



# Strategic Plan 2021-2025

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# Introduction

## Introduction

We live in tense times. The new decade poses challenges of all kinds to Europe, and to the European Union in particular.

First, of course – although this has now been repeated to the point of tedium – there is the still historically unique fact that one Member State, the United Kingdom (UK), formally left the EU on 31 January 2020 and is now in a transitional phase until the end of the year, during which all EU rules and laws remain in force in the UK for the

time being. The precise conditions under which the UK's imminent withdrawal from the EU will take place have still not been established just months before the fateful date of 1 January 2021, but it is obvious that an EU without the UK will be a different "union" from the old EU-28. For Europe, the new decade will be less driven by Anglo-Saxon approaches, even though it may be expected that, in economic terms, there will ultimately be little change in the close trading relationship between Flanders and the UK. Politically, however, relations within the EU will change.

Secondly, there is the new European Commission, which assumed office on 1 December 2019 and which, in its first year, should outline the multiannual financial framework for the first seven years of the new decade, the period 2021 to 2027. The radical new priorities outlined by Ursula Von der Leyen, from her election speech to the European Parliament at the end of 2019 to her recent "State of the European Union" address in September 2020, illustrate the new approach to economic development that the EU will now embrace, and to which the IES is also fully committed. Economic development and European integration are subordinated to the objective of sustainability. Europe aims to be the first climate-neutral continent in the world by 2050, with an ambitious European Green Deal programme and a digital agenda that respects European values of privacy and democracy.



Thirdly, of course, there is the global COVID-19 pandemic which, like a radical fracture in time, has eroded the confidence of citizens, politicians, employers and employees alike in the future. All over the world, but especially in Europe; because the coronavirus outbreak suddenly made it clear that health is first and foremost a national prerogative, based on principles of national solidarity. From the first outbreaks of the virus in northern Italy to the subsequent continent-wide spread in both northern and southern European countries, it was national concerns such as the scarcity of intensive care facilities, masks and other medical equipment, which became the red line for the introduction of national “lockdown” policies. These culminated in the closure of national borders to neighbouring countries. The focus on national health policy in Europe stood in sharp contrast with the way in which scientific research into the new SARS-CoV-2 virus became more or less global in nature. Scientific medical fields tackling pandemic outbreaks became the frontrunners in the use of open access, rapid international data sharing, and the exchange of information on different vaccine tests. Research into SARS-CoV-2 became an example of open science in a way that could only have been imagined in an ideal, open, global world. Fortunately, the European Commission is now alive to this, and health, consistently with the additional Next Generation Europe fund of EUR 750 billion to combat COVID-19, has now become a priority for Europe also.

Fourthly, there are the changes in the global multi-lateral world order in recent years and which, with the American Trump administration, are increasingly leading in the direction of bilateral trade agreements which do not hesitate from the use of hard instruments of power. Coupled with increasing geopolitical tensions between the US and China, aimed at technological supremacy, the question is how Europe, with its ‘soft power’ instruments, can find an effective response over the next decade. In a certain sense, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated a number of pre-pandemic tensions



such as the blurring lines between science and nationalist and military agendas, the threat posed by some technologies to privacy, integrity and human rights, the increasing geopolitical tensions over access to strategic raw materials, as well as broader issues such as weakening democracy, increasing inequalities and growing tensions between economic, social and environmental sustainability.

In short, there will be a huge need for knowledge-based advice, scientific insights, and education and training in European and international relations and public policy in the new decade. The IES stands ready.

Karel De Gucht  
*President*

Luc Soete  
*Dean*

# Introduction



# Summary

## Executive Summary

The Institute for European Studies' Strategic Plan sets out its objectives for the next five years, the period 2021–2025; a period of uncertainty – especially for Europe. It is precisely for this reason that the guiding principles of previous management periods remain valid. The IES will therefore continue to be a research and higher education institution dedicated to excellent, policy-relevant research, involved in post-initial education and academic service provision, and with functional independence within the legal entity and regulatory framework of the VUB.

Over the next five years, the IES intends to enter into a close alliance, under the umbrella of a “Brussels School of Governance”, with Vesalius College (VeCo): a non-profit organisation offering complementary education (accredited by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders, NVAO) and activities in the field of international policy and governance. In this way, the IES aims to become a leader in Brussels in both the conduct of multidisciplinary research and in higher education across a wide range of policy-relevant areas. More than ever, the major societal challenges facing Europe, Belgium as a Member State, Flanders as a region and community, and Brussels as a multi-cultural, international capital, call for a better understanding of how different levels of governance effectively contribute to tackling these challenges. In short, the diversity of governance problems in Europe and throughout the world call for knowledge-based advice in research and targeted executive post-graduate education – the mission of the IES.

In the period 2021–2025, therefore, IES research and education programmes will focus on the most urgent governance challenges which will face policy-makers in Europe and elsewhere in the world in the coming years. These include the sustainability transition, illustrated by the European Green Deal as a response to the climate challenge and the need for an energy transition away from fossil fuels; or the approach to and impact of migration, whether by asylum seekers or economic migrants, and including the legal and social challenges to their successful local integration; the shifts in political and military competition between the major world powers that have taken place in recent years and their implications for Europe's traditional “soft” power diplomacy; or the way in which artificial intelligence and, more generally, new digital technologies call into question existing organisational and management practices and routines in both the private and public sectors, raising new and fundamental questions about privacy, participatory democracy and digital skills.

These major challenges require quite fundamental, sometimes even radical, changes in the nature and scope of governance models as developed within traditional business and public policy graduate schools in recent decades and taught to students and policy-makers. Addressing these challenges will demand a more systematic use of contributions from a wide range of academic disciplines: as well as the usual social and political sciences, international relations, law, sociology and economics, much more extensive input is now required from behavioural and environmental sciences, business management, and even data science. Along with the more systematic involvement of expertise and insights from different public authorities, whether at European, national, regional, local or international level.

The existing reputation of the IES provides a unique opportunity to develop this expertise further together with VeCo, making maximum use of the presence in Brussels of the European institutions, NATO and the many diplomatic missions and representatives of UN agencies, in addition to the multi-layered Belgian public administration.



*IES Management (from left to right): Sven Van Kerckhoven (Vice-Dean Education), Alexander Mattelaer (Vice-Dean Research), Jacintha Liem (Head of Secretariat), Anthony Antoine (Executive Director), Luc Soete (Dean)*

In terms of higher education, the close collaboration between the IES and VeCo in the new Brussels School of Governance offers a unique opportunity to make better use, in the education offered, of synergies between the more fundamental and policy-oriented research expertise at IES and the more applied, work-related, educational expertise at VeCo. The general ambition of the education pillar of the Brussels School of Governance alliance is to offer the highest quality, in both bachelor's education (at VeCo) and (advanced) master's education (at the IES) that is currently available in the field of policy-making. For the IES, this means that, in addition to the existing postgraduate and executive programmes and the high-quality LLM programme, four specialised master's programmes will also be developed and offered reflecting the four broad avenues of research set out above.

This all poses a major organisational challenge to the IES. Firstly because over the next five years, the intention is to develop the four priority research areas into centres of expertise, with a view to strengthening the dynamism and external research resource capacity of the IES; and secondly because the IES aims to optimise the synergies between research expertise and education by developing specialist masters' programmes in each of these four areas, building on the research expertise developed within the Institute. It is expected that this closer coupling of research and education will bring success to each of the four centres of expertise over the coming years, enabling them to acquire external scientific resources such as ERC and FWO fellowships, Horizon Europe projects and applied advisory research in the broad field of public policy.



# Achievements

## Achievements over the previous policy period

2016–2020 was a time of turbulence. After a difficult recovery from a severe economic crisis, the EU temporarily lost control of its borders and the associated migration flows. At the same time, the geopolitical landscape underwent a dramatic shift with implications for trade and security, and after just a few years the Paris Climate Agreement was brought under threat. During these same years, the EU confronted the first contraction in its history: Brexit is now a fact. Last but not least, since the start of 2020 the world has seen the COVID-19 pandemic, with far-reaching consequences in every sphere, including education and education methodologies.

All this has also had consequences for the IES: for example, the attacks in Paris in November 2015 and the terrorist attacks in Brussels in March 2016 had a major impact on the international student intake – an intake on which the IES, as an international centre of knowledge, is particularly dependent. Nevertheless, research at the IES has excelled and the many crises have underlined the Institute's importance. With research clusters on migration, security, environment and economic policy, the IES has developed into an outstanding player in the field of policy research, knowledge and guidance. Scientific output has gained in importance, and many IES researchers became welcome guests in the media (in 2019 the IES attended more than 175 media events). The Institute was also frequently asked for policy advice, both by Flemish and foreign government departments and by industry. The research areas that we identified more than a decade ago therefore proved their value.

Under the leadership of a new president, appointed on the eve of the current management agreement, the Institute also grew significantly. Project finance over and above the government grant rose from €0.9m to €1.8m, while staff numbers also rose (from 35 to 56 FTE). The Institute entered into international partnerships, leading to the launch of the first Korea Chair in Europe and structural cooperation with the United Nations University, Warwick University, the University of Southern California, and the Vienna School of International Studies. Last but not least, collaboration was strengthened with the Vesalius College, with which the IES intends to launch an alliance at the start of the new management period through the Brussels School of Governance. In the previous period, the IES has also acquired an H2020 project (as lead partner) and was able to capitalise on several Jean Monnet projects (two Jean Monnet Chairs, two Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence projects, several Jean Monnet modules and finally a prestigious Jean Monnet Network).

The quasi-lockdown of March 2020 brought fresh challenges to the world of education. All at once, students had to be reached via virtual education platforms, and online learning became the norm. The 2001 government mandate, when the IES was set up, in to invest in “virtual education platforms” gave the IES a competitive advantage that is being exploited in full today. Whereas most educational institutions had difficulty switching to online teaching, the Institute already had more than 16 years’ experience in blended learning and online education. The online experience was very well received by students, and the Institute also organised a very successful online summer school in July 2020.

## EVALUATION OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

The Review Committee that audited the IES in September 2019 confirmed that the Institute had more than met the strategic objectives set in 2016: “the Committee is very impressed by the further positive developments achieved since the 2015 review.” (paragraph 8 of the evaluation report).

These objectives were as follows:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Status
<b>RESEARCH</b>						
Finalization of min.15 PhD projects	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Enhance the involvement of the IES in national and international networks	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Consolidation and enhancement of academic focal areas / evaluation clusters	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Implementation and development of guidelines for academic personnel	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Expansion of external project financing	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Promotion of cooperation between and integration of research clusters	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Better guidance for PhD projects through creation of Director of PhD Studies	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Publication of (on average) 40-50 articles in academic journals	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
<b>EDUCATION</b>						
<b>MaNaMa programmes</b>						
Issue 50 MaNaMa-diplomas (on average, yearly)	█	█	█	█	█	Ongoing
Assure the attractiveness of the programmes	█	█	█	█	█	Ongoing
Assure financial viability	█	█	█	█	█	Ongoing
Enhance link between research and education	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
<b>Postgraduate programmes</b>						
Expand the postgraduate offer	█	█	█	█	█	Ongoing
Development of executive master programmes	█	█	█	█	█	Ongoing
<b>Summer School</b>						
Annual organisation of the IES Summer School	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Ensure financial viability (through Jean Monnet-funding)	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
<b>Bespoke programmes</b>						
Optimisation of teaching capacity / student ratio	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Increase external income share	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
<b>ACADEMIC SERVICES</b>						
EU in International Affairs Conference	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized*
Intra-EU-conference	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Grand European Conferences	█	█	█	█	█	Ongoing
Policy Forums	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Enhance regional and national academic cooperation	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
<b>GENERAL</b>						
Review management structure	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Set up benchmarking- and promotion procedure	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized
Implementation of Gender Action Plan	█	█	█	█	█	Ongoing
Manage sustainable growth	█	█	█	█	█	Finalized

\*Because of COVID-19, the EUIA2020 conference was postponed to 2021



**BENCHMARK #1: Completion of at least 15 PhD projects (an average of three per year) and start-up of at least 25 PhD projects (10 to be financed from own resources).**

In the period 2016–2020, 18 doctorates were completed, an average of 3.6 per year

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
No of PhDs	3	4	4	4	3*	18
No of PhDs commenced	5	9	6	7	3	30
Funded by own resources	2	3	2	4	2	13

\* At the time of publication, two 2 successful PhD defences have taken place. One additional doctoral student has submitted her thesis for defence (expected in September 2020).

**BENCHMARK #2: Strengthening IES involvement in national and international research networks**

In 2016 the IES started a first H2020 project for which it was the 'lead partner'. The EL-CSID project on European Science and Cultural Diplomacy involved a number of international partners and was successfully completed in 2019. In addition, the launch of the KF-VUB Korea Chair in 2017 significantly expanded our network in the US and Asia. The IES also expanded its existing collaborations in the period 2016–20 through the organisation of joint events (e.g. The Brussels–Vienna Summer School), and its involvement in a growing number of EU projects with domestic and foreign consortiums. Examples include the H2020 COP21-RIPPLES project and the Jean Monnet Network "GOVTRAN" (both addressing EU climate and energy policy), and the European University EUTOPIA alliance in which the IES acts as a leading representative of the VUB.

**BENCHMARK #3: Consolidation and strengthening of areas of academic focus with a thorough evaluation of the existing cluster structure**

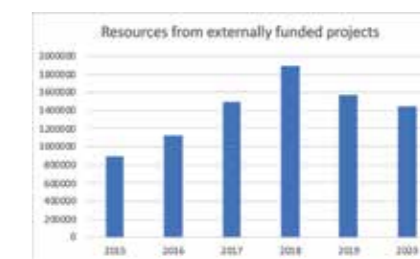
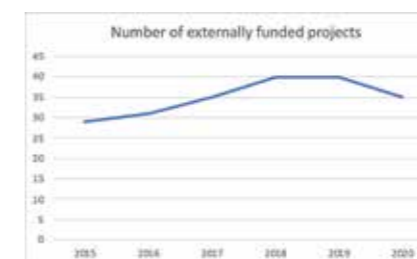
Since 2012 the IES has been organised into four clusters and an Educational Development Unit. Since then, the Institute has permanently strengthened these clusters (not least by recruiting at least one post-doctoral researcher per cluster and adding PhD researchers in rotation). In light of further growth, these clusters are currently being reorganised into fully-fledged Research Centres (see the Research Action Plan).

**BENCHMARK #4: Introduction and further development of guidelines for IES academic staff**

In principle, benchmarking interviews with researchers are held annually. As part of this, a workload-allocation process is under way. The results will be processed and implemented at the start of the new strategic plan.

**BENCHMARK #5: Consolidation and expansion of external project funding (for research projects and scientific services)**

2016–2020 was a very successful period in terms of the search for and acquisition of external funding. Attracting additional post-doctoral researchers and a policy of limited teaching burdens have allowed the number of externally funded projects to increase significantly. Since 2018, the share of income not obtained through grants has represented more than 60% of total IES funding (compared with 30% in 2015).



**BENCHMARK #6: Promoting cooperation and integration between different clusters (e.g. by giving priority to joint projects involving several clusters)**

The Institute encouraged several of its researchers to take part in projects involving different research clusters (e.g. Aviation Biofuels, PARENT, and eCoherence projects. There were also joint publications addressing horizontal topics such as Brexit, on which a collection of six IES Policy Briefs appeared in 2016.

**BENCHMARK #7: Better supervision for PhD projects through the appointment of a Director of PhD Studies**

The Institute created this new post and appointed Prof. Dr Sebastian Oberthür as its first Director of PhD studies in 2016. He acts as a representative or member in a number of VUB bodies, such as the university's doctoral school council and the faculty committees for research and doctoral supervision. The Director has made a significant contribution to improving mutual communication between the IES's PhD researchers and their supervisors. In 2020 this post was integrated into the management reorganisation. In future the IES will be headed by a Dean and two Vice-Deans, one of whom is responsible for research policy and thus de facto also for PhD students.

**BENCHMARK #8: Publication of on average 40–50 articles in recognised international journals or their equivalent in major book publications per year (with at least 50% peer-reviewed contributions); publication of 1–2 books per year (average) and publication of 15 policy papers per year (average)**

From 2016 to 2019 (no final figures are yet available for 2020), IES staff produced a total of 496 publications, representing an annual average of 124. The combined number of articles, book chapters and books has thus always exceeded the proposed annual average of 40–50. The same applies to the minimum average annual number of books and policy papers.

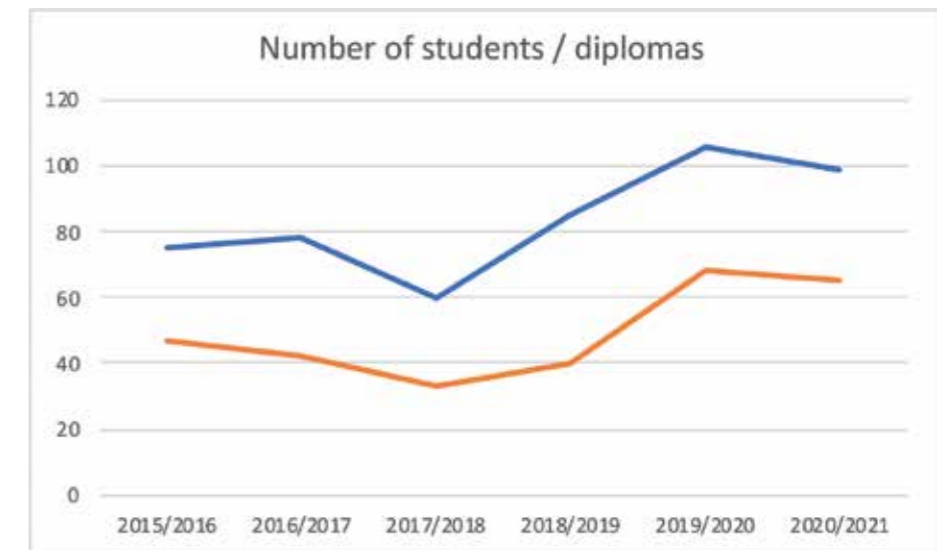
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
No of publications	64	117	211	104	tbc	496
Peer reviewed articles	30	24	20	13	tbc	87
Policy papers	21	9	23	20	6*	79

**EDUCATION**

**BENCHMARK #1: Awarding an average of 50 degrees annually (as stipulated in the management agreement), with due regard for quality control**

The attacks in Paris in November 2015 and in Brussels in March 2016 had a major impact on international student recruitment and hence on the IES, where international students represent more than 80% of the student population. Whereas the IES had more than 90 students in 2014, the number fell to 60 in 2017. Extensive marketing, programme reform and a more effective selection procedure enabled this number to rise again to over 100, so that the number of degrees awarded could also increase (68 again in the 2019/2020 academic year).

	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
No of students	75	78	60	85	106
No of degrees awarded	47	42	33	40	68



**BENCHMARK #2: Ensuring the attractiveness of programmes (through evaluations, broader recruitment, quality control, etc.)**

In 2017, the IES revised its EuroMaster curriculum, bringing the programme into line with the IES research structure and giving students the opportunity to specialise in two EU policy areas in future by choosing from six different combinations of specialisations. Subsequently, in 2018, the IES also updated the LLM programme syllabus, adding a Data Law specialist option. There is high demand among companies for legal professionals with knowledge of data legislation. As one of the first LLM programmes in the world to offer this option, this confirms the IES LLM programme's reputation as a pioneer in legal education.

**BENCHMARK #3: Ensuring the financial viability of the advanced master's programmes**

In 2016, following a market study, the IES Board set the enrolment fee for its advanced master's programmes at €4,800 (LLM) and €4,050 (EuroMaster) respectively. At that time, it also proposed to index these funds annually, so the tuition fees for the academic year 2019/2020 were set at €5,400 and €4,500. However, to allow both programmes to be self-supporting, at the end of 2019 it was decided to impose a full-cost rate of €13,000 on the prestigious LLM programme, making it more comparable with similar programmes on the international market. The increased cost was also accompanied by a significant increase in support measures available, so that economically disadvantaged students can still embark on their studies via scholarships and tuition fee-waivers. The IES also remains committed to tapping external funding sources. People and resources are made available, through extra support staff and cooperation with the VUB, to support professors who wish to apply for educational project funding.

**BENCHMARK #4: Strengthening the link between research and education (by developing courses within research clusters and themes that can be offered in the syllabus)**

Curriculum reform and expanding specialisation in the EuroMaster programme reflect today's major societal issues. These coincide with the themes addressed within the research clusters. The task was therefore to develop specific subjects that would fit into the specialist EuroMaster programme. The study tracks were completely reworked and expanded from two to four, while the proportion of teaching in the IES professors' tasks was increased. The number of IES professors has also been increased in the LLM programme (from one to three), as has the number of IES research staff giving guest lectures (from two to five). In addition, a number of EuroMaster and LLM professors sit on the doctoral committees of a number of IES doctoral students.

**BENCHMARK #5: Expansion of postgraduate programmes and development of Executive Master and Research Master Programmes at the IES**

The role of the IES as a centre of expertise has been recognised both within and outwith the university in recent years. Within the VUB, the IES was asked to act as a service provider in the new (initial) master's programme in European and International Governance offered by the ES faculty from September 2019. This initial master's programme can lead to progression to the EuroMaster. Internationally, the University of Warwick is currently collaborating in order to offer double degrees through our existing programmes, while work is also ongoing on Executive Master's programmes (scheduled for September 2021).

**BENCHMARK #6: Annual organisation of the IES Summer School and assurance of financial viability**

The IES first organised an inter-university Summer School as far back as 2003. In recent years both form and content have been adapted to ensure its continued attractiveness and relevance. Thus, themes were introduced ('Brexit' and 'Human Security' were the most recent) around which the creation of European policy-making was assessed. The 15th anniversary of this Summer School was formally celebrated in 2018 with a special conference on the future of Europe at the Vienna School of International Studies. In 2019 it was recognised for the fourth time as a Jean Monnet Module. The Postgraduate Certificate in European Policy programme, building on the e-learning modules already launched in 2004, was also further developed and, by attracting an instructional designer and migrating to a new virtual education platform, has become a much sought-after programme. In recent years, two new optional courses have been developed and were finally added to the curriculum in 2019. All this resulted in a record number of registrations.

In the constant search for an ever-improving service, a new advanced e-learning platform (Canvas) was acquired in 2016. The platform was subsequently integrated into our Study Abroad programme in the form of an online course on European policy analysis. More courses were prepared on Canvas in 2017 and the platform is now also used by LLM and EuroMaster students. The remaining VUB faculties also switched over to the Canvas platform in 2018. In response to the outbreak of COVID-19, this online learning environment was further developed and upgraded in 2020.

**BENCHMARK #7: Optimising teaching capacity/student ratio for other contractual education and increasing the share of financial income**

The IES has been running a summer programme for students of the University of Southern California (USC) since 2012. What was initially a small operation has been transformed in recent years into the Brussels Programme on EU Foreign Policy, which is also open to students from other universities. A renegotiation of the contract with USC and additional marketing has doubled the number of students since 2016, benefitting both the financial income and the capacity/student ratio. As a beneficial side-effect of the KF-VUB Korea Chair, since 2019 an additional Summer School has also been established for students of Seoul National University (SNU), while synergies have been sought to the extent possible between the three programmes (Summer School, USC and SNU).



ACADEMIC SERVICES

**BENCHMARK #1: Biannual organisation of The European Union in International Affairs conference (EUIA)**

Every two years, the IES, in collaboration with a number of partners (ULB, Egmont, UNU-CRIS, Warwick University), organises the European Union in International Affairs (EUIA) conference, a multi-day conference in the heart of Brussels. This event provides an opportunity for policy-makers, academics and the general public to debate hot topics relating to the EU's place on the international stage. It is an event that grows larger with each edition: with 392 participants from 63 different countries, #EUIA18 broke all previous records in terms of attendance. The conference opened with a keynote speech by Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier. In addition, the prestigious Journal of European Integration (JEI) organised a competition for the 'EUIA Best Paper Award' for the first time. The jury selected three winning papers, which were then published in the first 2019 issue of the JEI. The event planned for 2020 looked very promising, with a record number of registrations, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic it has had to be postponed until May 2021.

**BENCHMARK #2: Biannual organisation of an Intra-EU Conference**

In years when no EUIA conference is held, the ULB's Institut d'études Européennes and the IES jointly organise an "EU in European Affairs" conference (EUEA). This three-day conference, organised for the first time in 2017 with the theme "Controversial Approaches towards European Solidarity – From Burden Sharing to Integration", was successfully held a second time in 2019.

**BENCHMARK #3: Grand European Conferences**

Under the umbrella of 'Grand European Conferences', the IES has recently chosen to organise conferences and colloquiums aimed at a wide audience and addressing important current issues. Several of these public conferences have been held, both at the IES and in Brussels (BOZAR, The Hotel, Press Club Brussels Europe, etc.) Since 2017, the IES has organised an annual "Trade Defence Instruments" conference and two conference series addressing the Middle East, while the "Great Defence Debate" was held in the run-up to the 2019 Belgian elections. In total, the IES has organised more than 250 events over the last five years.

#### BENCHMARK #4: EU Policy Forums

In addition to conferences and colloquiums, the IES also organises policy forums on urgent themes on which it conducts research. These policy forums have now become a genuine focal point on the Brussels scene where policymakers come face to face with academics tackling current issues. The Institute has organised 30 such policy forums over the last five years:

2016: 10

- 22 January 2016: Turning the circular economy strategy into workable reality
- 7 April 2016: The Paris agreement on climate change: Transatlantic perspectives
- 19 May 2016: The refugee crisis and the EU-Turkey deal: which role for the EU's home affairs agencies?
- 23 May: Brexit and the environment: EU and UK environmental policies after 23 June
- 13 October 2016: The interface between EU competition law and regulation: challenges and new developments
- 19 October 2016: Sustainable advanced fuels in emission reduction for aviation: what are EU policy options?
- 20 October 2016: COP 22 and CMA 1 in Marrakesh – towards implementation of the Paris agreement
- 23 November 2016: Trump triumph: critically catastrophic or overly ominous for the EU?
- 7 December 2016: European identity in crisis: what role for the EU?
- 14 December 2016: The EU enlargement and gay politics in Central and Eastern Europe

2017: 9

- 21 March 2017: Sustainable aviation fuels: bridging the gap between technology and policy
- 22 March 2017: The implementation of the EU action plan on integration. Feedback from the member states, regional and local authorities
- 12 April 2017: Book launch and panel discussion: EU asylum policies. The power of strong regulating states
- 24 April 2017: Who's afraid of the Trump effect in international climate politics?
- 31 May 2017: The border and the wall. How to tackle migration control at the EU external border?
- 27 September 2017: Sustainable aviation fuel policies: perspectives from third countries
- 18 October 2017: KF-VUB Korea Chair Policy Forum
- 22 November 2017: two IES policy forums zoom in on climate journalism and Bonn COP23 outcome

2018: 7

- 26 January 2018: Lecture by Professor Dr Rainer Muenz, Advisor on Migration and Demography, note Migration and Diversity- Europe: "flooded" by immigrants? Myths and realities
- 7 March 2018: Policy panel discussion: International Criminal Justice as a Foreign Policy Tool of the EU: the case of the Kosovo Specialist Chambers
- 28 March 2018: Post-crisis - is the reform of the EU's asylum system on track?
- 16 April 2018: Joint IES-VUB and EconPol Policy Forum on Future Perspectives for the EMU
- 30 April 2018: Inter-state and private actors in managing migration

- 24 May 2018: Algorithms and Antitrust: New Clouds on the Legal Horizon?
- 19 December 2018: The Climate COP in Katowice: Implications for International and European Climate Policy

2019: 4

- 18 January 2019: Development and democratization in the new Gambia: African and European perspectives
- 3 April 2019: EU-African cooperation on migration: what are the African interests?
- 10 October 2019: Migration Aspirations: Strategies of Young Africans in a State of 'Involuntary Immobility'
- 26 November 2019: Cold shoulders or warm welcomes? Challenges and opportunities for the EU's Arctic policy

#### BENCHMARK #5: Strengthening regional and national academic cooperation

In addition to international structural cooperation with the Korea Foundation, the Japan Foundation, Warwick University, the United Nations University, the Vienna School of International Studies and the University of Southern California, the IES has also strengthened cooperation at regional and national level. Ties with the Vesalius College have been significantly strengthened, cooperation with UNU-CRIS in Bruges has been structured (as has cooperation with UGent), and ties with the parent institution VUB have also strengthened. In addition, numerous research collaborations have taken place with other Flemish universities, including the following projects:

- Maximising Previously Acquired Competences (MaxiPAC): MaxiPAC is a combined project of Thomas More, UGent, VUB, NARIC, the Minderhedenforum and H&H Education, financed by the European Integration Fund. This is an Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) project that aims to promote the confirmation of previously acquired competences of citizens of third countries in Flemish higher education (2018–2019).
- REFRACT: Research Network on Regime Complexes and Fragmentation (REFRACT) financed by the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) and coordinated by Ghent University. (2015–2019)
- GOVTRAN: Jean Monnet Network Governing the EU's Climate and Energy transition in Turbulent Times (IES acting as coordinator), in collaboration with Ghent University (2018–2021)
- Policy integration: Decarbonisation and security of supply in the EU's external energy policy – funded by FWO, in cooperation with Ghent University (2019–2022)
- Virtuosi: Virtuosi is a series of virtual research seminars on fragmentation and value reconciliation in international law and policy. Through these seminars, a network of more than 40 experts from the universities of Brussels (VUB), Antwerp and Ghent, along with the United Nations University on Comparative and Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS) in Bruges, has been created in Flanders (since 2016).

- Under the Memorandum of Understanding with the Flemish Government on UNU-CRIS, the VUB works closely with Ghent University (2016–2021) via the IES, including in the GREMLIN project.

In addition, the IES continues to organise the EUJA and EUEA conferences with other national partners, such as the ULB, Egmont and UNU-CRIS.

## GENERAL

### BENCHMARK #1: Reviewing the general management structure

The IES has had an eventful period in management terms. Four scientific directors (mainly ad interim) have been appointed in as many years, while the Institute has doubled in size and the need for strengthened and unambiguous management has become ever greater. After a thorough reorganisation and adaptation of the statutes (the 'Organic Regulations' of the IES), the previous structure has been abandoned and the Institute is now headed by a Dean, two Vice-Deans and an Executive Director. In 2019 a Secretariat Head was also added. They jointly comprise the Executive Committee – the Institute's executive body.

The other policy structures have also been adapted and simplified. The Board, the highest policy body, has been merged with the Academic Board (some of the powers of which have been transferred to the Executive Committee). In addition, the Board has been enlarged to include representatives of various groups within the Institute (staff, students, etc.) and observers from the vice-rectors' and central departments of the university. This ensures smoother policy flows and better interaction between the parent institution and the Institute.

### BENCHMARK #2: Establishing benchmarking and promotion procedures

Benchmarking academic staff is a continuous task and is carried out annually in consultation with the Dean and Vice Deans. On the basis of these benchmark reports, and in accordance with VUB rules, a promotion round was held in 2018, at the same time extending the scope of existing independent academic staff (ZAP) mandates. To ensure continuity, the IES now has fourteen part-time ZAP members (up from seven at the start of this management period). Administrative and support staff will also be subject to benchmarking. This takes place twice a year and forms the basis for promotion opportunities, which otherwise follow the VUB regulations.

### BENCHMARK #3: Implementation of Gender Action Plan

The Gender Action Plan, adopted by the university in 2014, has been closely monitored during the current management period. When assembling the new Board, care was taken to ensure that at least one-third of the members were female. This condition has also been enshrined in the new organic regulation. The composition of the Executive Committee must also include at least one-third female members. In addition, diversity has been an explicit focus in recruitment. Today, the IES has as many female as male employees, although there are still differences by subcategory. Recently, however, a better balance has been sought. The IES now has four ZAP members, whereas there was only one in 2015.

### BENCHMARK #4: Managing sustainable growth

To foster the continued growth of the Institute and to make it possible to form an alliance with Vesalius College, the structures were first adapted (see above: Board, Executive Committee). To this end, the IES organic regulation has been amended – an amendment ratified by the VUB Board of Directors. In order to maintain sustainable growth, the intention is to expand the research clusters into fully-fledged research centres in the future- an operation that is being developed as part of this strategic plan.





# Objectives

## Policy positions and objectives

### SUMMARY

In the period 2021–2025, the IES aims to achieve the following objectives:

#### GENERAL

- Maximising synergies between the IES and its strategic partner Vesalius College, and developing an alliance in the form of the Brussels School of Governance;
- Deepening the partnerships with Warwick University and the United Nations University;
- Maximising synergies between the VUB and the IES in terms of European studies and international networks in the IES areas of research and education;
- Maximising synergies between research and the Institute's educational offering;

#### EDUCATION

- Maximising synergies between the educational offers of the VUB (ES and RC faculties), Vesalius College, and the IES with regard to European studies;
- Developing specialised (advanced) Master's programmes based on the Institute's research competences to supplement or modernise/replace the current portfolio;
- Maintaining and modernising the LLM International and European Law programme to ensure that it is attractive and competitive;
- Developing a flexible learning system that enables face-to-face or online teaching, as necessary. Thorough digitisation of the existing educational package, underpinned by a high-quality educational methodology and the widest possible interactivity, will form the basis for this;
- Delivering the number of post-initial degrees each year, as set out in the management contract;
- Offering Executive Master programmes in IES research fields, individually or in collaboration with other high-quality partners;
- Ensuring the financial viability of the programmes, with a 'self-supporting' principle;
- Keeping the courses attractive and up-to-date (through programme reviews, benchmarking with stakeholders, quality control, etc.);

## RESEARCH

- Updating the IES research agenda around four new research centres: a Centre on Digitalisation, Democracy and Innovation; a Centre on Environment, Economy and Energy; a Centre on Migration, Diversity and Justice; and a Centre on Security, Diplomacy and Strategy.
- Maximising the intrinsic synergies between the educational offers of the IES and the VUB's ES and RC faculties, Vesalius College, and the partners in the European university alliance, EUTOPIA;
- Within each research centre, the aim is to deliver one doctorate per year, and therefore to start a total of at least 20 doctoral projects over the full management period (at least 10 of which are to be launched using Flemish government funding).
- Achieving at least one large-scale research project (e.g. ERC, Horizon Europe or Chair) per centre
- Annually: publication of an average of 50 scientific publications with peer review, one to two books and 20 policy papers.

## ACADEMIC SERVICES AND EVENTS

- Organisation of a major biannual conference on the role of Europe in the world;
- Organisation of 10–15 IES policy forums and colloquiums annually, for informed and constructive public debate on current aspects of European policy and law;
- Organisation of IES research colloquiums (around 15–20 sessions annually)
- Maximising synergies between the event offers of the VUB (ES and RC faculties), Vesalius College, and the IES with regard to European studies;

## COOPERATION WITH UNIVERSITIES AND MISCELLANEOUS PARTNERS

- Further development of partnerships with structural partners such as UNU-CRIS, Warwick University, Vesalius College, the Vienna School of International Studies, University of Southern California, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and Seoul National University.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles of previous management periods remain valid. Hence the IES remains committed to excellence in research, education and academic services, and intends to fulfil its obligations under the management agreement meticulously.

In terms of research, the IES aims for scientific excellence and policy relevance. We expect leading academic output (in the form of peer-reviewed academic publications and projects) from our internationally selected professors, and the application of this output in outreach activities (e.g. the publication of policy reports, events organisation, and contributions to the public debate).

In terms of education, the IES wishes to offer academically excellent, specialised Master's programmes based on the high-quality research carried out by the Institute in its various centres. It strives to optimise its strengths, which include a strong link between research and education, strong pedagogical insights regardless of the learning method, social engagement with the themes delivered, and an added value mix of academic insights and practical relevance by attracting a diverse body of professors who are both academics and policy makers and officials.

The IES aims to offer its academic services at an equally high level and strives to offer themes relevant to both a specialised and a general public. This takes place via internationally renowned conferences (such as the biannual EUJA) and at lectures, workshops and colloquiums where the highest quality must be achieved through peer review and feedback.

To achieve all this, the support services (administration and technical support) must also be of the highest quality. Therefore, it will continue to monitor administrative excellence that is innovative, cooperative, efficient and effective and at the service of the overall mission, vision and strategic plan.



### Incoming and graduating students

The academic level and the research specialisations within the Institute form the ideal basis on which to nourish the development of specialised and internationally competitive Master's (and advanced Master's) programmes. However, such an educational model is subject to external factors which the IES hopes to anticipate, but which cannot always be controlled institutionally. In this way, the IES wishes to continue its efforts to attract excellent international students. External crises, such as attacks, changing world economies and pandemics, can pose an unforeseen obstacle. In addition, the development of specialist educational niches must respond to an ever-changing society, each new situation calling for different specialisations. The IES keeps a close eye on this, and through its pioneering role in interdisciplinary European and international research, it keeps its finger on the pulse and is constantly translating new insights into educational programmes and subjects.

All this means that maintaining a constant student intake remains a challenge that needs to be tackled on an ongoing basis. The IES will therefore continue to focus on marketing through specialist channels and on active recruitment addressing a highly educated audience. Through partnerships with other well-established institutions, the Institute also wishes to create a broader recruitment base.

In addition, the IES is bound by an obligation in respect of graduates: the management agreement determines the ideal number of outgoing graduates and lays down the minimum number of degrees to be awarded per year. The Institute is therefore making every effort to increase students' chances of success through a series of measures, which can be summarised as follows:

- Stringent selection at the start, so that the best students, those with the highest chances of success, are chosen;
- Relatively small groups, to increase interactivity (and the chance to ask questions and seek clarification);
- A sophisticated blended learning methodology, in which the student's learning process is central. This innovative teaching approach is assessed annually and adapted if necessary;
- A combination of theoretical knowledge and practical skills through simulation exercises and through interaction with professionals;
- Individual support for students where possible and necessary;
- Constant monitoring of the quality of education, including regular student feedback.
- Dedicated student support within the administration

### Different target groups

The IES currently offers three types of programmes: specialist Master's programmes (advanced Master's), postgraduate and short-term summer programmes. These three 'formats' are aimed at different target groups, and even within the programmes different target groups can be identified.

#### a. *Specialized Advanced Master's programmes*

The IES now organises two advanced Master's programmes: the LL.M. in International and European Law and the MSc in European Integration. Both programmes are profiled as specialisations, aimed at highly educated students with an international background. However, the target groups for these advanced master's programmes differ essentially: the LL.M. focuses exclusively on law students. Recruitment is very international, and students must follow the programme on a full-time basis. The MSc is also aimed at international students, but this evening programme also attracts international working students who are already in Brussels. The recruitment base is very broad and is defined as "students in social sciences", but students with a different background but with relevant work experience (e.g. EU officials) are also admitted. The MSc currently offers four specialisations, of which two are chosen. In the near future, the IES wishes to investigate how and whether these four specialisms can be developed into separate Masters' programmes or majors. Further specialisation can therefore lead to other target groups. The outcome here is the closest possible link between research expertise and educational programmes. The IES ensures that the student cohort on its advanced Masters' programmes is diverse, in terms of both geographical and socio-economic backgrounds. The selection process accepts no more than a certain percentage of students from one country or region, in order to ensure diversity. Extra efforts are therefore being made to recruit students from economically less performing countries (particularly from Africa and South America).

#### b. *Postgraduates*

The Postgraduate Certificate on Policy Making is a predominantly online study programme, mainly recruiting young graduates and professionals. The programme can be followed on a full-time or part-time basis to allow students to combine study and work. The IES would like to further expand such programmes and market these postgraduate courses as Executive Masters among a national and international, predominantly working student population. The IES also wishes to further investigate how such executive programmes can

serve national and international public administrations. It is also investigating the potential introduction of a joint Executive Programme with Warwick University.

**c. Short-term (summer) programmes**

The short-term programmes or summer schools are open to (initial) Masters' students and students with a background in international or European studies. The IES organises summer schools both online and face-to-face, attracting different target groups depending on the mode. The online versions, like the postgraduate programmes, are mainly aimed at working students.

**Accessibility for socio-economically disadvantaged students**

The IES aims to organise its educational programmes on a cost-covering basis. This is primarily achieved by means of tuition fees, but the Institute also wants to use European or other external funding in order to reduce student fees. Nonetheless, the IES works with an Anglo-Saxon model with tuition fees that are cost-covering but internationally competitive, but these are higher than normal in the Flemish education landscape.

In order to ensure accessibility for socio-economically disadvantaged students, the IES is developing a system of merit-based scholarships: outstanding students can receive a fee reduction or even a full scholarship. In order to ensure the intake of these students, the IES provides a low-threshold application procedure and makes at least 25% of the educational income available for these scholarships annually.

RESEARCH

The IES research programme focuses on the most pressing policy challenges that are emerging at the European level of governance and in a wider international context. As both this international environment and the EU's position in it are changing rapidly, this agenda forms an adaptive whole that we will update structurally in the coming management period. We do so on the basis of three overarching principles, namely, (a) monitoring scientific excellence (as measured by the quality and reach of our research output), (b) maximising policy relevance and impact (providing research-based responses to today's policy challenges through open-access policy reports and studies), and (c) ensuring the sustainability of our research activities in the aftermath of the COVID-19 epidemic, thereby responding to the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee (particularly in the areas of human resources, finance and scientific ethics).

In terms of the content of our research agenda, we foresee a further development and expansion of our existing lines of research in the period 2021–2025. Firstly, the sustainability transition of which the European Green Deal is an example requires a delicate balancing act between a range of economic, energy and environmental factors. This requires us to bring together our research on economic governance and on the environment and sustainable development. Secondly, the digitisation of society and the emergence of artificial intelligence are stimulating all kinds of innovation and progress. At the same time, they also raise new questions – not least with regard to the functioning of democracy itself. Therefore, based on our earlier tradition of research into the economy and the information society, we are distilling a new focus on the interaction between digitisation, democracy and innovation. Thirdly, the aftermath of the European migration crisis calls for an in-depth reflection on social inclusion and identity, and an evaluation of the current instruments for European cooperation in the fields of justice, fundamental rights and home affairs. Therefore we are continuing our research into migration, diversity and justice, embedding it in a broader framework of university cooperation on migration and minorities. Fourthly, we are looking at the implications of the global political and military power shifts and the return of rivalries between superpowers. We are therefore continuing our line of research on European foreign policy and international security with a focus on security, diplomacy and strategy. In doing so, we will also pay particular attention to Europe's partnerships in East Asia (particularly with South Korea, Japan and Australia).

From 2021, we will establish four new research centres around these four substantive focal points, building on the existing clusters. They will look at these policy challenges in functional terms, that is to say, across all levels of government. These challenges require the

close cooperation of the European institutions, the Member States and regions, and often external partners – both international organisations and third countries. Therefore, we are also seeking to strengthen ties with both the Flemish, federal and European administrations involved. Our new research centres are also reflecting on the interactions between these four challenges and the policy levels involved. By attracting doctoral students in a competitive fashion and acquiring external projects, these centres aim to gain critical mass and pursue an independent course of research, specialist teaching expertise and service provision. They therefore set their own specialist agenda and detailed objectives.

Our three overarching principles provide the framework within which the new research centres draw up their objectives and activities. In terms of scientific excellence, the four research teams publish their work in leading academic journals (where we take account not only of the number of publications, but also impact factors and citations), attract additional funding from a wide range of sources for both fundamental and applied research, and ensure a permanent presence in specialist networks. In terms of policy relevance and impact, we are developing our existing policy briefs in a leading open-access format for policy papers. The intention here is not only to analyse policy challenges, but also to propose research-based solutions, regardless of the constraints with which each administration struggles at its level. In this context, we are also committed to maintaining good contacts with the relevant administrations (such as the Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs) in order to be able to deliver specialist research reports on demand in our areas of expertise. In addition, we are continuing our high-profile strategy in national and international media, supported by the seminars and conferences we organise. In terms of organisational sustainability, our teams seek to anchor their own lines of research through external funding and we monitor the individual use of time by researchers and the distribution of tasks across the team as a whole. For all the research centres, objectives are identified for major projects (ERC, Horizon Europe, Chairs, etc.) and doctoral pathways launched. In terms of project applications, and in line with changes in European funding, more attention is also paid to scientific integrity, ethical issues, data management and privacy. For reasons of prudence, we assume that the impact of the COVID pandemic will put more pressure on all these aspects.

Schematically, our objectives for the coming management period can be summed up as follows:

- Updating the IES research agenda around the four new research centres: the Centre on Digitalisation, Democracy and Innovation; the Centre on Environment, Economy and Energy; the Centre on Migration, Diversity and Justice; and the Centre on Security, Diplomacy and Strategy. Maximising the intrinsic synergies between the educational offers of the IES and the VUB's ES and RC faculties, Vesalius College, and the partners in the European university network, EUTOPIA;
- Within each research centre, the aim is to complete four high-standard doctorates per year (and therefore to start a total of at least 20 doctoral projects, at least 10 of which are to be launched using Flemish government funding).
- Achieving at least one large-scale research project (e.g. ERC, Horizon Europe or Chair) per centre
- Annually: publication of an average of 50 scientific publications with peer review, one to two books and 20 policy papers.

#### ACADEMIC AND SCIENTIFIC QUALITY ASSURANCE

Together with the VUB, the IES ensures the highest academic and scientific quality assurance. Educational programmes are accredited in accordance with the applicable quality standards and the VUB ensures their periodic evaluation. In addition, the IES ensures the stringent selection of students, with a high standard of student intake. When recruiting academic and scientific staff, a CV and merit-based selection is made after publication of an open – and usually international – vacancy notice. Senior academic staff are appointed based on interviews and selection by an independent committee that also includes external experts. Potential teachers who will be standing in front of the class for the first time must also give a test lesson. The programmes in general and the teaching staff in particular are subject to student evaluations each semester.

In research, special attention is given to the recruitment of doctoral students. Every year, the IES holds a competitive selection procedure in which the best projects (linked to outstanding CVs of potential researchers) are selected. Doctoral students are primarily done monitored by their supervisors and the doctoral committee, but (doctoral) research is also structurally embedded in one of the research centres of the Institute. In addition, periodic research colloquiums are organised (obligatory for doctoral researchers) in which one researcher is subjected to peer review each time.

## SPECIFIC ADDED VALUE AND COMPETITIVENESS

During the forthcoming management period, the IES wishes to consolidate and further develop its leading role as a hub for European studies in Brussels. Accordingly, it wishes to position itself in various networks connecting Flemish institutions with their counterparts throughout Europe and the rest of the world. To this end, we have concluded Memorandums of Understanding with the United Nations University, the University of Ghent, the University of Vienna, the Vienna School of International Studies, Vesalius College, the University of Warwick and the University of Southern California. Agreements have also been reached with the Korea Foundation and the Japan Foundation in conjunction with the Korea Chair and the Japan Project. The IES is already Europe's leading research institute in these areas. The intention is to continue along this path and become a centre of excellence for EU relations with the world (with a focus on Asia, but also on North America and Oceania).

The specialist teaching programmes, both at advanced Masters' and Executive Master (post-graduate) level, aim to provide clear added value for students in the Flemish and international landscape. The IES wishes to remain competitive at international level with its specialist teaching programmes. After all, the main competition is located not so much in Flanders as abroad (London School of Economics, Kennedy School of Governance, Hertie School of Governance, etc.). The IES ambition is to play a leading role within this select club of excellent schools. Further, through select partnerships, the Institute wishes to consolidate and strengthen its position through a leading role in the Brussels School of Governance established by the VUB.

The IES continues to recruit internationally, but it also wishes to create added value for Flanders. It has already done so in the past, in particular by carrying out projects, organising events and providing other academic services that have directly or indirectly created this added value (for a list of academic services for Flanders in the period 2016–2020: see annex).

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

*Cooperation with universities, scientific institutions and organisations domestically and abroad*

Cooperation with other universities and scientific institutions takes place in several ways. For example, the IES cooperates with various institutions on research projects and within networks. However, the Institute has also established long-term partnerships with various institutions. During previous management period(s), it drew up and signed formal memorandums to this end. On this basis, the IES therefore wishes to cooperate with the following institutions (in alphabetical order) in the forthcoming management period:

**Vienna School of International Studies:** The IES has been collaborating with the Vienna School of International Studies for 17 years, mainly on the summer programme and the European Policy Making postgraduate programme. The IES wishes to continue to organise the joint Summer School with this institution, and to investigate whether and how further cooperation in the field of executive training can be developed.

**Hankuk University of Foreign Studies:** the IES has been collaborating with HUFSS since 2008, initially by welcoming HUFSS students to a European project, but more recently in the field of research and in conjunction with the Korea Chair. Under the aegis of His Majesty the King, the IES signed a MOU in 2019, which should form the basis for further cooperation in the future, in the fields of both education and research.

**Seoul National University:** SNU is the top university in South Korea and is ranked first in the country in both QS and Times Higher Education rankings. Since 2019, the IES has been organising a summer programme for SNU, and frequently provides guest lectures at this university via the Korea Chair. In the context of the Korea Chair, consideration will be given to how this link can be further strengthened.

**United Nations University:** UNU-CRIS (Comparative Regional Integration Studies) in Bruges is supported by the Flemish Government, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and the University of Ghent. This partnership operates at doctoral and postdoctoral level and conducts research in fields related to those pursued by the IES. The IES wishes to explore the possibility of offering advanced educational programmes with the prestigious UNU label in the future.

University of Southern California: the IES partnership with USC – one of the top-15 universities in the United States (THE ranking – began as early as 2010, with the organisation of a summer programme for USC students. This has since expanded into the Brussels Programme on Foreign Policy. Further possibilities for cooperation on master's programmes with USC are being considered.

**Vesalius College:** the IES wishes to develop an in-depth partnership with Vesalius College. Vesalius College is a private educational institution offering unsubsidised but NVAO-accredited programmes at Bachelor's and Master's level. In this context, the progression of students from BA-MA level to advanced master's level is a first attempt, while the joint BA-MA-advanced master's-PhD portfolio forms a complete package that can be attractive to (predominantly foreign) students. Working in the same building, cooperation between the two institutions can give rise to economies of scale: the secretariat and support services can share their knowledge, which in time will lead to rationalisation and greater efficiency. At the initial phase, the management of the two institutions has been harmonised during the current management period: the members of the Board of Directors, Dean, Vice-Deans, Executive Director and Head of Administration are the same for both institutions. This ensures that the two institutions share a compatible vision. In a subsequent phase, the IES wishes to investigate how to maximise compatibility between the educational programmes, and how the academic research of the institutions can be mutually reinforcing. In order to become more competitive, the IES and Vesalius College wish to develop an alliance together under the name Brussels School of Governance.

**Warwick University:** the Politics And International Studies (PAIS) department of Warwick University, with which the IES has close ties, has been ranked top of the UK university rankings for the second consecutive time. In addition, Warwick University, together with the VUB, is one of the six partners in the European University Network "EUTOPIA" established by the European Union in 2018. Both their research and educational offerings closely match those of the IES, making Warwick University an ideal partner for submitting joint research proposals and offering joint educational programmes. In the post-Brexit period, close links with top UK universities will continue to provide added value for both the UK and continental partners.

**Other institutions:** the IES has very good relations with other education and research centres at home and abroad. For example, the IES frequently collaborates with Egmont (the Royal Institute for International Relations), the ULB's Institut d'Etudes Européennes, Ecologic (research institute in Berlin), Turku University, the Korea Foundation, the Japan Foundation, and many others, both in the field of research and in the organisation of academic services (conferences, papers, etc.). A number of IES PhD alumni have made careers at the universities of Ghent and Leuven,

# Objectives

and several IES professors are also active part-time at other institutions such as the University of Antwerp and the College of Europe. The IES will continue to monitor and evaluate structural and occasional partnerships and, where appropriate, add new structural partners to its portfolio. For example, the IES wishes to expand its expertise on EU-Asia and, to this end, it is tapping into new collaborations with Japan, India, Australia and others; it also wishes to strengthen the transatlantic link.





# Action Plan

## Policy instruments and action plan for the achievement of policy objectives

### RESEARCH POLICY

In order to achieve the outcomes and research objectives described above, we can identify five instruments: (a) the research architecture, (b) the academic staff policy, (c) the annual doctoral scholarships awarded on a competitive basis, (d) the administrative support for project applications and follow-up, and (e) our own (open-access) publication channels for disseminating policy-oriented research (including social media). These instruments are described below, including their related points of action (summarised at the bottom of this section).

#### (a) IES research architecture

The updating of the IES research agenda hinges on the launch of four new research centres. A deliberate choice has been made in favour of the decentralisation of content and funding: these centres are assumed to act as research entrepreneurs. On the basis of self-chosen research priorities, new project funding is constantly being sought, and this is also managed at centre level. The spearheads of expertise that are built up can therefore serve as a source of inspiration for the development of the related teaching curriculums. These centres are also anchored in the broad umbrella structure of the Brussels School of Governance, strengthening the research-based synergies with colleagues in Vesalius College and faculty departments. Horizontal coordination – both substantive and administrative – takes place within the IES Research Council, in which all professors as well as other staff categories are represented. The operation of the research centres is assessed biannually. Through this tiered organisational structure, research policy forms a living whole.

Related action points:

- Launch of new research centres
- Streamlining of research agendas and teaching curriculums
- Biannual review of research centres

**(b) Academic staff policy**

To a significant extent, research policy is shaped in practice by staff policy: the balancing act between the quality and quantity of scientific output, as well as its sustainability, is the most explicit aspect. In this area, following the expansion in staff numbers for the coming management period, we are opting for a graduated (and therefore partially decentralised) model. Professors are coached by the Vice Dean of Research, doctoral students by their supervisors and project staff by research centre directors (or the project manager responsible). Attention is paid at all levels to time measurement, the distribution of tasks and burdens, and the impact and sustainability of the output. This also responds to the recommendations of the 2020 evaluation report (not least in terms of managing the risk of burnout). This is also relevant in light of the transition to a far-reaching digitisation of our activities as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Related action points:

- Codification of a yardstick for the allocation of tasks and burdens and time measurement
- Annual staff reviews at all levels
- Updating the guidelines for the community of IES doctoral students

**(c) The annual IES doctoral grants**

The annual award of at least two doctoral grants is the key instrument for guiding the substantive research agenda. These are awarded by open, international and competitive selection procedures conducted by the research centres in consultation with the Vice Dean of Research. This allows the centres to identify and stimulate new research trends on a regular basis. In doing so, we seek to achieve a close link to the policy issues that animate the European, federal and Flemish administrations. We are also happy to include colleagues from other Flemish universities in the supervisory committees that are set up after the selection of candidates.

Related action points:

- Annual call for doctoral project proposals & selection of at least two candidates
- Ensuring a link with European, federal and Flemish public policy.

**(d) Project support**

In order to anchor the research agendas of the centres through external funding (and thus make them more sustainable), the coming management period will focus on the further professionalisation of our projects. To this end, a Project Support Office will be set up within the broad umbrella structure of the Brussels School of Governance. Its mission is to organise the process of project acquisition and to maintain an overview of projects and reporting requirements in database form. A significant innovation in this area is financial decentralisation, whereby the research centres retain oversight and control of the resources generated by projects (with the exception of fixed costs). We also monitor ethical control and research integrity, in close cooperation with the relevant ethics committees of the VUB. These innovations are also intended to minimise the burden of administrative planning for academic staff.

Related action points:

- Codification and where necessary updating a guide describing all administrative processes for project acquisition and operation
- Research budget breakdown per research centre (with quarterly review)

**(e) Own publication channels**

Science communication is critical to achieve any impact outside the community of academic experts. For an institute that aspires to European policy relevance and impact, this is doubly important. Therefore, we are strongly committed to the further development of our own publication channels and our presence on social media and in the press. This also allows us, through data analytics, to acquire an insight into the evolution and areas of interest of our target audience of policymakers and experts. So we can keep a finger on the pulse in an increasing rich data environment. The accessibility of our research results through open-access media is an important concern here.

Related action points:

- Further developing our 'policy brief' formula into a series of leading policy papers that are publicly available (with possible preview reserved for those public administrations that make up the target audience).
- Ensuring the publication of all our theses in an open-access format.
- Developing social media channels for research centres to feed more content into our central channels and facilitate data analysis.
- Drawing up an open access strategy for all (or at least as many as possible) of the Institute's publications

**EDUCATION POLICY**

The following instruments will be used to achieve the objectives set for the IES education portfolio:

**(a) revision and exploration of teaching fields in line with the research ambitions**

In the coming years, the education portfolio of the IES will focus more deeply on those research areas that are being developed in the research centres. The ambition is to provide education that is supported by the high quality research they carry out. In the first instance, the aim is to offer the students of the existing advanced master's in European Integration a larger range of options. However the intention is to establish whether these options can be developed into fully-fledged programmes. These could then be offered under the broad umbrella of the Brussels School of Governance. Biannual benchmarking of each programme will also be carried out to ensure the relevance of the courses.

Related action points:

- Streamlining academic research and teaching offerings
- Biannual review of courses
- Broadening the range of options

**(b) Guaranteeing quality assurance**

As in previous years, the IES, together with the VUB, is building on quality assurance in education in general terms. Programmes are approved by the VUB Education Council, and student evaluations are used in staff policy. In collaboration with various partners, primarily Vesalius College, the IES wishes to roll out a more extensive quality cycle, in which the programme directors will also play an important role as guardians of the learning objectives. Before the start of the semester, the programme director assesses the syllabuses to ensure that the programme-wide learning objectives can be achieved. At the end of each semester, extensive student evaluations take place. The results are discussed in the programme councils and with individual teachers with a view to assessment and continuous quality assurance.



Related action points:

- Further refining the quality cycle
- Implementing the quality cycle
- Inclusion of quality cycle results in programme evaluations and assessments of individual teacher

**(c) Strengthening and expanding the digital offering**

The IES use of digital learning platforms is established in the Education Codex. Accordingly, the Institute has been working on models for distance learning since its inception, and has set up a special unit for this purpose. The knowledge and practical experience gained over the past year has proved very useful, allowing us to accelerate the roll-out of a fully digital offer. In order to offer course components successfully and sustainably, ever more use needs to be made of the technological tools we now have at our disposal. The IES aims to intensify its focus on online and blended courses, where the physical location of the student and teacher is less important. Ideally, future course components should be developed in such a way that they contain both a face-to-face and a digital element.

Related action points:

- Developing a digital element for as many course components as possible
- Establishing an Office for Teaching and Learning Innovation

**(d) Intensifying cooperation**

Over the coming period the IES will consider whether the strategic partnerships with universities in the EUTOPIA network (in particular with the University of Warwick), with UNU-CRIS, with the Vienna School of International Studies and with Vesalius College could lead to new, integrated courses or training programmes. Where appropriate, these could be set up during this period.

Related action points:

- Further development of partnerships

**(e) Safeguarding the attractiveness of programmes**

Safeguarding the attractiveness of the programmes focuses on six aspects: the curriculum (discussed under point (a) above), quality (see point (b)), learning methods, the degree of interactivity, marketing and individual support.

During the previous management period, the IES developed and co-organised a simulation game which was rolled out via an international partnership (Eurosim). Such practice-oriented exercises are very popular with students, so the intention is to develop and integrate them further within existing curriculum.

Other blended learning elements will also be explored and incorporated where appropriate.

Related action points:

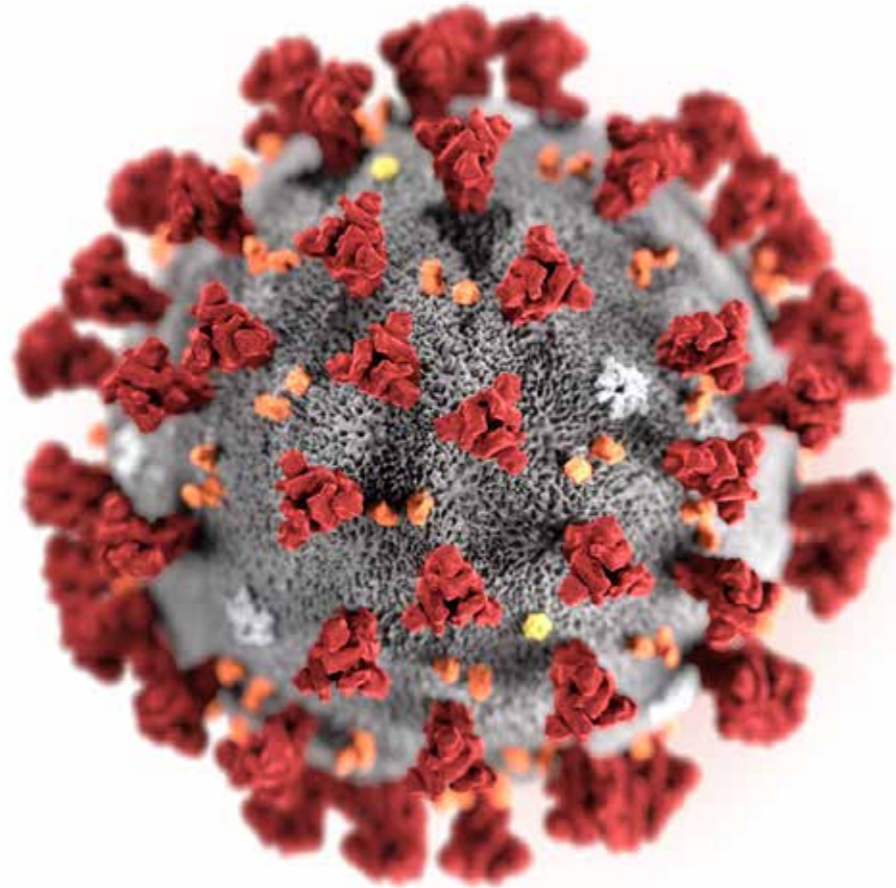
- Modernising teaching methods
- Incorporating simulation games into curriculums

**(f) Continued financial monitoring**

Every advanced master's programme must in principle be self-supporting. As a first step, the enrolment fee for the LLM in International and European Law for the academic year 2020–2021 was increased to 13,000 euro. This should enable the programme to be self-supporting. A high number of scholarships were also introduced to enable outstanding students who do not have the financial capacity to take part in the programme.

Related action points:

- Ensuring the financial sustainability of the courses
- Further developing an appropriate scholarship policy



# Impact Covid-19

## The impact of Covid-19

As a genuinely international institute in terms of both staff and students, the IES was particularly affected by the outbreak of the global pandemic. The absence of international mobility has prevented our staff from travelling internationally, reduced the number of conferences attended and delayed the development of international partnerships.

At the same time, the Institute has acted quickly as a focal point for the creation and sharing of knowledge in the field of European Studies. On its website, it immediately published research and comments from IES researchers on COVID-19 and its impact on the various subject areas studied at the Institute (the Green Deal, security, digitisation and migration). Researchers are also committed to transferring their knowledge on the impact of COVID-19 to the wider academic and policy community. The Institute thus stands ready to provide input to international, national, regional and local policy environments. Our experts will ensure that their knowledge is shared with their respective communities. For example, close cooperation with the Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs is being explored.

Furthermore, the prolonged uncertainty regarding international student mobility and the temporary halt to the issue of student visas are affecting our educational programmes. International students who wish to expand their knowledge of the functioning of the European Union and the wider field of European studies are the main target group for these programmes.

The IES, which has previously completed several Jean Monnet projects on digital and 'blended' learning, was better placed than any other such institution for the complete digitisation of its courses. The switch to online learning has been successful, including – indeed, especially – in the case of the summer school on EU policy-making, which attracted an unprecedented number of participants. In making such a rapid response successful, past investments in an education and learning innovation service have proved useful.

In the case of the advanced master's courses, it became clear that most students were partly attracted to the Institute because of its location in Brussels. A mixed approach was developed to 1) ensure the stability and safety students and staff, 2) reduce the insecurity associated with studying abroad, 3) address the need for students to have access to Brussels.

Over the short term, applications have fallen slightly. If the COVID-19 situation continues, it may be difficult in the long run to meet the government requirement to award 50 degrees annually. Given the timescale for this strategic plan, the Board expects to be able to meet this benchmark again within five years, but the average number over the next management period may fall under the benchmark.



# 5-year Budget

## Budget for the coming five years

Over the last 20 years, the Institute has benefitted from a healthy financial situation, despite setbacks such as the attacks in Brussels in 2016 and the Corona crisis last year, both of which have had a severe impact on the intake of international students and on the organisation of major events.

However, the IES has acquired an increasing number of responsibilities, which also have financial implications. SLAs have been concluded between the IES and the respective faculties in order to promote the Institute's academic autonomy over its educational programmes, while at the same time increasing its financial contribution. In addition, the Institute also obtained its own ZAP quota, although this had a very low financial impact (as all senior staff had similar ZAP grades).

### PLANNING 2021-2025

The current financial plan will implement the strategic aspects indicated below. In particular, it ensures:

- The balanced distribution of government revenue between the four research centres and the central administration;
- Incentives to increase the proportion of externally funded projects:
  - The IES aims to consolidate external project funding, increasing it to around €2 100 000 by 2025 (compared with about €1 600 000 in 2020);
  - The IES wishes to increase the ownership of projects by decentralising resources to the four centres;
  - Tools will be developed or maintained in order to offer successful doctoral students a (part-time) place at the institute after obtaining their doctorate, and thus enable them to obtain externally funded projects;
  - Additional incentivising scholarships will be provided for obtaining FWO or other prestigious projects;

# 5-year Budget

- Additional incentivising scholarships will encourage cooperation between the IES and its principal partners (VeCo, Warwick, UNU-CRIS, etc.);
- The funding of at least two doctoral projects per year: the Management Agreement with the government requires the IES to launch two doctorates per year. The IES aims to meet this requirement through calls for projects that are in line with the Institute's research strategy (funded both by the IES and external resources). Doctoral students are expected to complete their doctorates within a period of four years.
- The further development of four (advanced) MA programmes, grafted on to the Centres' research portfolio and building on the current EuroMaster specialisations;
- The pursuit of education programmes that break even financially;
- Financial support for a time-allocation model for senior academic staff;
- Financial planning requires further support from the VUB for the two specialist IES masters' programmes. The VUB will continue to pay the salaries of full-time VUB professors and provide the necessary office and teaching space.
- Exchanges between the IES and the faculties will be governed by Service Level Agreements.
- Because the VUB's contribution for support staff will be discontinued, its contribution will fall from €200 000 to €150 000;
- The current financial plan envisages the continuing organisation of a biannual international conference (EUIA).
- The IES will continue to rent office space from the VUB and will re-let parts of that space for conferences/meetings and for other VUB staff. This is taken into account in the budget both on the outgoings and income side.
- The Institute will continue to pay all the social liabilities of its staff.

The figures provided suggest that after an initial investment and additional resources due to the Corona pandemic, the IES should under normal circumstances be able to repay these investments within the term of the management agreement and maintain a break-even situation.

The table on the following page shows the financial overview as estimated today. It is intended as a framework for the costs/revenue for the next five years. It is based in part on costs and income from previous years.

- (1) external project funding could yield up to €2 100 ,000 by 2025; the IES has doubled the ZAP framework in the past management period and will offer additional incentives during this management period. With this investment, the Institute hopes to further increase the number of externally funded projects in order to reap the benefits of its investment;
- (2) advanced master's programmes will increase student numbers to their pre-2015 levels (35 for the LL.M. and 70 the the EuroMaster);
- (3) tuition fees for the LL.M will be maintained at €13 000 (subject to indexation);
- (4) tuition fees for the EuroMaster will rise to break-even level;
- (5) For both programmes, tuition fees and the possibility of further increasing them will be evaluated on a regular basis.
- (6) Scholarships and/or (partial) tuition fee exemptions will be available at all times for economically disadvantaged students with proven need and merit. The general aim is to achieve self-sufficiency/break-even for advanced master's programmes;
- (7) new programmes should be self-sustaining within the foreseeable future;
- (8) investment remains at the same level (essentially: depreciation cost over 5 years); however, investment funds will be provided to strengthen the collaboration with Vesalius College (which operates in the same building) and to optimise digital learning;
- (9) the number of junior researchers paid with own IES funds is maintained at eight doctoral students; the number of externally funded researchers will rise.
- (10) collaboration with other institutions can lead to rationalisation of overheads (e.g. shared rental costs, shared administration, shared research programmes, etc.).

# 5-year Budget

DASHBOARD	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
	€	#	€	#	€	#	€	#	€	#
Tuition fee LLM	13.000	20	13.260	25	13.525	30	13.796	30	14.072	30
Tuition fee EM Full Time	5.000	35	5.100	37	5.202	38	5.306	39	5.412	40
Tuition fee EM Part Time	2.500	35	2.550	37	2.601	38	2.653	39	2.706	40
Tuition fee other MA programmes	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.796	20	14.072	30
Tuition fee PGC	2.400	35	2.448	38	2.497	40	2.547	40	2.598	40
Summer/Winter School	1.300	20	1.326	20	1.353	20	1.380	20	1.407	20
EUIA	120	300	-	-	125	300	-	-	130	300
Stipends / Scholarships	10.000	15	10.000	15	10.000	15	10.000	15	10.000	15

Total number of expected students	90	99	106	128	140
Index	1,02	1,02	1,02	1,02	1,02

INCOME	4.924.400	5.195.112	5.533.937	6.004.245	6.423.167
Government funding	2.085.900	2.127.618	2.170.170	2.213.574	2.257.845
VUB contribution	150.000	153.000	156.060	159.181	162.365
External Projects	1.500.000	1.650.000	1.800.000	1.950.000	2.100.000
Gifts	20.000	20.400	20.808	21.224	21.649
Tuition fees MA programme	522.500	614.550	702.270	1.000.194	1.169.036
Tuition fees (other)	146.000	119.544	164.429	129.467	171.057
Other income	100.000	102.000	104.040	106.121	108.243
Reimbursement Secondments	400.000	408.000	416.160	424.483	432.973

INVESTEMENT	94.100	96.082	99.084	102.105	105.147
Hardware	45.000	46.000	48.000	50.000	52.000
Software	15.000	15.300	15.606	15.918	16.236
Office	34.100	34.782	35.478	36.187	36.911

RUNNING COSTS	1.457.500	1.481.970	1.573.515	1.650.500	1.752.768
Office (rent + maintenance)	476.000	485.520	495.230	505.135	515.238
Services	30.000	30.000	30.000	30.000	30.000
Central Academic Running Costs	25.000	30.000	33.000	45.000	50.000
Running Costs Research Centres	340.000	380.000	410.000	450.000	480.000
Running Costs Education	304.000	309.700	314.200	327.100	334.000
Organisation of Events	70.000	30.000	70.000	30.000	70.000
Admin and other overhead costs	200.000	204.000	208.080	250.000	260.000
Miscellaneous	12.500	12.750	13.005	13.265	13.530

PERSONNEL	3.610.000	3.684.200	3.758.884	4.141.216	4.352.040
Academic Personnel	2.400.000	2.450.000	2.500.000	2.850.000	3.000.000
Administrative Personnel	700.000	714.000	728.280	750.000	800.000
Secondments	400.000	408.000	416.160	424.483	432.973
Pension Fund	110.000	112.200	114.444	116.733	119.068

PROVISIONS	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000
Central Academic Provisions	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000
Administrative Provisions	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000	10.000

TOTAL INCOME	4.924.400	5.195.112	5.533.937	6.004.245	6.423.167
TOTAL EXPENSES	5.181.600	5.282.252	5.451.483	5.913.822	6.229.956
OVERALL TOTAL	- 257.200	- 87.140	82.454	90.423	193.211

## Institute for European Studies Strategic Plan 2021-2025

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