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**Abstract**

Attempting to generalize about the reform of higher education in Central and Eastern Europe since the end of communism is made complicated by the difficulty in identifying clear terms of reference and points of comparison. The area and the higher education systems concerned are far from being homogeneous, for the homogeneity imposed by communism and Soviet domination did not last. When comparing Central and Eastern European higher education systems with those of the West, one is confronted with Western higher education systems that are quite heterogeneous and themselves also going through change. The routes to transition in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe are as diverse as the given systems and countries. The two standard categorizations of Central and Eastern European higher education, exceptionalism and underdevelopment, are inaccurate. Rather, Central and Eastern European higher education should be viewed as fitting into a wider effort to reorient the whole of European higher education towards the knowledge society. In this venture, Central and Eastern European higher education may possess some advantages that are not as prevalent further West. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)