



Finnish Virtual University

Suomen virtuaaliyliopisto - Finlands virtuella universitet

Finnish Virtual University and its experiences

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Background

FINLAND

Area total:

337,030 sq km

Population:

5,183,545

GDP/ comp. by sector:

agriculture: 4%

industry: 34%

services: 62%

GDP/ capita:

purchasing power parity

\$26,200

International organizations

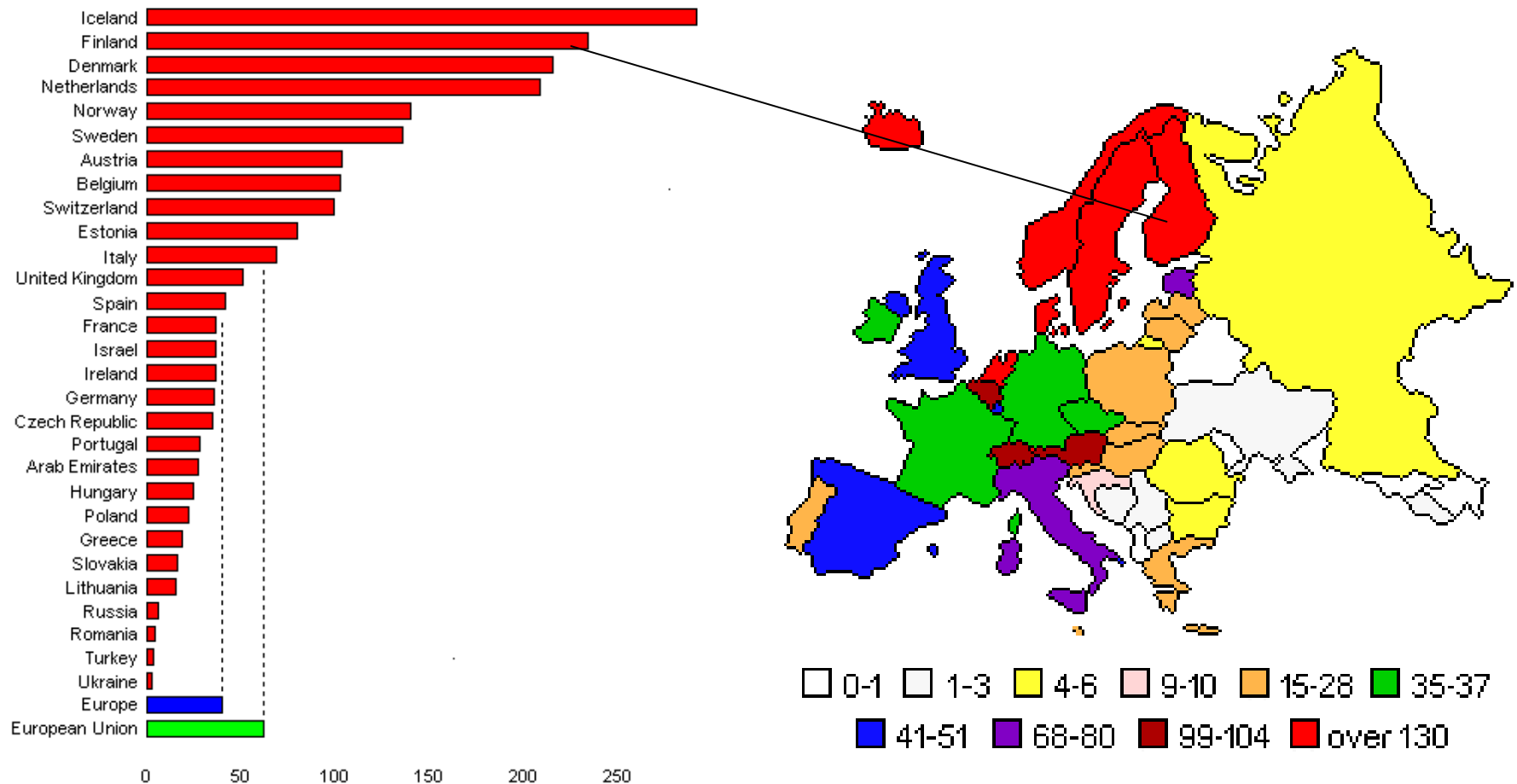
-Member of United Nations
since 1955

- Member of European Union
since 1995

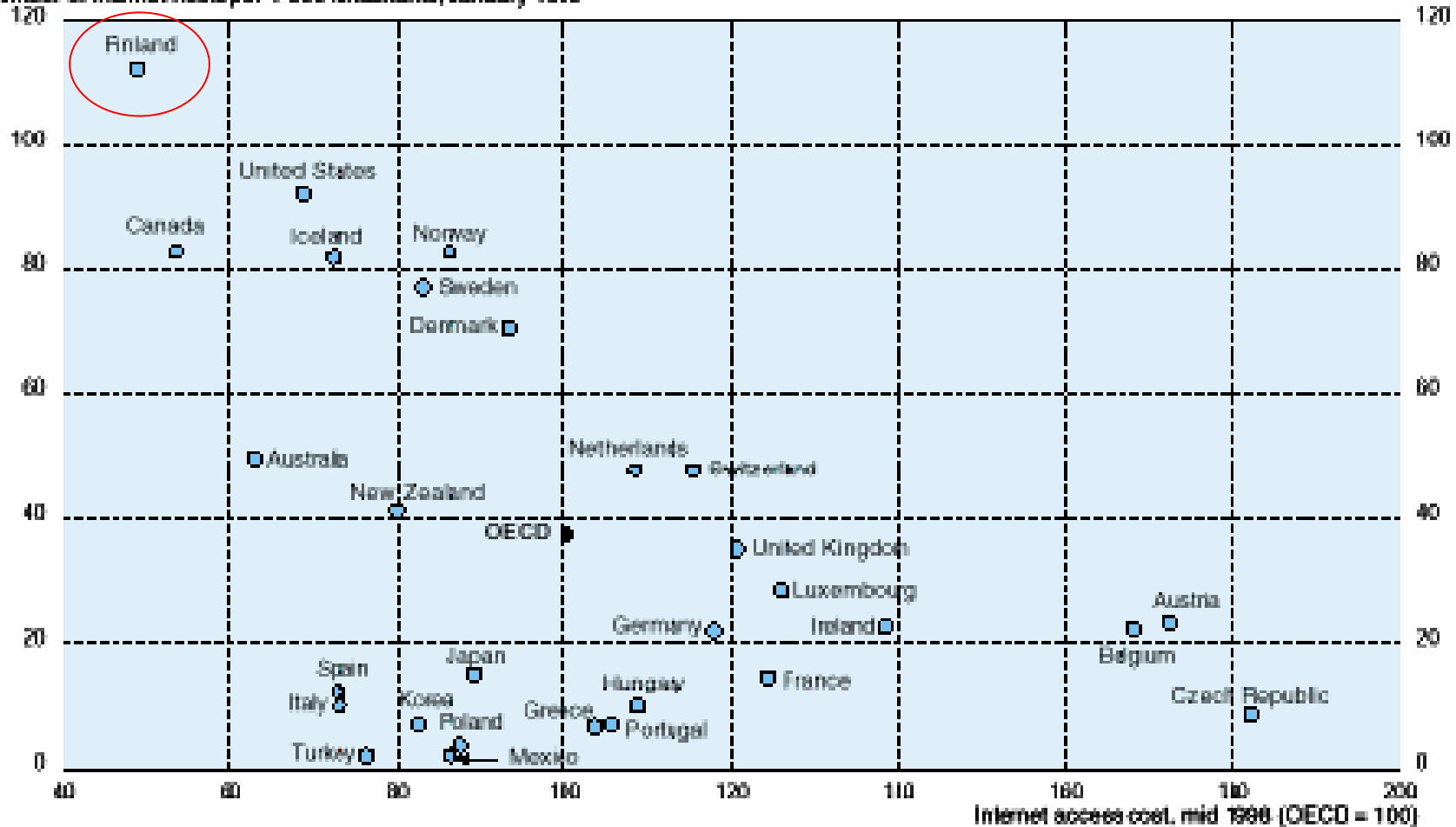


<http://www.gandalf.it/data/data2.htm>
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>

Internet hosts per 1000 inhabitants 3/2003 <http://www.gandalf.it/data/data2.htm>



Number of Internet hosts per 1 000 inhabitants, January 1999

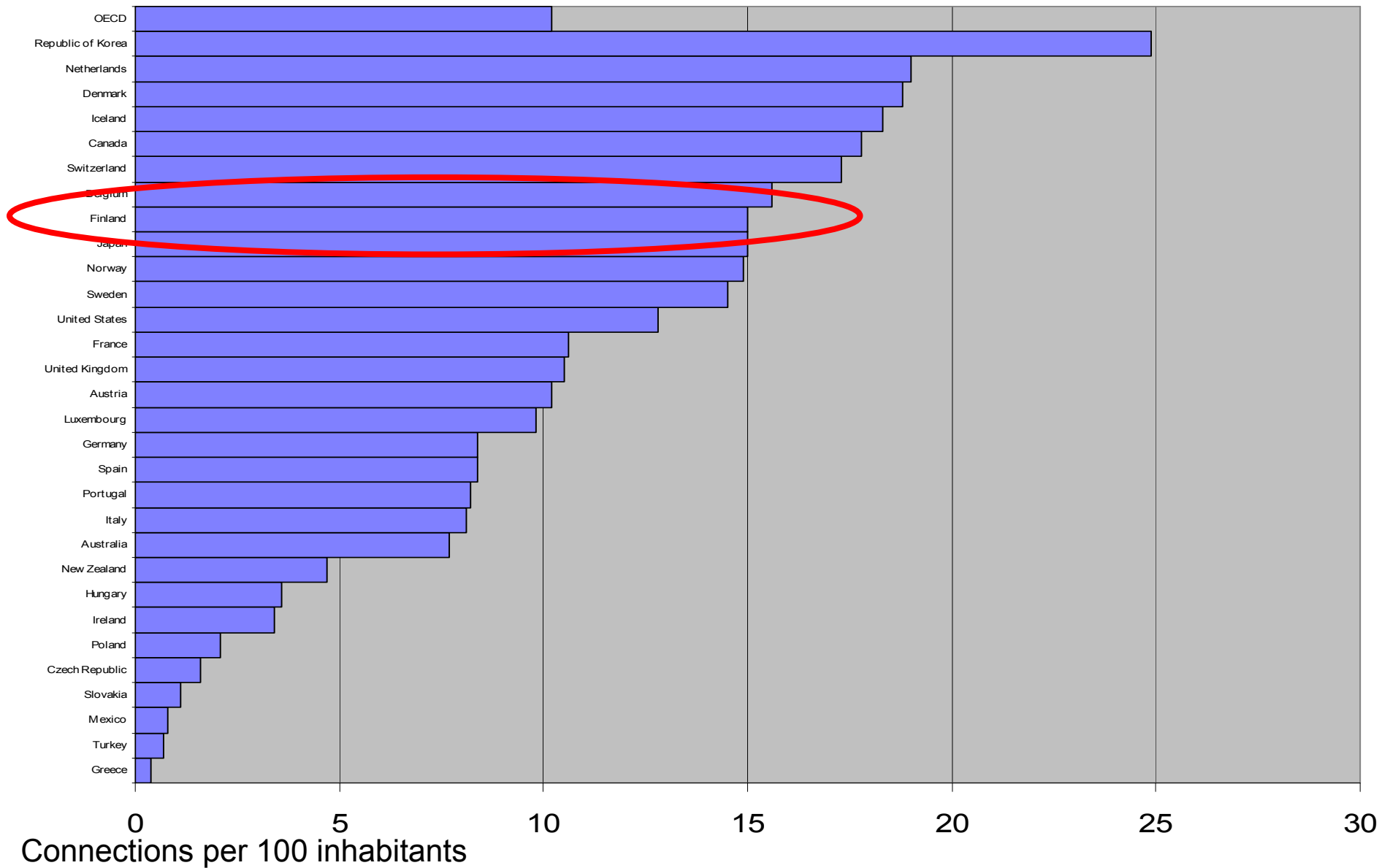


Internet Access Cost and Internet Host Density OECD Nations 1998-99

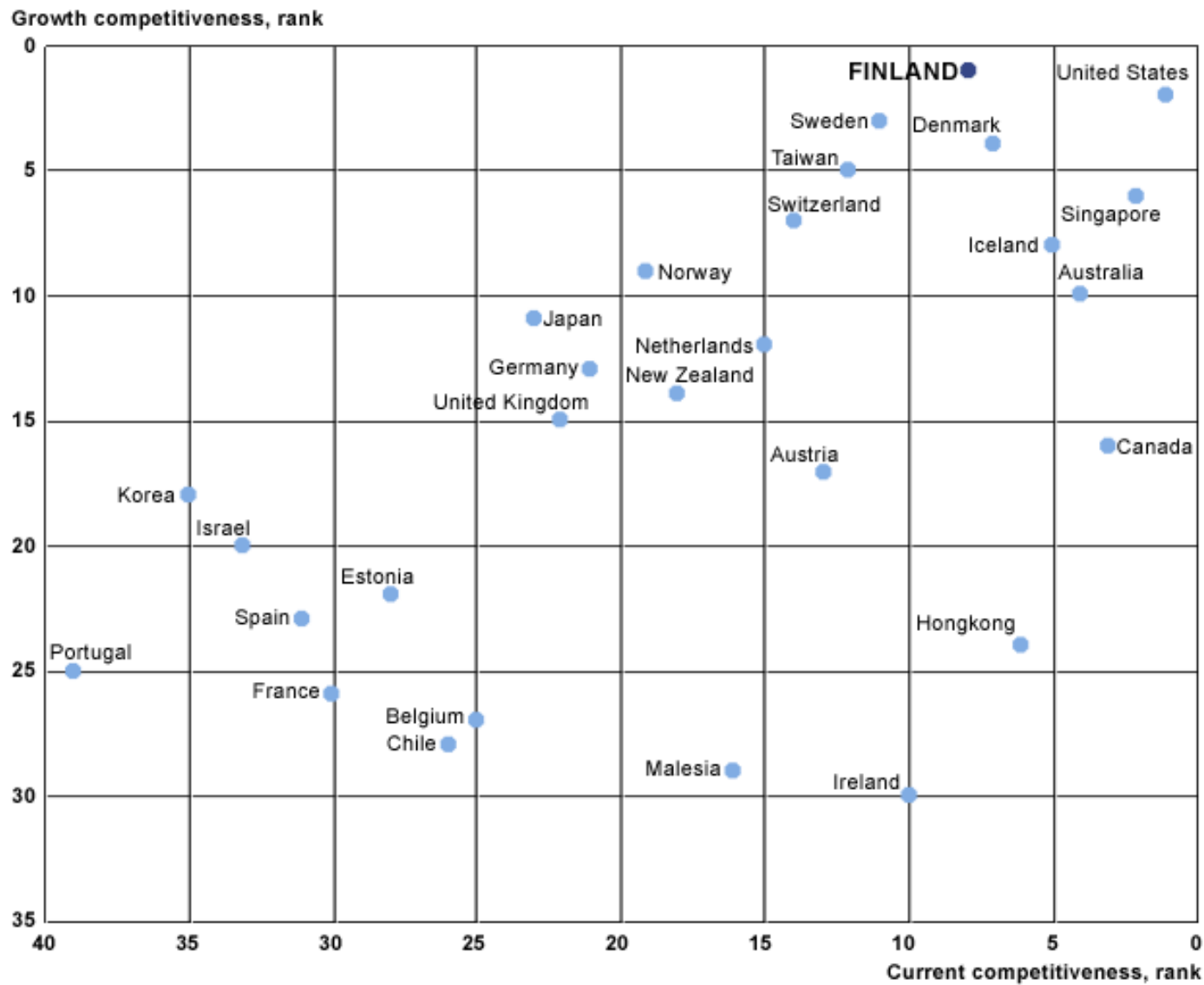
OECD, *Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard, 1999, Benchmarking Knowledge-based economies* (OECD: Paris) p.19

Broad-band Connections

<http://www.tilastokeskus.fi>

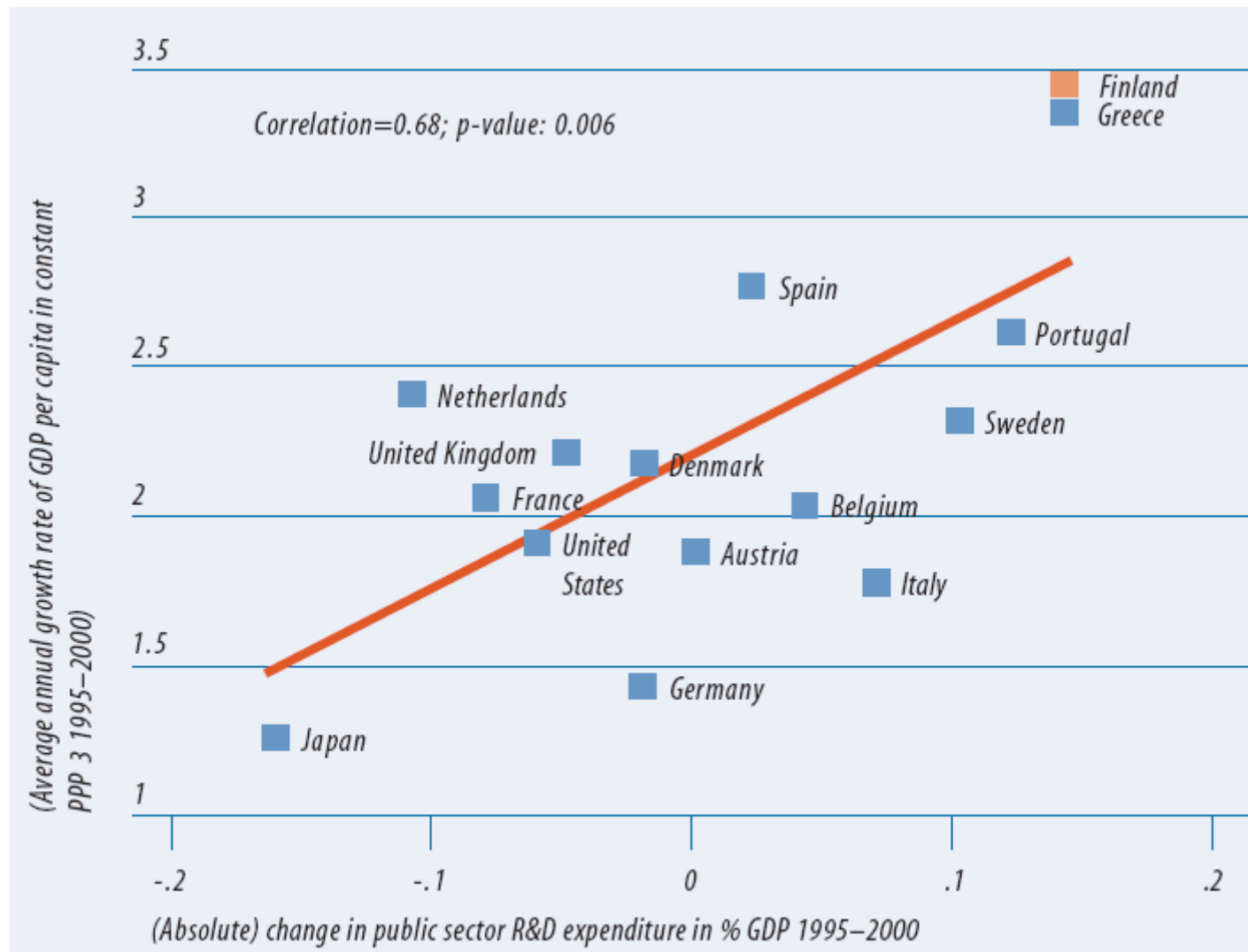


Competitiveness



Source: World Economic Forum (WEF), The International Institute for Management Development (IMD)

Relationship between GDP per capita and public funding for research and development



Note: Ireland has been excluded from the above analysis because of the extraordinarily high growth rate during this period.

Source: EU Commission: European Competitiveness Report 2004, 82

About Virtual University terminology

UNESCO World Conference on *Higher Education in the 21st Century*

“The large number of **different terms and expressions** used in the context of distance or virtual education warrants semantic examination so that they can be classified, misunderstandings can be avoided and the major past and future trends highlighted”.

Farrell, G., ed., (1999)

"The label **virtual is widely and indiscriminately used** around the globe... it is frequently used interchangeably with other labels such as open and distance learning, distributed learning, networked learning, Web-based learning, and computer learning... in spite of the increased use of the term virtual, there are very few examples of institutions using information and communications technologies to carry out all the functions"

The real virtual university will be a response to a growing demand for knowledge and skills. It will involve technology, but will be a form of cooperation as well communication

Seen as cyberspace, the virtual university cannot usurp or perform many of the real university's functions. It may teach, but it won't create knowledge, conduct research, or consult and criticize on its own. Cyberspace has no inherent content, nor the capacity independently to create any.

In collaboration with real institutions cyberspace can do several things... The VU can be found on the Web... It offers a range of more or less conventional but also contemporary studies... The student may enroll and study via the Internet, via a mix of media... he/ she may study alone or together (libraries, centers, at work or in electronic chatrooms etc... Study can lead to diploma or degree, transferred credits, accreditation...

...TO ACHIEVE ALL THIS, THE VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY HAD BEST TO BE A CONSORTIUM OF A WELL-ESTABLISHED REAL UNIVERSITIES...



Finnish Virtual University

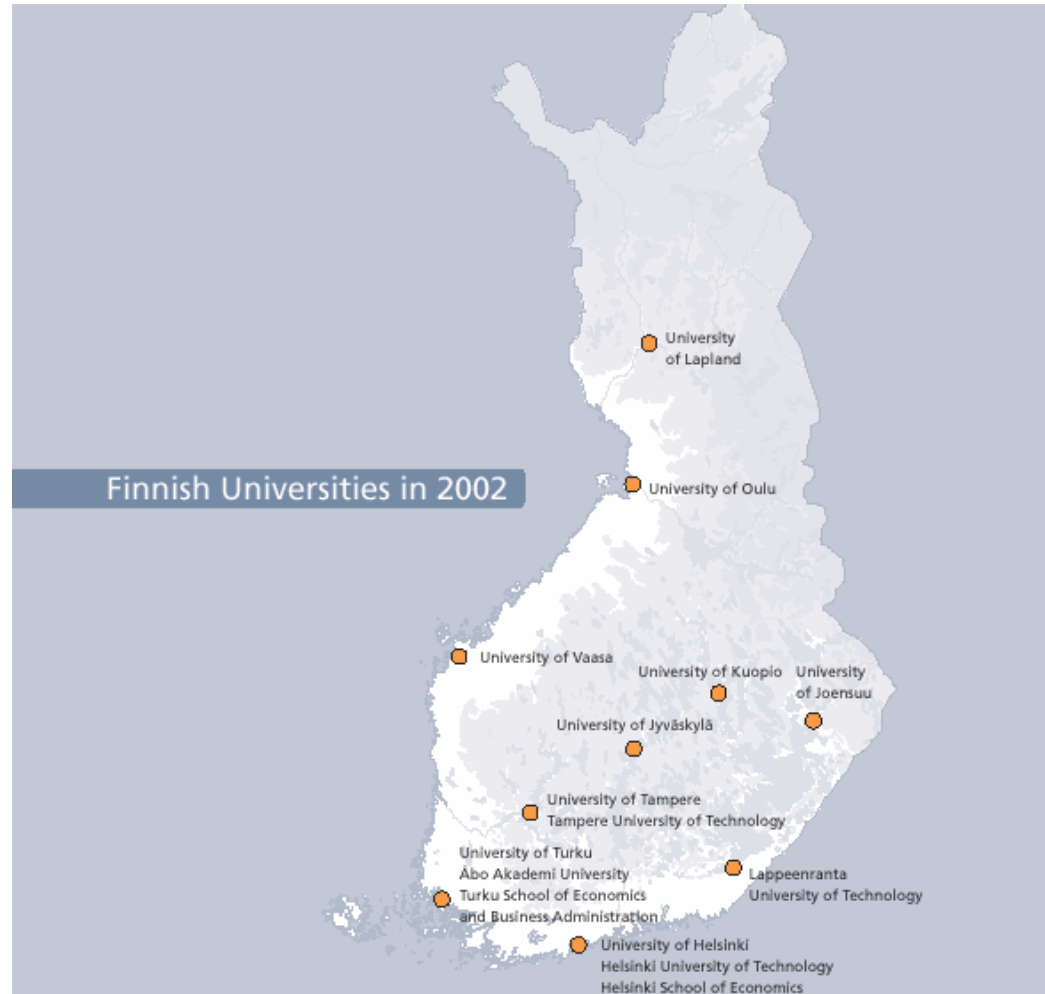
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Finnish University System

Finnish University system

21 FINNISH UNIVERSITIES (Government)

- 10 multifaculty universities
- 3 technical universities
- 3 business schools
- 4 art universities
- 1 National College for Defence



Higher Education Policy in Finland, guidelines 1999-2004

Education and research seen as crucial to Finland's national economic and political strategy for the future. In 1999 the Government fixed the guidelines for higher education up to the year 2004.

The Information Strategy For Research And Education centered on:

- Reforms of University education towards a more student-centered teaching methods
- The development of teaching and learning to especially capitalize on network-based and open and distance learning
- The promotion of the use of ICT in education and research
- Virtual university, established to produce high-standard educational services which enable studies to be pursued in every part of Finland through networks

MinEdu requested all the 21 Finnish Universities to prepare ICT strategy for teaching and learning at the end of the year 2002

ref. e.g.

<http://www.minedu.fi/julkaisut/Hep2001/Edusys/3HEPolicy/index.html>



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Finnish Virtual University in a nutshell

FVU in a nutshell

- a consortium of all 21 Finnish universities
- a co-operative and service organization of the universities
- does not award degrees or qualifications
- operation started in 2001 and until December 2006 the FVU operates as a project organization
- no legal authority yet

Higher Education and ICT for Teaching and Learning

Four phases

The Equipment
Phase (iron age)



1995-1999

The Competence
Phase



2000 -2001

The Strategy
Phase



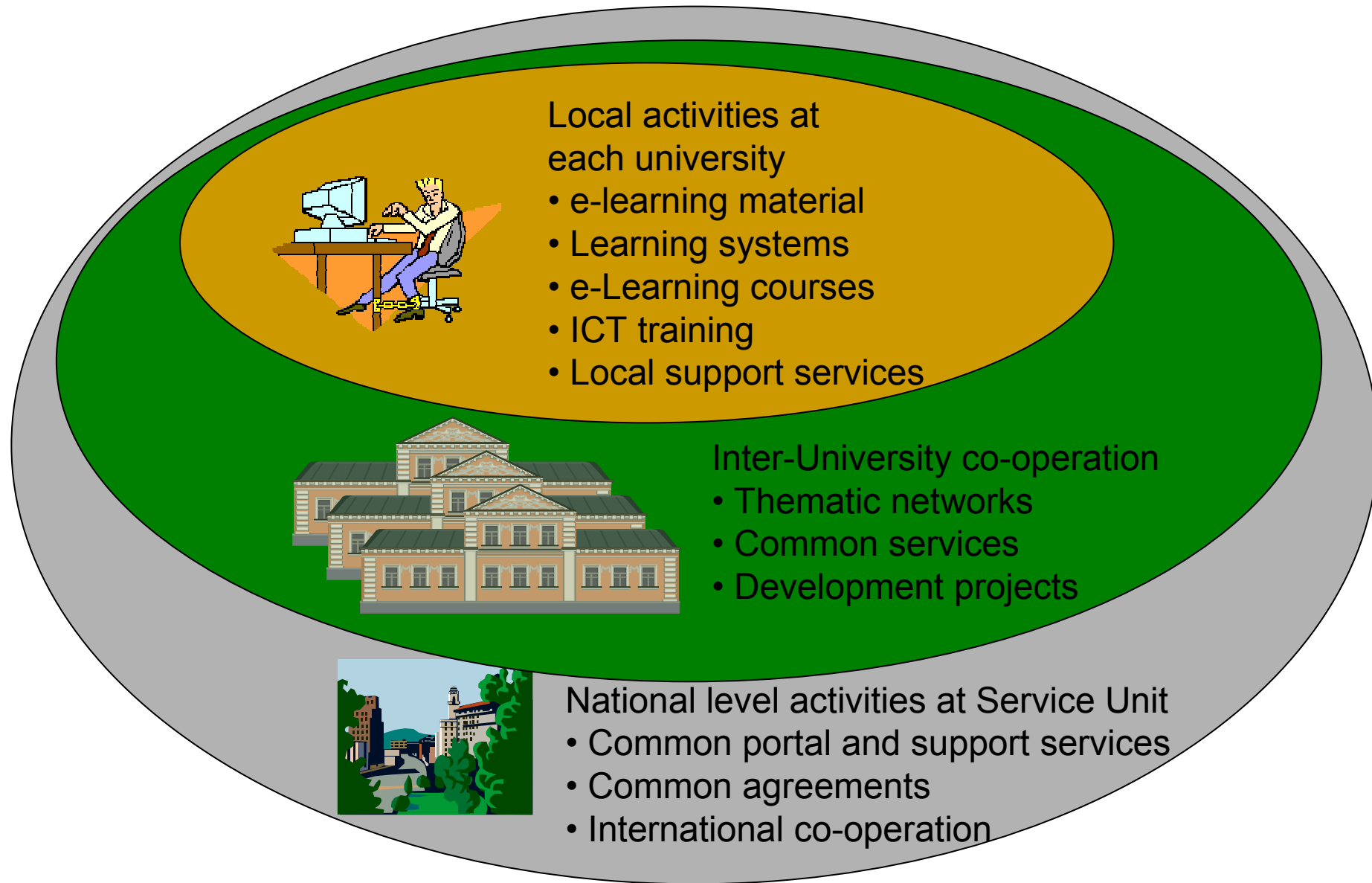
2002 -2004

The Network
Phase



2005-...2009

Finnish Virtual University activities



Management Model of the Finnish Virtual University



Consortium Assembly

FVU strategy and national guide lines are decided at FVU Consortium Assembly. Each university and Ministry of Education are represented.

Steering Group

Steering Group takes care of operational management

Service Unit

Coordination of national development projects

FVU Mission

The Finnish Virtual University (FVU) is a network organization for co-operation among Finnish universities

The FVU promotes the development, productisation and distribution of network-based educational and research services for shared use and provision by universities in national and international contexts

The FVU bases its development work on state-of-the-art research

Strategic objectives

1. Enhancement of flexible studies and development of support systems for flexible studies



Students have broad selection of courses and administration is easy

2. Enhancement of co-operation among e-learning courses and course material



Enhancement of quality, cost-efficiency

3. Wide-spread usage of FVU ICT training and support services



Developed tools and services are in large-scale use, cost-efficiency

4. Integration of FVU to the European Higher Education Area, other international co-operation



Mutual exchange of university teaching, broad-scale co-operation with selected partners

5. Organization, working methods, financing and management model support the needs of networked operation



A firm foundation for all operations



Ministry of Education 2001 - 2005:

~9 million EUR per annum

half for the universities' projects

half for the university networks

European Social Fund 2001 - 2004:

1.5 million EUR for the FVU portal



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Case Examples of FVU operations

Case: Strategic Development and ICT Strategy Service

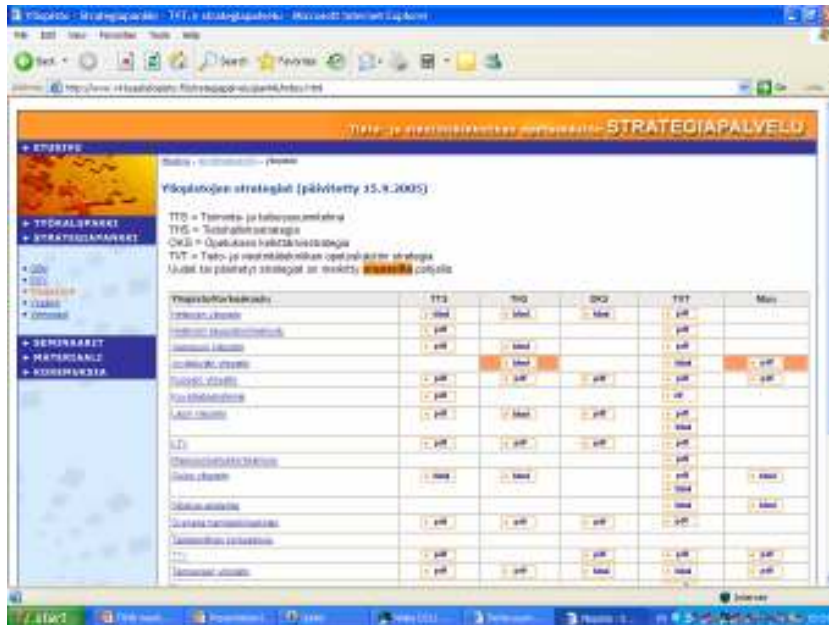
➤ The development of Finnish Virtual University started as strategic level initiative

➤ In order to support the universities to define an ICT strategy, a strategy support service was created by the FVU

➤ Strategy service has tools how to built up a balance score card based strategy

➤ Strategy service has a data base of different ICT strategies of Finnish universities

➤ Strategy service is supported by strategy consulting offered by the senior experts of FVU



Experiences:

- all universities have made ICT strategies
- the quality of university strategy work has increased
- the openness of universities goals has increased

Case: Learning Center "Aleksandria" at Helsinki University



- The Finnish Virtual University activities of Helsinki University are organized as Learning Centre "Aleksandria"
- In addition of the virtual university activities the unit has components of university library, university language centre and IT support units.
 - The Language Centre is responsible for the Self-Access Centre for language study
 - the Library offers a major part of Aleksandria's library services
 - Information Technology Department takes care of IT support, user account administration, and software distribution and sales.
- At the Learning Centre there are 350 computers available for the students' use free of charge 24 hours per day.
- The local virtual university unit offers the teaching staff of the University of Helsinki support services in the use of ICT in teaching.

Case: ICT training program "TieVie"



➤ Finnish Virtual University ICT training program "TieVie" is networked expert organization comprised of experts from 13 universities

➤ TieVie has trained almost 600 university teachers to have the basic level educational ICT skills and over 300 teachers and specialists have been trained to expert level.

➤ Altogether the number of trained people represents about 11 % of total number of Finnish university teachers.

Case: Service Unit



- The Service Unit of the Finnish Virtual University offers and maintains the national virtual university services like portal services and flexible study right services.
- The unit negotiates national level agreements between the consortium members and with partners.
- The personnel participate in national development projects and the results of the projects are distributed via service unit channels.
- The service Unit is also one contact point for all domestic and international contacts.
- The service unit has a staff of 7 persons.



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Experiences

Success stories...

- **FVU consortium agreement:**
 - First ever collective agreement among the Finnish Universities

- **Agreement of Flexible Studies in different universities**
 - All universities participating, started September 2004
 - extensive support service launched in 2004

- **Strategic level approach for the development of virtual university activities**
 - All areas developed simultaneously and systematically

... Success stories

➤ Truly networked research and development established

- 30 active networks' of universities operating regional, service focused and thematic networks

➤ Local successes

- eLearning support units formed in each Finnish university
- the amount of e-Learning rising steadily

➤ eLearning methods thoroughly accepted

- permanent organizations formed
- new technology and services developed

Challenges...

➤ **Management model**

- complicated
- responsibilities of different organizations shall be defined in more detail

➤ **Financing model**

- Today sole dependency of MinEDU funding
- 50 % directly to universities, 50 % to university networks

➤ **21 different opinions and strategies of parent universities**

- Challenge to manage but also a strength: different views and plenty of ideas collected in each project

... Challenges

➤ Consolidation of the legal and economic position of the FVU

- Legal entity will be formed in 2006

➤ Technical infrastructure

- Today totally different IT systems
- Common infrastructure will be built on key areas

➤ Joint quality procedures and criteria

- Joint quality criteria will be defined by 2005
- Extensive quality program for e-learning in 2004-2006



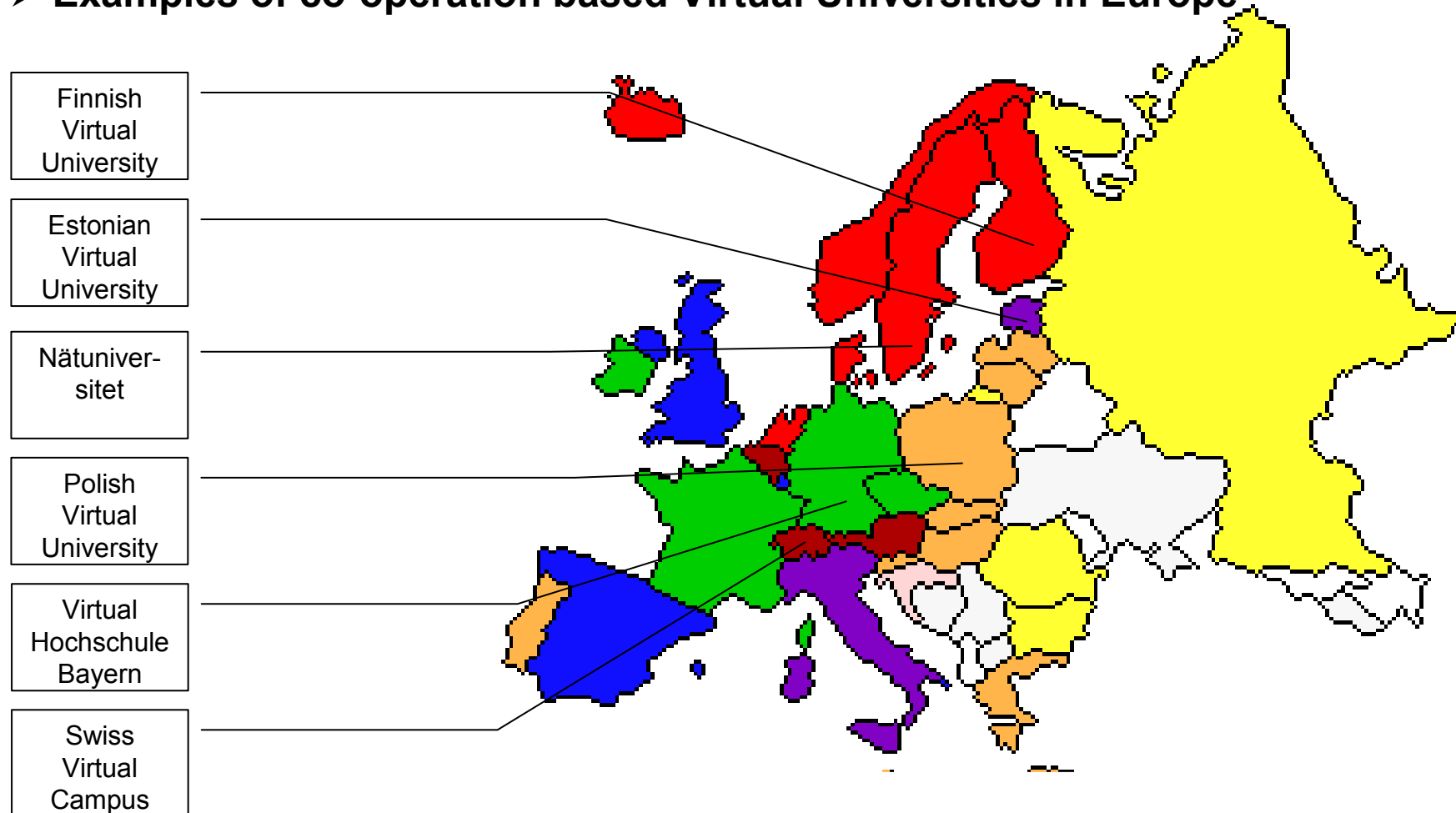
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Virtual University Co- operation in the European Higher Education Area

European Virtual Universities

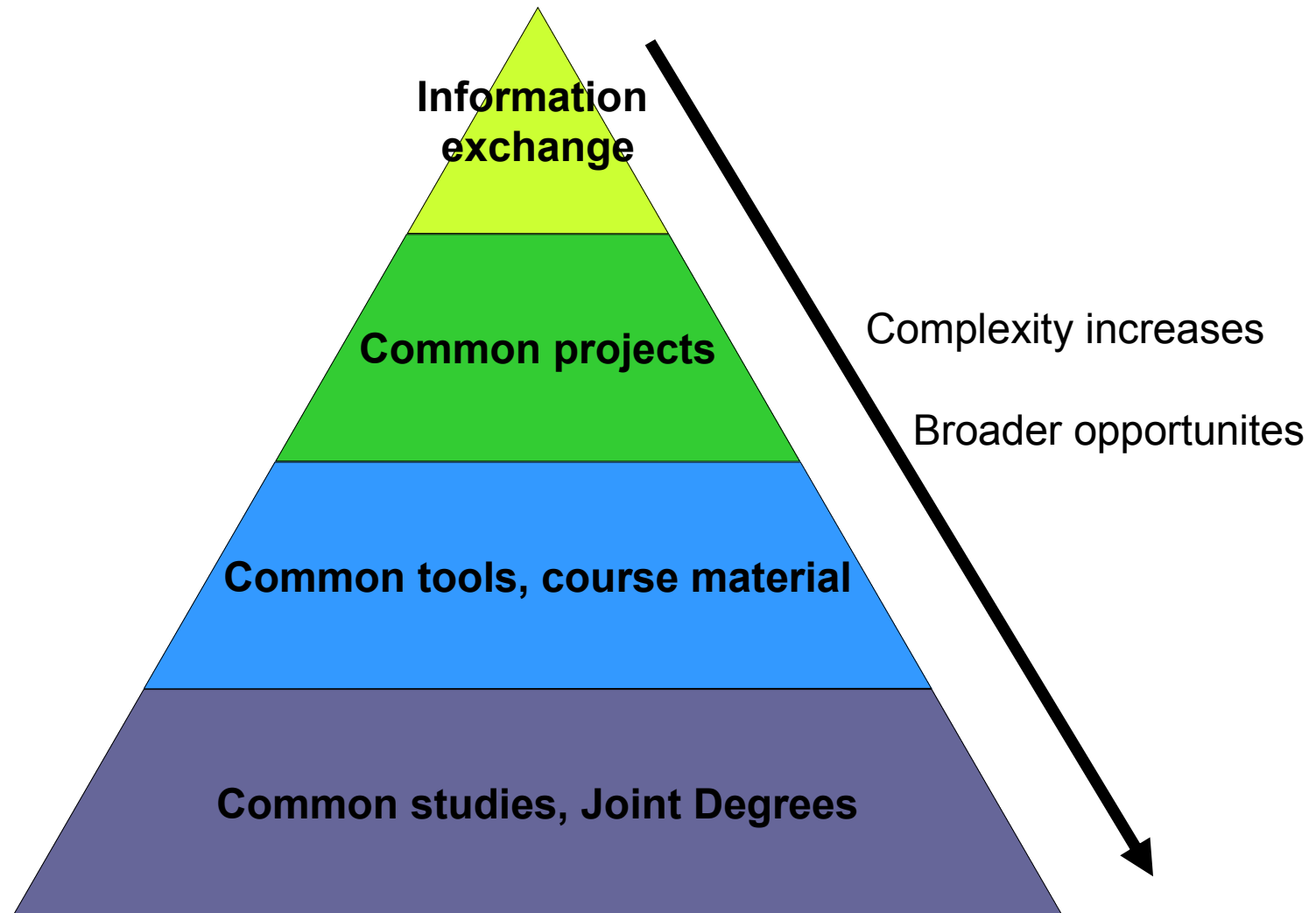
➤ Examples of co-operation based Virtual Universities in Europe



On-going international projects

- EU research projects
 - Normally 1-2 on-going EU projects with FVU direct involvement
 - In 2005 participation in EleneTT and TREE projects
- Co-operation projects with selected partners
 - eLearning and virtual university quality program VHB
 - Regional co-operation in accordance with the Northern eDimension Action Plan, NeDAP
- Information exchange, change on best practises
 - e.g. co-operation with the Estonian Virtual University

Co-operation Possibilities



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