



Interview: EU scholar calls for cross-border academic cooperation

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BRUSSELS, Dec. 7 (Xinhua) -- Every country can benefit from cross-border academic cooperation, said Jorg Monar, rector of the College of Europe, in an interview with Xinhua.

The European Union (EU) has invested heavily in exchange programs, both for students and academics and there is now increasing cooperation between the EU and China and China is already on a good path, said Monar.

Each country has its own strengths and weaknesses in different fields. If a country opens up its academic system, it can attract expertise from other countries, which will make it stronger and may even compensate for certain weaknesses, he explained.

Moreover, according to Monar, there is a cross-border international interest in safeguarding higher standards of academic conduct.

However, academic cooperation does not always go smoothly. All countries have their own systems and, in many aspects, they are different. For example, national universities are affected by factors such as politics, culture and traditions.

This means that sometimes it is difficult for countries to cooperate because these differences persist to some extent. Though lots has been done to reduce these differences, they are still prominent and there is still a long way to go to overcome them, Monar said.

Many European countries have been going through low growth and serious economic difficulties in recent years. As a result, public funding possibilities for research are relatively tight.

Public authorities have a tendency to support research which will produce quick and positive results for the economy in not so positive economic circumstances, because they have fewer means, said Monar.

However, he warned that investing heavily in utilitarian research instead of more fundamental, long-term research may make sense in the short term, but in the long run, it is very risky.

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