



# ERUA

European Reform  
University Alliance

## Closing Report

### Chair of the History of Knowledge x ERUA



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**1. What is ERUA?**

From 2020 to 2023, the University of Konstanz was part of the European Reform University Alliance (ERUA) with four other young reform universities from Bulgaria, Denmark, France and Greece:

- New Bulgarian University
- Roskilde University
- Université Paris 8 Vincennes
- University of the Aegean

The transnational higher education alliance was funded by the European Universities Initiative of the European Commission. The mission of ERUA is to create a multilingual, multicultural environment where students and researchers can take part in a shared European experience. Most disciplinary fields are covered, with a particularly strong profile in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Arts. Reform is at the heart of ERUA: being critical, empowering students, promoting initiative, making a difference, and fostering sustainability.<sup>i</sup>

## **2. Who is ERUA?**

### **2.1 Researchers**



[Anne Kwaschik](#) is Professor of the History of Knowledge at the University of Konstanz and President of the German-French Historians Committee. She has taught and researched in Berlin (FU Berlin, TU Berlin), Paris (EHESS ; CIERA ; DHIP; CNAM), New York (NYU), Rome (Roma Tre), and at Roskilde University (Denmark). Her research interests concern the intellectual history of Western Europe in its global interconnections from the 19th to the 21st century. Anne Kwaschik was also member of the interdisciplinary research group of the network “[Re-imagining Higher](#)

[Education and Research](#)”.<sup>ii</sup> Researchers from the various ERUA universities could make contact via this network. Not only research cooperations between the ERUA universities but also the expansion of the ERUA team of the Chair of the History of Knowledge were the results.

Since July 2022 [Anders Kampman](#), M.A., is a research assistant at the Chair of the History of Knowledge at the University of Konstanz. He studied Philosophy and Science Studies and History at Roskilde University and Leibniz Universität Hannover. Anders Kampmann has also worked as a student assistant for ERUA. At the moment, he is working on formulating a PhD-project centered around utopian/early socialist thinking from around the middle of the 19th century. Furthermore, Anders



Kampman was part of the ERUA initiative and member of a working group, which discusses ideas and practicalities about future pre-doctoral schools (at reform universities).

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[Layla Kiefel](#), M.A., is a doctoral student at the University Bordeaux Montaigne and at the University of Konstanz since 2020. She studied Humanities and in her Master's German Studies and German History at the *Lycée Henri IV* in Paris and at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* (ENS) in Lyon. During her studies, she spent several semesters in Germany at the University of Konstanz and at the Free University in Berlin. Her first Master's thesis was about the portrayal of prostitution in German television documentaries after its legalisation in 2002; in her second Master's thesis, she focused on the ISK women of the daily newspaper *Der Funke*.

From the summer semester 2023 until the end of 2023, [Candice Mermet](#), M.A., has been working as a research assistant at the Chair of the History of Knowledge. After a Bachelor's degree in Cultural and Media Production Strategies (University of Québec in Montréal, Canada, 2020), she completed a Master's degree in Gender Studies (Université Bordeaux Montaigne, France, 2023) and in German Studies (University of Potsdam, 2023). She was part of WP2 of the European Reform University Alliance (ERUA). Additionally, Candice Mermet is working on the project on the women's health movement of the 1970s and 1980s in the FRG.<sup>iii</sup>



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## **2.2 Student Assistants**



After finishing her Bachelor's degree in social sciences at the Heinrich-Heine University in Düsseldorf, [Kathrin Ebel](#), M.A., came to the University of Konstanz in 2019 to join the Master's program in politics and public administration. From March 2021 to May 2022, she supported the ERUA team in Konstanz and was part of the Student Research Group, the Local Coordination Committee and the University Council. She completed her studies in 2022 with a thesis about "[Student Representatives' Perceived Effectiveness of their Engagement in European University Alliances' Governance Structures](#)" (2022, University of Konstanz/Utrecht University), Kathrin Ebel explored student representatives' perceptions of their engagement's effectiveness in transnational higher education alliance governance such as ERUA.

After graduating from Osnabrück University with a bachelor's in Cognitive Science, [Clara Feldmann](#), M.A., began her master's in Multilingualism at the University of Konstanz in 2021. She started volunteering for the Erasmus Student Network Konstanz in 2021 and was president of the association from February to July 2022. From March 2022 to June 2023, Clara Feldmann helped the ERUA team in Konstanz and was part of the [Student Research Group](#). She is student representative of the University of Konstanz in the [Local Coordination Committee](#) and the [University Council of ERUA](#).



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Elena Preiser, B.A., is currently doing her master's degree in History at the University of Konstanz. During her bachelor studies, she worked as a student assistant in the history department, as well as for ERUA where she was not only able to assist with event organization and execution, but also to learn about the structure of a university alliance and university collaboration. Particularly interesting for her was a stay abroad at Université Paris VIII Vincennes, one of ERUA's partner universities. From July 2023 to December 2023, Elena Preiser was part of the ERUA team of the Chair of the History of Knowledge and member of the [ERUA Student Research Group](#).<sup>iv</sup>



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### 3. Events

Several ERUA workshops and (online) talks have been organized in order to exchange thoughts and ideas about different concepts of reform universities, the history and legacy of reform universities, or digital transformations of research and practice of reform universities. Both the workshops and the (online) talks were organized by members of the [ERUA Research Group](#) and the associated [ERUA Student Research Group](#).

#### 3.1 Workshops

Beginning with the “[What Are Reform Universities \(and How Do We Know\)?](#)”, taking place from September 24 to 25, 2021 at Roskilde University, the collaboration between researchers of ERUA universities, therefore the work of the [ERUA Research Group](#), started. The members agreed about a common agenda for the years to come. In the first part of the workshop it was investigated what reform universities are. The second part explores common plans for the future.



From May 5 to 7, 2022 the workshop “[The History and Legacy of Reform: Changing Promises and Realities of Higher Education](#)” organized by the [ERUA WP 2 Research Group](#) was held at the University of Konstanz. The main topic were existing and the plausible future alternatives to higher education. Questions of how and why reform universities emerged, what it

meant to be an alternative in the past and what it would mean to be an alternative today in the modern landscape of Higher Education were asked. Within this framework, this workshop investigated the relationship between major socio-political transformations and reform initiatives. In the duality of promises and realities, the workshop will investigate two major problem fields concerning firstly, the scope and impact of higher education and secondly, the transformation of higher education by new forms of funding, evaluation, and organization.

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[William Whyte](#), Professor of Social and Architectural History at the University of Oxford, held the keynote “[Semper Reformanda: Reform and the University Through History](#)”. Whyte spoke about what explains universities through history either reforming or failing to reform. And why does change – even apparently radical change – so often take the form of reversion to older types? And, why does reform rarely amount to the dissolution or replacement of the university?



The workshop “[Digital Transformation of Research and Practice in the Reform Universities: Past, Present and Future](#)” from September 8 to 10, 2022 at New Bulgarian University, was about Internet and the new digital technologies brought globally the most important socio-cultural transformation during the last few decades. Universities, as all other educational institutions, are among the most affected by this transformation. The researches talked about reforming education for the digital age, higher education for digital citizenship, and new tools and approaches in digitalized education.

From May 18 to 20, 2023 the University of the Aegean hosted the workshop “[Reform Universities, Society and Entrepreneurship: Current Views and Future Research Agenda](#)” which inquired how reform universities and their mission of societal engagement relate to the current demands for an “entrepreneurial university”. The main question to discuss was on how do reform universities teach, research, and organize entrepreneurship, and how do they differ from other traditional universities?

The workshop “[Why Universities? Reimagining Higher Education and Research](#)” was held from 11 to 12 October, 2023 at Roskilde University. It took place to investigate the role of alternative and experimental forms of higher education and research in a time of challenges: expanded student populations, technological disruption, the emergence of a global market of higher education, and the growth of social inequality and anti-scientific sentiment. The main questions were: How do – and how should – these challenges reconfigure the role of the university in the world? Why do we need universities today? Those questions were addressed by focusing on three themes: universities and internationalization, challenges to teaching, and responsible research.



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The last workshop “[Post-Extractivist Universities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#)” in which the ERUA team of the University of Konstanz was involved was taking place from October 26 to 27, 2023 at Université Paris VIII Vincennes. The ERUA Student Research Group put together an [ERUA Booklet](#) in which the founding history of all ERUA universities is told. The goals of the workshop were to transform studying and teaching, research, and publication collaboration and outreach so that personal, institutional and collective academic experience as well as our working-studying-teaching-researching conditions can be improved.

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### **3.2 (Online) Talks**

In her talk “[‘La Colonisation est une Science qui ne s’improvise pas’: The Scientisation of Colonialism in the Age of Empire](#)” (September 30<sup>th</sup> 2020) Anne Kwaschik spoke about social and colonial research projects demanding socio-economic data and innovative modes at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The talk investigated the formation of “scientisation” as a cultural code through international practices and institutions highlighting in the second part questionnaires as a vital tool of scientisation. On a broader scale, Anne Kwaschik aimed at discussing the scientisation of colonialism as boundary work. In her second talk within the framework of ERUA “[‘Laboratories of the Social: Socialism and Social Science in the 19th century](#)” (September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021)”, Anne Kwaschik talked about the shared genealogy of socialism and the social sciences in the 19th century. She argued that Charles Fourier’s early socialist thoughts present an organisational alternative to state socialism that was fully realized in cooperativism at the end of the 19th century and suggested a historical understanding of the social sciences as laboratory practices.

Ku-Ming Changs talk “[‘The History of Research Education: A Global Overview, 1840-1950](#)” (March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021) was about the emergence of the modern research university framed in a global history of research education. Chang looked at research education across the globe from 1840 to 1950. By analyzing five different modes of education (formal education, informal education, apprenticeship, self-training, and study abroad), he concluded by delineating what may be called the first globalization of research education in history.

Kristoffer Kropp spoke about European research funding and the Europeanisation of social science research in his talk “[‘A field of European Social Science?’](#)” (April 14<sup>th</sup> 2021) at Roskilde University. In his talk, he presented his current project analyzing the possible formation of a field of European social sciences, integrated through both intellectual and institutional structures.

“[‘Where are the sciences today?’](#)” (October 28<sup>th</sup> 2021) was the talk of Steven Shapin from Harvard University who spoke about the influence of science on the world, especially on our taste, behavior, and preferences. As an important reason for this Shapin named the increasing number of students around the world. Also, there are simply more scientists and scientifically trained people around us. According to Shapin, this situation has also changed what we consider as science and which sciences are being prioritized.

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Yves Citton from Université Paris 8 Vincennes held his talk “[Practicing the Presence of Study against the Future of the Universities?](#)” (December 9<sup>th</sup> 2021) addressed the topic of “black studies” in connection with an alternative to the current conception of our universities, driven by the toxic double imperative of “teaching” and “research”. Main questions of Citton were: What does it mean to “practice study”? Is it bound to be a clandestine activity, or can it be promoted by academic administrations? What insights can be drawn from recent proposals about a “third university”, different from the “first university” (which delivers MBAs) as well as from the “second university” (which delivers certifications of guilty conscience through critical humanities)?

In her talk “[The Future of Learning and Innovation: How AI is Changing the Game](#)” (April 4<sup>th</sup> 2022), Marigo Raftopoulos from Tampere University talked about artificial intelligence as disrupting our traditional models of learning, creating and working. She also argues that, despite the astonishing rate of progress with AI technology, our social and economic challenges cannot be solved by machines alone and require innovative forms of human-machine collaboration and co-creation.

Virginie Servant-Miklos from Erasmus University Rotterdam spoke about “[Pedagogies of Collapse](#)” (April 26<sup>th</sup> 2022). She addressed the fact that environmental collapse is upon us, yet the education system carried on much as it did in the 20th century: under the promise of eternal growth, preparing students for a future that looks much like the past. Her goal was to re-examine the existential roots of critical pedagogy in light of the climate crisis calls educators to reconnect with learning as revolution. In the urgency of the present, learning built on imperfect solidarities and reckoning with trauma may guide our students’ generation back to a safe operating space for humanity.<sup>v</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> <https://erua-eui.eu/the-alliance/>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.geschichte.uni-konstanz.de/en/research/kwaschik/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.geschichte.uni-konstanz.de/en/research/kwaschik/miscellaneous/european-reform-university-alliance-erua/assistants/>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.geschichte.uni-konstanz.de/en/research/kwaschik/miscellaneous/european-reform-university-alliance-erua/assistants/>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.geschichte.uni-konstanz.de/en/research/kwaschik/miscellaneous/european-reform-university-alliance-erua/events/online-talks/>