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**Abstract**

French higher education institutions have recently started the considerable process of mergence and cooperation into a new institutional model. Motivated by a need for visibility and supported by a recent bill (2013), the concentrated process is different from what occurs elsewhere because it is strongly linked to history and to the initial split of existing universities. This process is not new; alliances and associations of universities started a few decades ago. But with the emergence of the new bill, new incentives and within the socio-economic context, its implementation has accelerated change and nine mergers are being realised as well as 19 new 'communities' federating higher education institutions. Mergers provide strong advantages for visibility, mutualising, rationalisation, knowledge and competencies transfer. Nevertheless, some difficulties also occur with harmonisation constraints, human resources management, implementation costs and locations. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)