

First 17 “European Universities” selected: a major step towards building a European Education Area

The European Commission has today announced the higher education institutions from all over Europe that will be part of the first “European Universities” alliances. They will enhance the quality and attractiveness of European higher education and boost cooperation between institutions, their students and staff.

Out of 54 applications received, 17 European Universities involving 114 higher education institutions from 24 Member States were selected (see [Annex](#)), based on an evaluation carried out by 26 independent external experts, including rectors, professors and researchers, appointed by the Commission. European Universities are transnational alliances of higher education institutions from across the EU that share a long-term strategy and promote European values and identity. The initiative is designed to significantly strengthen mobility of students and staff, and foster the quality, inclusiveness and competitiveness of European higher education.

Tibor **Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *“I am pleased to see the ambition of the first 17 European Universities, which will act as role models for others across the EU. They will enable the next generations of students to experience Europe by studying in different countries. I am convinced that this initiative, a key building block of the European Education Area, will be a real game changer for higher education in Europe, boosting excellence and inclusion.”*

The selection of European Universities includes a broad range of higher education institutions from across the EU, from universities of applied sciences, technical universities and universities of fine arts to comprehensive and research-intensive universities.

European Universities will become inter-university campuses around which students, doctoral candidates, staff and researchers can move seamlessly. They will pool their expertise, platforms and resources to deliver joint curricula or modules covering various disciplines. These curricula will be very flexible and will allow students to personalise their education, choosing what, where and when to study and get a European degree. European Universities will also contribute to the sustainable economic development of the regions where they are located, as their students will work closely with companies, municipal authorities, academics and researchers to find solutions to the challenges their regions are facing.

In total, a budget of up to €85 million is available for the first 17 “European Universities”. Each alliance will receive up to €5 million in the coming three years to start implementing their plans and pave the way for

other higher education institutions across the EU to follow. Their progress will be closely monitored.

This first call – together with a second one to be launched this autumn – will test different models to implement the new concept of European Universities and its potential to boost higher education. For the next long-term EU budget running from 2021-2027, the Commission proposed to fully roll out European Universities under Erasmus+, with a significantly increased budget. While some alliances are comprehensive and cover all disciplines, others are for example focusing on urban coastal sustainability, social sciences or global health. Each alliance is composed on an average of seven higher education institutions from all parts of Europe, leading to new partnerships. This reflects the distribution of applications received from the various countries.

Background

The European Commission proposed this new initiative to European Union leaders ahead of the Gothenburg Social Summit in November 2017. The initiative was endorsed by the European Council in December 2017 which called for the emergence of at least 20 European Universities by 2024 and is part of the push towards establishing a European Education Area by 2025.

Developed together with Member States, higher education institutions and student organisations, the concept of the European Universities attracted applications from 54 alliances involving more than 300 higher education institutions from 28 Member States and other Erasmus+ Programme Countries. They replied to an Erasmus+ call on “European Universities” launched in October 2018.

The €60 million originally set aside for this new Erasmus+ initiative has been increased to €85 million allowing for the funding of 17 alliances rather than the 12 initially foreseen.

For more information

[Factsheet](#)

[European Universities Initiative](#)

[Information on the Call for Proposals](#)