



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service



“Reflecting on higher education policy in Europe in geopolitically challenging times” - CIHE Friends in Europe Meeting 2026

Date: 22 – 23 January 2026

Venue: DAAD Brussels Office, Rue d'Arlon 22-24, 1050 Brussels ([Directions](#))

Thursday, 22 January

12:00 – 13:30 Registration and light lunch

13:30-14:00 **Words of welcome and introduction**

- ACA and DAAD
- Updates on CIHE and EAIE

14:00-14:30 **Keynote: Geopolitics, knowledge security and global dynamics - The case against academic freedom**

Academic freedom is typically framed in positive terms – as essential for a well-functioning academic system. In this keynote, Jeroen challenges this taken-for-granted assumption and reflects on the lack of research on the topic itself. Rather than focusing on defending academic freedom, he invites participants to consider whether a shift toward discussing academic duties might offer more meaningful insights for both scholarship and policy.

- **Jeroen Huisman**, Professor of Higher Education at the Centre for Higher Education Governance Ghent (CHEGG)

14:30-15:30 **Panel I: Reflecting on higher education policy in Europe in geopolitically challenging times**

Moderator: **Hans de Wit**, Emeritus Professor of the Practice & Distinguished Fellow, Center for International Higher Education (CIHE), Boston College, USA

Panellists:

- **Sakine Weikert**, DAAD Centre for International Academic Cooperation (KIWi)
- **Jan Marco Müller**, Team Leader Global Approach, Multilateral Dialogue and Science Diplomacy, European Commission, DG Research and Innovation
- **Hilligje van 't Land**, Secretary-General / Executive Director, International Association of Universities (IAU)

- **Daniela Craciun**, Assistant Professor, Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), University of Twente.

Q&A

15:30 – 16:00

Coffee break

16:00 – 16:45

Panel II: European policy for the future of higher education and research

Moderator: **Laura Rumbley**, Director, Knowledge Development & Research at European Association for International Education (EAIE)

Panellists:

- **Ellen Hazelkorn**, Joint Managing Partner at BH Associates; Professor Emeritus, Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin)
- **Ligia Deca**, Vice-Rector of National University of Political Studies and Public Administration
- **Irina Ferencz**, Director of Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), Brussels

16:45 – 17:30

Roundtable discussions with all participants

17:30 – 18:00

Plenary and wrap-up

18:00 – 20:00

Dinner

23 January 2026

Exchange between early and senior career researchers (for CIHE alumni only)

09:00 – 09:45

Panel on private higher education in Europe

Panellists:

- **Liudvika Leišytė**, Professor of Higher Education & Deputy Director, Center for Higher Education (zhb), TU Dortmund University, Germany.
- **Isak Froumin**, Head of the Observatory of Higher Education Innovations, Constructor University Bremen, Germany; also Professor in the Department of Higher Education Research at University for Continuing Education Krems (part-time)

09:45-12:30

Presentations by early-career researchers (10-15 min. each) informing about their work and enabling engagement with the senior researchers

Lunch