'How to facilitate mutual understanding and cooperation between various inter-university actors?'

The question being posed is one of the three questions about *integration*. The other two questions are about (i) integration within the university and (ii) between universities and wider societal systems (locally, nationally and internationally). I take it, therefore, that we are being asked to focus on (iii) relationships between universities *and* like organisations.

The question has two components - mutual understanding and cooperation. I take the context to be cooperation within publicly funded universities and I ignore private universities.

Mutual understanding: Why is this a problem? It is a problem since universities are sometimes so different that they fail to understand each other. They move in quite different time-space configurations. One is in the top 100 universities on the rankings and has a global presence; another - even in the same city - is nowhere to be seen, being a very local 'teaching' university. They do not see themselves as in the same universe.

Cooperation: Why is *this* a problem? There has been developing, over the last 50+ years, increasing cooperation between universities but it tends to be a matter of 'birds of a feather flock together', ie the elite universities form their own consortia (or 'gangs', as David Watson (former university vice-chancellor) called them). For the most part, though, universities compete against each other, regionally, nationally, globally and locally.

Moreover, the vestiges of coloniality are still apparent. Universities in the core/ the Global North assume a position of superiority vis-à-vis those in the periphery/ the Global South, even where there are formal collaborations. This pattern is admittedly dissolving but power, status and resources are 'owned' in a few hands. The forces for hierarchy are huge.

Recommendations:

(a) Make it a requirement of being a recognized University of Europe that it form a mutual partnership - ***without hierarchy*** - with joint degrees and joint projects, with at least one university in the periphery (in the Global South), and preferably with a different kind of mission. This would entail, eg, *according precedence to the Global South university* and allowing it to lead joint projects; translating all documents of any significance - regarding any joint activity - into the languages of the institutions concerned. An international monitoring and evaluation system (composed equally across the Global South/ Global North) should be put in place, issuing public annual reports on the matter.

(b) Imagine what it would be like if every one of the world's 20,000 universities was to *commit to a universal code of being a university for the public good in the C21*. But then universities would have to recognize themselves as members of the world-wide *single family* of universities. The quest then would not be that of becoming a world-class university but rather being a member of ***worldly*** universities, acting *in the interests of the whole world*.

(c) Have Rectors swop jobs for 6 months, across the Global South/ Global North.

BUT some level of competition may assist the optimum performance of the total ecosystem of universities globally. We should not seek total integration, equality or transparency. What are required are *much* higher levels of recognition and mutuality. 17.3.2021