



24 new European Universities reinforce the European Education Area

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European Universities are transnational alliances of higher education institutions from across the EU that come together for the benefit of students, teachers and society. Today, the European Commission has unveiled the additional 24 European Universities that will join the first 17 alliances of higher education institutions selected already in 2019. With financial support from the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programmes, they enhance the quality, inclusion, digitalisation and attractiveness of European higher education.

Margaritis **Schinas**, Vice-President for Promoting the European Way of Life, said: *"The Commission is today strongly responding to the call of students for more freedom to study across Europe, from teachers and researchers to better pool knowledge, and from higher education institutions to pool resources. With 41 European Universities, involving 280 institutions and backed up by € 287 million from the EU budget, the European Education Area becomes a tangible reality for many."*

Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: *"I am very pleased to see that a diverse range of higher education institutions from all Member States and beyond are now involved in the 41 European Universities. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that deeper cooperation across borders, disciplines and cultures is the only way to recover from the crisis and to build resilience. These European Universities are a key building block for the European Education Area."*

Selected from 62 applications, the 24 newly selected European Universities involve 165 higher education institutions from 26 Member States and other countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme (see Annex). They will deepen cooperation between their institutions, their students and staff and pool online and physical resources, courses, expertise, data and infrastructure. Working closer together will leverage their ability to tackle the challenges they are faced with during the recovery, and beyond. It will help them to foster inclusive green and digital transitions for the benefit of their students and all Europeans.

European Universities show first results

The Commission recently conducted a survey of the already existing 17 European Universities selected last year. The results show that 96% of the institutions think they would have been better prepared to face the coronavirus pandemic if their European University had already been fully operational (they only started 6 to 9 months ago). More than 60% of them consider that being part of a European University has already been helpful in addressing the current difficulties linked to the crisis. Good examples include the creation of virtual inter-university campuses, offering joint blended courses and common teaching units integrated in the curricula of all the member universities. European Universities also aim to further support lifelong learning by providing learners of all ages with the opportunity to obtain micro-credentials, awarded after the completion of short courses or modules.

European Universities include different types of higher education institutions, from universities of applied sciences, technical universities and film and media art schools to comprehensive and research-intensive universities. They will involve around 280 higher education institutions from all Member States and beyond, located not only in capital cities but also in more remote European regions. Each alliance is composed on average of seven higher education institutions. While some alliances are comprehensive and cover all disciplines, others are for example focusing on sustainable development, health and well-being, digitalisation and artificial intelligence, art, engineering or space.

In total, a budget of up to €287 million is available for these 41 European Universities. Each alliance receives up to €5 million from the Erasmus+ programme and up to €2 million from the Horizon 2020 programme for three years to start implementing their plans and pave the way for other higher education institutions across the EU to follow. Funding from both programmes is an important step in strengthening the interactions between the European Education Area and the European Research Area. The progress of each alliance is closely monitored.

Under the next long-term EU budget for 2021-2027, the Commission proposed to roll out European Universities under the Erasmus programme, in synergy with Horizon Europe and other EU instruments.

Background

The European Commission proposed the European Universities initiative to European Union leaders ahead of the Gothenburg Social Summit in November 2017, as part of an overall vision for the creation of a European Education Area by 2025. The initiative was endorsed by the European Council in December 2017 which called for the emergence of at least 20 European Universities by 2024. The concept of European Universities was developed under the guidance of the European Commission, in close cooperation with Member States, higher education institutions and student organisations.

For more information

[Factsheet](#)

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