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**Abstract**

Based on thematic data analysis of reports from a qualitative cross-country study, the article explores the perceptions of Brexit and collaborations with the UK in different EU countries through the lens of discursive institutionalism. We suggest that in the context of uncertainty characteristic of the post-Brexit referendum period, ideas related to economic concerns and strategic repositioning of national higher education systems subsume the values attached to the European dimension of higher education and research policies. The ideal of educational cooperation based on cultural diversity and national varieties is overridden by concerns expressed in terms of economic rationales. These findings corroborate research that argues that collaboration/cooperation has become a pragmatic and instrumental endeavour. In time, and if the current climate of uncertainty persists, this may further reconfigure institutional strategies and lead institutions to focus on problem-solutions rather than the pursuit of the political ends of cooperation. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)