions, reformed themselves, probably we will keep expecting that and after the 70s and 80s, with the new approach of new public management, that brought us a more managerial view of the identification institutions and the public administration. Even the entrepreneurial University of Clark that you mentioned is a product of the scarcity of funding in higher education institutions. The universities need to be more entrepreneurial because the amount of public funding is less available than before. When we compare the number of teachers, the number of students, and the funding that we have now, it's less than 30 or 40 years ago. So, the type of concepts that we have now, in our educational institutions is much more limited, by that view of the principles of new public management, that it was a concept that brought more market view to higher education institutions. That model now is a model that combines more the public, the state, and the market. It strengthened the initiative, financial and patrimonial autonomy of higher educational institutions because the higher education institutions management become much more complex as the system is more complex to manage that states give away some of their powers to the higher education institutions and to manage bodies because they were the ones that were going to do. The best approach to manage that complexity, so much more than the theoretical approaches of the bureaucracy of the entrepreneurial university, I would see that all of this come to the views of the managerial approach in higher education institutions that need to be more search for funding that needs to have more agile in their decisions that have to be more accountable, that have shorter or smaller bodies to decide better and faster. All of this can have a much more market approach or market view of the higher education institutions that need to be accountable, flexible, fast to the size, international competition. I think it's new public management.

Martina Zipoli

Thank you for your answer. As far as I understood, we have been talking about different governance models. And they reflect somehow, the balance of powers between the state control academic oligarchy and freedom, the community in the market controls, the different elements reflecting them on the governance models, but at the same time, when we talk about governance, it refers to how universities structure their boards, so a board of trustees and academic board, the certificate boards and so on. So, how should we look to the university governance, having in mind those two complementary but different meanings, and how according to your experience should be the balance between state, academic, and market control, which should be the adequate board functions? But, you know, according to the relation between university governance and the boards, how should be the balance between different actors? And which are the adequate function of the boards?

Pedro Barrias

the discussion about the balance between within the institutions and the balance between the institutions and the government, it's very complex, because all the actors always demand more power for themselves, or the actors that don't have the power within the institutions asked for more power to the government. I have worked on both sides, I have worked on the university side, and also on the government side. And when I was at the university side, I keep listening every day complaining about the lack of autonomy that institutions have at all levels, financial, academic, etc. The view on higher education institutions was every rule that the government was trying to implement, it was seen as an attack on autonomy, and it was seen like the state was overwhelming their powers that were given by constitutions. the view was like the government should pay and universities should have the right and rules they want, they're choosing the students they want, choosing the teachers they want, and the state does not have anything to do with it. then we have unions that do this balance. it's more in favor of the states because they have more power within the state than they have within the educational institutions. So the balance is always very complex because all the parts will

demand to develop the appropriate balance for the games that they have. I think the government should have very strong power in defining the main framework. I think the taxpayer pays a large part of the educational institution's budget. So the state has to have the power to say something on universities management, to guarantee that the university's management will address the main public policies objectives, that are within the main framework that the statement must operate, I think in higher education institutions, the balance should be on their scientific issues, research, and curriculum. they should have total control over that. the state should have the control of minimum requirements related to access to higher education, student support, accreditation quality, to give us the minimum requirements throughout the country, and all the institutions should work in similar ways As I said, the taxpayer as part of education strategic institutions budget, because of that, the balance should show the participation of external stakeholders, the market and CTO. they should have their presence and the balance should not be excessive to avoid that the entire educational institution's research is controlled by Economic Review and not for scientific goals. I think academic scientific institutions have total control of higher education institutions and legal requirements at the national level and the state also must control and the stakeholders should also have a good part of the balance of power within institutions

Ruaidhri Neavyn

I think Pedro is correct. Certainly, the state itself needs to be able to ensure that its national strategies are going to be implemented if they are paying the university for the pleasure of doing that. therefore, the strength in terms of what you want your governing bodies to do. Bit lies in the legislation that underpins the functions of the new institutions themselves. The first point is looking at your legislation which underpins the operation, the functioning of a university. The second point from a state perspective is the composition of the board is important. I think in most international examples, you will see the chairperson of a governing body tends to be a government appoint in 99.9% of jurisdictions that pretend to be a state deployment of usually below will be zero. then the composition of the governing body will be made up of a balance between members of the management team, members of staff, members of external stakeholder groups such as industry, business, society, commerce, and did sometimes potentially international membership where they would have some advisors coming from an international perspective to assistance. But I think the key is people understanding what it is, the state expects the university sector to do. still allowing the universities to have autonomy in terms of the creative nature of their work, in terms of the creative abilities concerning academic program provision, concerning research and development and innovation, and also concerning meeting specific regional or national needs. So, it's the balance of memberships. it's the underpinning legislation. What the functions of governing body would say is they should avoid getting into the nitty-gritty of operational matters. I think sometimes governing bodies can get operational and the reason they get into operational is that there are as Petro pointed out power games going on and governing bodies from time to time have complex on regular occasions between management and staff groups concerning implementation strategy, or work practices. you will also have certain outside interests who are maybe looking to steer an Institute in their favor. these are things you have to be conscious of. the composition of the board, it's very important that you get it right. Indeed, there is healthy competition for members of the governing body. But you don't want a situation where your governing body you're scraping around looking for people to either volunteer to participate, you need to create what I would call healthy competition. And in that regard, showing the benefits of governing body membership to external stakeholders is very important, but also showing the benefits to your internal staff members. Finally, I would agree with most of the concepts that Pedro said.

Paulo Resende da Silva

let's look at a particular reality that both of you know very well. You had a very strong disruptive moment in 2007, with new regulations and the new narratives that changed the boards of governance of the universities. So, Pedro, how deeper was the change of the university governance in Portugal?

Pedro Barrias

In 2017, it is seen as a very strong moment for verification institutions in Portugal, because of the new legal framework that was approved. that legal framework came to implement the anti-higher education institutions, the new public management values, and principles that were already put in place in the rest of Public Administration. As if we see all

the types of changes that were brought in 2007 what are the main changes? Firstly, we had a reinforcement of institutional autonomy because it was created a new type of higher education institutions governance model, that was the independent legal status institutions that are created by the state with ever a greater degree of autonomy because they have independence, they are not private, in their relationship with the state that they are private in some of the issues of their management. So, internationally, they are called independent legal status. I will talk about this a little bit more later. Another big change was the centralization of the decision in the institution's leadership. previous to the 2017 and 2007, we have big bodies, for instance, to elect the rector we have bodies between 300 and 100 people, the Senate at around 120 people, and all of the Commissions the minimum requirements were several dozens of people in the Commissions that came to an end that it was not operational, because the decisions took so long to take place, that the institutions were very slow when compared to other institutions. And they were not able to quickly manage the institution, especially in a much more complex environment, as we have it like now. Another change brought to the educational institutions, new values, mainly that came from the market. Then the financial professionalization, the concentration of the power in the director of the President, and that affected other traditional values of your educational institutions, the collegiality of the decisions, the lack of external control over the productivity of the institutions, the lack of concern of with financial management that was a little bit effective. There was a replacement of values, the traditional values, and new values that were more market-oriented. We had also changed labor relations because, with the independent legal status, the new type of relations was created with teachers and employees. Previously, all the teachers and employees, were public servants, to the state, and with the independent legal status, they became not public servants to the States, that private servants to the higher education institution. higher education institution is different from the others because they have a board of trustees that it's nominated by the government. But they have much more brother management powers than the other institutions. this type of institution is established the international way, was not created in Portugal. for instance, In England, all the higher education institutions work like this; they are charities that use the model of independent legal status. Also, in Sweden, Chalmers University is an independent legal status; in Austria, since 2002 all universities have had independent legal status; in Germany in some states and Portugal, nowadays, we have six independent legal status institutions that are more autonomous than all the other institutions. These were the main changes that were produced in 2007.

Paulo Resende da Silva

When you look a little bit more for this disruptive governance model in Portugal, it was very critical at that time. Most of the criticism was about the mainboard and that who can be the rector. Nowadays, everyone who has a Ph.D. and was in university can be a rector in a Portuguese University. some of you from Iraq can be active in a Portuguese University because you have the power and language, but this criticize from internal from the academics, is not focused on that board and how you can choose a director is about the perceptions of internal democracy, and the adopted perceptions of the academic freedom. Barrias as you have an external advisor of the Portuguese higher education council, and also an expert on university governments, what kind of critical success factors needs to be analyzed to implement a realistic governance model in a country?

Ruaidhri Neavyn

I'll try to give it a simple answer as possible. I think the first thing is the legislation and you have to underpin your higher education system and structures and functions of a university. That's the starting point. I think you need to think that through to the point that you spell out the If you liked the mission and the vision that the country has for its universities, so whether there can be more entrepreneurial, whether it be regionally focused letter there to the international focus. Just that vision piece is important because I think that helps all the stakeholders focus on the future strategy and development of a higher education institution. That's the first comment. The second comment is your governing bodies, the structures that you put in place. Certainly, my view of the governing body of an institution you should try and keep it small. when I say small, somewhere between 20 members tops, the composition of that should include policy management, general Staff representation, experienced representation. So, they may even want to include some international expertise. I think the chairperson needs to be an external deployment, needs to be someone that is endorsed by the state, and even recommended by the Minister. I think the President should be on a fixed-term contract and should be able to be elected, or indeed interviewed appropriately and come through a very big election, or indeed, the interview process. I think, concerning the governing body, you need to have good for how awkward and what options are. I think you provided some links with examples of that in the chat function fellow, which is great. I also

believe you need in terms of the balanced membership that I talked about. I think members of a governing body need appropriate training, and to get a very good understanding of how a university is to operate because universities are very complex structures and have multiple functions and activities. I think as well, your governing body, come on to your Academic Council leader as your governing body needs to have in place, very good terms of reference, and also a reasonable committee structure that allows it to do its main functions and our governing body should be monitoring of strategy implementation, ensuring accountability in terms of state investments that are being made, ensuring appropriate development of the physical infrastructure of a higher education institution, and ensuring appropriate development of its staff and student body, in terms of the academic courses that are being researched and developed. The other comment is its focus should mainly be unstrapped into operational minutiae, it should not delve into activities that are reserved functions of the management or the staff of the institution going on to your Academic Council, or some people might call the senate Academic Council. I think that should be kept small, it should be representation for each appropriate faculty at a senior level and should always be some elected members from the lower cadre like non-management services that get a well-balanced view from the entire staff. I would say your operating management structure should represent all functions of the higher education institution. So, it should be drawn not just from academic units, but also from support units, such as your student services, support areas, your external business operation units, etc.

Martina Zipoli

Thank you. I have a final broader question. We hold the knowledge that universities have a critical role in the development of each country everywhere. But to be successful, they need to work with the stakeholders and involve a different range of stakeholders in university governments, and especially for the implementation of national policies and their institutional strategy. So, if we start from Europe, the key stakeholders, which need to be involved in university governance and with which role they need to be involved. Indeed, what are the role of the top governance on the one side and the management boards on the other side?

Pedro Barrias

As I said previously, at least at public, higher education institutions, key stakeholders, key external members should be present, because taxpayers pay a good part of the higher education institutions budget, and because of that, some type of control, contribution, accountability should be provided to those external members. If the community estate is represented by companies CEO, I think it depends more on the area where they are aiming to work or the type of strategic planning that identifies. I think companies should be in the higher education institutions, companies should be at the general councils of the education institutions, not only as consultative but also having some decision power within the main decision body. I think they represent CEOs and other public administration bodies that are related to the type of outputs that higher education institutions produce. For instance, if higher education institution is very strong at public administration and sociology, it has an external stakeholder and public institutions that work in that area and is related to engineering. I think companies related to that area should be there. But it depends a little bit on the strategic planning of the institutions. Probably, some institutions want to have their top leaders of the museums in Portugal, because they have a strong role in museology or history. Other companies and institutions probably don't have anything to do with that and it's more relevant stakeholders related with companies that work in physics, engineering, cars, etc. Companies and public administration bodies are always thinking the output of the institutions, will provide their geographical environment. I think they must have some power not only be in consultative parties, but key stakeholders were in the consultative bodies. Although they must have some of this power not only being consulted, the top managers should not be from the companies or the stakeholders, because if they are from the stakeholders, the top management will be constrained by the views only of the stakeholders and many times the view of the stakeholders is a very short view, because they are only thinking about the short approach to employment and the local development. The top management must be provided to two directors that are elected by a general council, that they must have power to elect directors, to approve the budget, to ever contribute to their education institutions strategy.

Martina Zipoli

Thank you for a lot of issues in a very comprehensive answer. I would like to give the floor to Ruaidhri to add any additional comments on the topic.

Ruaidhri Neavyn

I think what's important is to stress to external governing body members that you want them to be engaged in the actual decision-making processes or the institution and its future strategic direction. So, what's key is that your institution or higher education institution ensures that the strategic plan or its institutions are owned. Indeed, in some ways, it was delivered on by your governing body. I think governing bodies shouldn't just be seen as agreement with everything that a higher education institution is proposing to do, your governing body needs to be able to be critical, and indeed, creative in terms of how it can contribute to the future direction of any higher education institutions. The management of the institution must recognize and understand that they have to allow external and internal governing body members to influence and chart the future strategic direction of the institution because your governing body should be operating at a very high level. It should be farsighted for thinking and not be engaged in what we call minutiae that the little decisions and operational matters, it needs to think strategically and be up there and be very engaged and very involved.

Paulo Resende da Silva

What are the main obstacles and difficulties from the university point of view, to put in place a good governance system?

Ruaidhri Neavyn

I think the main obstacles will be different stakeholder views. Governance can be a little bit of a power struggle. It can be a conflict of opinion between different internal stakeholders and external stakeholders. I think that's the main obstacle and the way to get rid of that obstacle, the power struggle is to ensure that there is a nationally agreed code of practice. If you have a nationally agreed code of practice, or nationally agreed compositions, or nationally agreed legislation to underpin the functions of a university that helps you to be rich. Sometimes, automatic tension will exist between these opposing stakeholders. I think all members of governing bodies have the best intentions and the best desires, so they don't always see each other side point of view. I suppose code to practice can help you greatly to define how people should operate and function.

Pedro Barrias

I agree with Ruaidhri. The bigger problem is the different views about the internal and external stakeholders about what is a good governance system because all of the internal stakeholders will look at the governance system as being good only if they are representative. In vast numbers, for instance, it's the critic that Paulo assumed about the lack of participation and collegiality. In higher education institution governance system in Portugal, its main critic since 2007. Because the teachers think they should have more power. The government thinks that external stakeholders should have more power. The students complain because they have fewer representatives than they will add before that. Now the students have more power than before because, at relative numbers, they are deciding many times who is the director because when we have two candidates, the number of students are in general councils that decide who is the rector and also, we have students that are managers, the chief of staffs of the rectors. They are assuming very soon, strategic positions in higher education institutions, because rectors need to negotiate with the students. Students keep complaining that they are not represented enough and also staff repeated complaints the same because they don't have the power. There will not be a good governance system that can attend to all of these demands but the governing bodies will not be agile, flexible, and not be accountable in the management bodies. If we have a national consensus about the structure and code of conduct, that will be the guide to this good governance system. When we come outside the higher education institutions, and we go to the government and the parliament, we have the same type of tension, because teachers will complain to the parliament, students complain to the parliament, etc. So, even with this type of governance system, we were able to implement it in 2007 because the government was in the full majority in the

parliament and if we are in the relative majority, the parliament will change that. So, the leader of the opposition came to the ministry of higher education at that time to discuss this and they said, you are doing the things that we were intending to do. We will complain because we are in opposition, but we will not present a real alternative, because you are doing everything that we agree. We will do something, a very short document only to say that we are presenting something, but please follow on in your view. We could do that because we were at majority and the opposition was agreeing, at least in the background, they were agreeing with us. It's not possible to do something like this in a relative majority because the next day, all of the internal stakeholders will complain to the parliament, and they will change everything the next day. So it's very hard to do the balance but it's a policy.

Paulo Resende da Silva

Thank you, Pedro. If someone wishes to address some questions, we are ready to hear.

Hussain Al-Rubaiey

Can tell us what is the influence of European Union projects, fund, rules on the university governments in Europe?

Ruaidhri Neavyn

I would like to comment on that. The European Union is looking at how to create a European higher education area. In that context, they're looking at common issues that include joint awards, for example, individual transferable awards, transferable education across national boundaries. But also in that context. They're looking at establishing European universities, which will be multi-campus universities, which will operate across multiple jurisdictions in the European Union. At this point, they're grappling with the concepts of how to create these new entities, which are formed from some universities in different countries. They influence how people think about governance and help people think about the legislation underpinning their universities and also think about the processes involved in the management of institutions and how the institutions should function. What people should do, I think what they're trying to understand and help with the issues that are appearing, as we look to create a European higher education area, and the issues that are appearing are common structures, common programs, and now with European universities, the concept of multicampus, Pan European universities of higher education.

Martina Zipoli

Thank you for answering this question. We are at the end of our second webinar. Thanks to all of you for your participation, involvement, and engagement in the webinar. Also, a special thank you from our two invited speakers, Pedro and Ruaidhri, and the fantastic sharing of information and ideas, and opinions with us about university governance models. To our participants, the next webinar will be on September 9th with the main topic of quality assurance in higher education and the university.

Goodbye and take care to all of you.