

## European University Networks: a new European initiative

Background paper for discussion at the EUA Secretaries General Meeting on 4 April 2018, Zurich, Switzerland

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### Context

In recent months discussions at European level have been going on about the creation of 'European Universities' as explained during the EUA Council meeting in January this year (2018-C1, item 8). As outlined by the French President Emmanuel Macron in his speech on the future of Europe at Sorbonne University back in September last year and subsequently restated by the European Commission, the idea is to create such European Universities through the establishment of networks of universities from several European countries that work together in teaching, research and innovation. The target is to create 20 of such networks with three to five universities each by 2024.

EUA is actively involved in the debate and was invited by the European Commission to take part in a stakeholder group with other associations and university representatives to clarify the details and feed into the development of a new funding mechanism for such European University Networks at EU-level. The European Commission envisages to publish a call for proposals for pilots of such networks still this year.

### EUA's view

EUA has identified three key conditions for the initiative to be successful:

- In each case a common vision based on the envisaged academic project and its European added value, in terms of education, research and innovation;
- Sufficient funding, including operational funding - thus most probably involving a new EU funding scheme, but one which would not divert resources from existing, successful actions - centrally managed, open to consortia, and enabling funding dedicated to: educational endeavours, high level research and Innovation and regional convergence;
- It would also be crucial to the broad success of such networks to remove administrative and legal obstacles at national/sub-national levels, to support the establishment of the partnership, e.g. in terms of the accreditation of joint programmes, recognition, mobility, etc.

### Questions for discussion and further input

To feed the different perspectives of our members into the process and get a better understanding of existing collaborations and specific barriers, EUA proposes to discuss the following three questions during the break-out session at the next Secretaries General meeting on 4 April 2018 in Zurich:

- **From the perspective of your system, what would be the added value of such European University Networks and a related new EU-level funding scheme?**
- **What are the obstacles in your system to cross-border cooperation between universities (e.g. joint programmes and joint degrees; joint research)?**
- **Which universities in your systems have a strategic collaboration with universities in other countries that goes beyond individual projects? What is the focus of the collaboration?**

We encourage you to reflect on these issues in advance and contribute actively to the debate, so that we get as many views as possible from across Europe.