



TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2025)0196

A new vision for the European Universities alliances

European Parliament resolution of 11 September 2025 on a new vision for the European Universities alliances (2025/2036(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Articles 13 and 14 thereof on the freedom of the arts and sciences and the right to education,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013¹,
- having regard to the study of 11 September 2023 conducted for its Committee on Culture and Education entitled 'EU funding programmes 2021-2027 in culture, media, education, youth and sports: first lessons, challenges and future perspectives - Erasmus+',
- having regard to the study of 20 July 2023 conducted for its Committee on Culture and Education entitled 'Early implementation of four 2021-2027 EU programmes: Erasmus+, Creative Europe, European Solidarity Corps and Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (Strand 3)',
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 17 May 2021 on the European Universities initiative – Bridging higher education, research, innovation and society: Paving the way for a new dimension in European higher education,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 14 and 15 December 2017,

¹ OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/817/oj>.

- having regard to the Council conclusions of 7 June 2018 on moving towards a vision of a European Education Area,
- having regard to the Council Resolution of 18 November 2019 on further developing the European Education Area to support future-oriented education and training systems¹,
- having regard to the Council Resolution of 29 November 2021 on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030²,
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 13 May 2024 entitled “Europe on the Move” – learning mobility opportunities for everyone’³,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 28 February 2025 for a Council Recommendation on the European Research Area Policy Agenda 2025-2027 (COM(2025)0062),
- having regard to Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/2122 of 26 November 2021 on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe⁴,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 18 January 2022 on a European strategy for universities (COM(2022)0016),
- having regard to the Commission report of 15 April 2024 on good practices from European University Alliances Projects (Pilot II),
- having regard to the Commission report on the outcomes and transformational potential of the European Universities initiative⁵,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 27 March 2024 entitled ‘A blueprint for a European degree’ (COM(2024)0144),
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 27 March 2024 (SWD(2024)0074), accompanying Commission communication COM(2024)0144, the Commission proposal of 27 March 2024 for a Council recommendation on a European Quality Assurance and Recognition System in Higher Education (COM(2024)0147) and the Commission proposal of 27 March 2024

¹ OJ C 389, 18.11.2019, p. 1.

² OJ C 504, 14.12.2021, p. 9.

³ OJ C, C/2024/3364, 14.6.2024, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/3364/oj>.

⁴ OJ L 431, 2.12.2021, p. 1, ELI:
<http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2021/2122/oj>.

⁵ European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture et al., Report on the outcomes and transformational potential of the European Universities initiative, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025.
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/32313>.

for a Council recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education (COM(2024)0145),

- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 19 December 2024 entitled 'Report on the final outcomes of the Erasmus+ policy experimentation projects: European degree (label) and institutionalised EU cooperation instruments' (SWD(2024)0291),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2025 entitled 'The Union of Skills' (COM(2025)0090),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2025 on a STEM Education Strategic Plan: skills for competitiveness and innovation (COM(2025)0089),
- having regard to the mid-term review of the European Education Area of 2023,
- having regard to the Rome Ministerial Communiqué adopted on 19 November 2020 at the Ministerial conference of the European Higher Education Area,
- having regard to the Principles, Guidelines and Indicators of the Social Dimension of Higher Education of 9 January 2024, published by the Bologna Follow-up Group, Working Group on Social Dimension 2021-2024,
- having regard to the independent high-level report on the future of the single market by Enrico Letta, entitled 'Much more than a market - Speed, Security, Solidarity: Empowering the Single Market to deliver a sustainable future and prosperity for all EU Citizens', published in April 2024,
- having regard to the report by Mario Draghi on the Future of European Competitiveness, published in September 2024,
- having regard to the report on research and innovation by a group of independent experts chaired by Manuel Heitor, entitled 'Align, act, accelerate - Research, technology and innovation to boost European competitiveness', published in October 2024,
- having regard to its resolution of 23 June 2022 on the implementation of inclusion measures within Erasmus+ 2014-2020¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 September 2020 on effective measures to 'green' Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps²,

¹ OJ C 32, 27.1.2023, p. 58.

² OJ C 385, 22.9.2021, p. 2.

- having regard to its resolution of 19 May 2022 on establishing the European Education Area by 2025 – micro-credentials, individual learning accounts and learning for a sustainable environment¹,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A10-0135/2025),
- A. whereas quality education and training as well as academic cooperation are prerequisites for achieving the European Union’s strategic autonomy, promoting EU’s values², fighting skills shortages by attracting and retaining talent, and fostering competitiveness with leading global universities based on the development of human capital, resilience and wellbeing;
 - B. whereas the importance of academia and universities for a competitive, resilient and autonomous European Union is underlined in Mario Draghi’s report on the future of European competitiveness, in Enrico Letta’s report on the future of the single market and in Manuel Heitor’s report on the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe;
 - C. whereas the fragmentation of the EU’s higher education and research undermines the capacity of the EU to safeguard its sovereignty, promote its values and assert global influence; whereas greater integration could reinforce the EU’s strategic position;
 - D. whereas the Competitiveness Compass emphasises the importance of high-quality education, training and lifelong learning to fill in the skills and labour gaps;
 - E. whereas Erasmus+ is an EU flagship programme supporting education, training, youth and sport in Europe and internationally, while fostering mobility and academic cooperation; whereas stronger interaction between Erasmus+ and other existing EU programmes such as Horizon Europe would benefit those objectives while fostering a more comprehensive approach to higher education;
 - F. whereas the European Universities alliances serve a multidimensional purpose, starting with the creation of joint curricula, progressing towards the creation of inter-university campuses with a strong European dimension that fosters the mobility of students, lifelong learners and researchers, as well as academic and non-academic staff, and catalysing other even more transformative changes in the higher education landscapes in

¹ OJ C 479, 16.12.2022, p. 65.

² As enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty of European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Member States and participating countries for a truly competitive European Education Area;

- G. whereas academic freedom is a central principle of universities' missions and activities as enshrined in Article 13 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the UNESCO Recommendation of 11 November 1997 concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel; whereas such freedom is crucial to the well-being of democratic societies and thus needs to be further protected and promoted;
- H. whereas the European Universities alliances, by providing seamless mobility for students, researchers and academic and non-academic staff within the EU and beyond, play a role in enhancing research, innovation and education in the single market, and so are central to the realisation of the 'fifth freedom' as described in the Letta report;
- I. whereas higher education institutions in Europe face challenges with transnational collaboration, especially with regard to funding, significant divergences in national and regional legislation, legal status and governance structures, and contractual barriers to knowledge sharing;
- J. whereas the European Universities initiative has been successful, exceeding expectations in terms of participation and engagement; whereas the aim of creating 20 alliances set out in the 2017 Council conclusions has been surpassed, as 65 alliances have now been created, encompassing more than 570 universities with more than 2 200 external partners, without any additional budget allocations and without any guarantee of continuity for funded projects;
- K. whereas these current alliances were selected through five competitive open calls focusing on quality, excellence, academic merit, inclusivity and equitable geographical coverage;
- L. whereas the European Universities initiative is a key instrument for building an integrated, competitive and inclusive European Education Area, capable of responding to global challenges as well as strengthening European identity, culture and values;
- M. whereas the alliances have proven their transformative potential to modernise the Member States' higher education systems, playing a leading role in educating a new generation of mobile European students, and have contributed to cutting-edge research; whereas universities from several alliances are key advocates and drivers of legislative changes in their own countries;
- N. whereas 23 Member States are currently co-funding alliances with their national budgets;

State of play, challenges and obstacles

1. Acknowledges the warm welcome and commitment given to the European Universities initiative by higher education institutions and the initiative's role in facilitating efforts to remove obstacles to regional, cross-border and international cooperation in higher education, such as fragmented funding, disparities in accreditation systems and legal barriers;
2. Highlights the fact that mobility projects, the creation of common curricula and cooperation between universities in Europe are instrumental in addressing needs in strategic areas and reinforcing the sense of belonging to Europe and adherence to the EU's values, while preserving the diversity and richness of the European Union;
3. Notes that the alliances are a powerful tool for the implementation and advancement of the Bologna Process; highlights the leverage effect alliances have on transformation processes in the higher education landscape through pioneering and boosting innovative approaches as well as new methods for cooperation, the creation of opportunities and accessibility for students;
4. Underlines the diversity of the alliances in terms of governance, topics and subjects covered, and the size and location of participating universities; notes the successful participation of many universities from medium-sized cities, rural areas and outermost regions, making it an accessible and inclusive initiative; highlights the fact that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not appropriate for the alliances; notes that the Europe-wide geographical representation of universities within the alliances is key to tackling brain drain and attracting international talent, while making an invaluable contribution to European unity and integration;
5. Welcomes the integration of students in the alliances' governance structures, enabling young people to have a substantial and real impact on their development, as youth participation in democratic decision-making processes helps to make alliances more forward-looking and addresses practical challenges faced by students; stresses the importance of aligning student engagement with student organisations to ensure transparency, fairness and inclusivity in stakeholder involvement;
6. Highlights the fact that alliances have the potential and expertise to help universities address socio-economic challenges; underlines the importance of incorporating societal impact as a cross-cutting element in the activities of the alliances; calls for clear strategies to ensure and monitor accessibility and the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities¹ in all alliances' activities, especially through the dismantling of barriers to mobility and the prevention of all forms of

¹ As defined in Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021.

discrimination, in line with the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education;

7. Welcomes pilot projects aimed at creating a European degree and/or a legal status; underlines, however, that alliances should not serve as the sole instrument for innovation in higher education; notes that alliances should have the freedom to specialise and be flexible in their undertakings;
8. Welcomes the outcomes of the six Erasmus+ policy experimentation projects on the European degree and the European degree label conducted by 21 alliances¹; acknowledges the clear added value of a common framework for European degrees, based on European criteria, as a step towards the recognition of degrees and diplomas at EU level; recognises that such EU-level recognition would enhance mobility and the quality of education, reinforcing the framework for cooperation and encouraging wider engagement in transnational academic programmes as well as strengthening the global visibility and competitiveness of European higher education;
9. Notes that the European degree label should be accessible to all other joint university programmes and be complementary to national qualification frameworks, which should be adapted when necessary without creating an additional administrative burden;
10. Firmly believes in the potential of the alliances to strengthen the European Higher Education Area, paving the way for a single area of accreditation at EU level; believes that this is a necessary step for our European autonomy, as numerous European higher education institutions, such as those issuing MBA degrees, still rely on American accreditation agencies;
11. Welcomes the significant increase in the number of mobility projects involving students, lifelong learners and researchers, as well as academic and non-academic staff in universities participating in alliances compared to other Erasmus+ mobility projects;
12. Notes, however, that the initial objective of achieving seamless mobility for 50 % of students in participating alliances has not yet been reached and will remain challenging without appropriate funding mechanisms; is worried, in this regard, about the potential competition between the alliances' mobility schemes and universities' general Erasmus+ mobility, which share the same limited funding provisions, as mobility targets for alliances are higher than those for general Erasmus+ mobility; calls on the Commission, therefore, to assess those requirements;

¹ Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2024)0291.

13. Is deeply concerned about current threats to academic freedom in several parts of the world, including in some Member States and non-EU countries participating in Erasmus+;
14. Stresses the need for alliances to uphold EU values, democratic resilience and institutional autonomy, and to foster active citizenship; highlights their role as multilateral and multicultural learning spaces;
15. Welcomes values-based initiatives such as the cooperation in solidarity with Ukraine, the global outreach of alliances and the alliances' role in the accession preparations of candidate countries from the Eastern neighbourhood and the Western Balkans;
16. Welcomes the Union of Skills initiative, especially the upcoming proposal for a future investment pathway and a clear legal status for alliances, as it will make it easier for universities to initiate and lead European projects, pool resources, enhance their autonomy, reduce administrative burdens, attract funding and broaden their governance structure, especially in the case of universities from non-EU countries, as well as facilitating the institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation;
17. Underlines the key role that universities, including alliances, play in protecting and promoting evidence-based science, building trust in democratic discourse, fostering cooperation based on EU values and making themselves and the European higher education sector more attractive to non-EU students, academic staff and researchers;
18. Welcomes the creation of FOREU4ALL, a community of practice for European Universities alliances; underlines its key role in disseminating innovations from the alliances to the broader academic community, as universities and higher education institutions that are not part of alliances should not be left behind; recalls that policies and initiatives should benefit the entire higher education system;
19. Acknowledges the important role of other networks within the higher education sector that bring together a broader spectrum of European universities, irrespective of their participation in an alliance; underlines the complementary nature of these networks with the alliances and their potential to prepare the ground for legislative change at national level;
20. Underlines that the mission of universities includes all four aspects of the knowledge square: education, research, innovation and service to society; stresses that alliances must be closely aligned with the labour market to address Europe's skills shortages and competitiveness challenges;

21. Is notably worried about the lack of research and innovation pillars within the alliances given the current framework, as it undermines the full potential for cooperation between universities within alliances;

Recommendations

22. Encourages the alliances to deepen the link between education and research; highlights the significant ability of the alliances to build cross-border networks of excellence for researchers and to share and disseminate knowledge at EU level and beyond, especially in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects, including in strategic fields for the EU;
23. Underlines that the strategic vision for university alliances has to be reflected in the next multiannual financial framework to maximise their potential and impact; asks the Commission to evaluate each alliance in order to provide support and tailor-made solutions regarding their future development;
24. Encourages the Commission, the Member States and the alliances to shift from a 'project-based logic' to long-term, transformative cooperation by introducing a funding approach that enables this transition; underlines the importance for alliances to be able to scale up; underlines the need to set qualitative rather than quantitative goals, emphasising the transformative impact for the European Education Area;
25. Stresses the need for coordinated, sustainable and predictable funding for current alliances; asks the Commission to consider reserving future calls for the continuation of successful alliances, enabling them to deepen integration and build on their accomplishments; asks the Commission to keep the application and reporting processes as simple as possible; encourages a fast-track renewal process for successful alliances to secure continued funding without an excessive administrative burden;
26. Recognises the relevance of the European Universities initiative continuing to be a part of the Erasmus+ programme, taking into account the current framework; at the same time, invites the Commission to study the viability of creating a tailor-made solution for financing the European Universities alliances in the post-2027 multiannual financial framework, with the possibility of creating a separate programme with a view to enabling alliances to plan strategically, engage in long-term initiatives and establish enduring cooperation;
27. Calls on Member States to commit to co-financing alliances through national budgets and asks the Commission to present a comprehensive investment strategy for the alliances that enables them to fulfil their quadruple mission; notes that this strategy should

incorporate synergies with EU programmes such as Horizon Europe, the European Competitiveness Fund, the European Social Fund Plus and the European Regional Development Fund, in order to optimise resources, avoid duplication, strengthen interaction and collaboration and retain their competitive nature;

28. Highlights the fact that, in order to achieve real and sustainable success encompassing quality, excellence and inclusion, support for alliances cannot come solely from the EU budget but should also come from coordinated contributions from national, regional, local and private sources, provided that they can guarantee the autonomy of higher education institutions and safeguard academic freedom;
29. Emphasises that the closer integration of alliances with the private sector can be mutually beneficial; encourages partnerships and structured cooperation between universities and businesses in order to create integrated systems that foster innovation and high-level technical and professional training, and facilitate students' transition to the job market as well as reskilling and upskilling for people outside of higher education;
30. Stresses the need to strengthen the internationalisation of alliances, in line with, among others, the Global Gateway strategy and talent partnerships; notes that alliances are at the right level for establishing partnerships with non-EU countries, in particular candidate countries, and can strengthen the international dimension of Erasmus+, through, for example, Erasmus Mundus; asks the Commission and the alliances to ensure that all partners involved comply with EU values and the principle of academic freedom, and adhere to the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education;
31. Notes that alliances are testing innovative ways of teaching and acquiring knowledge, such as European learning pathways, micro-credentials, blended learning mobility and the automatic recognition of qualifications; stresses the need to invest in secure digital infrastructure and strengthen existing initiatives such as the European student card;
32. Emphasises the need to consolidate the interoperability of computer systems and align European and national policies to create genuine virtual European inter-campus; encourages more cross-alliance collaboration to enable secure, interoperable student identification, course registration, and academic record exchange as well as investment in integrating new educational technologies;
33. Stresses the need to expand the use of micro-credentials, building on best practice, to integrate the alliances in a wider learning environment, bridging their work with other non-formal learning institutions; notes that training and upskilling recognised through

micro-credentials can facilitate the flexible revision, expansion and modernisation of university degrees;

34. Asks the Commission to consider adding criteria to possible future calls, in line with topics linked to European strategic autonomy and competitiveness, such as resilience, energy, climate change, the digital transition and digital skills, and defence, while keeping in mind the core objectives of adherence to EU values, education excellence and innovation;
35. Stresses the need for alliances to have the appropriate structures and capacities to support transfer from academia to business, to contribute to the realisation of the EU's ambitions of strategic autonomy; calls on the Commission to dismantle barriers that impede the effective sharing and pooling of joint resources and knowledge, through actions such as the facilitation of joint recruitment of academic staff and researchers, as well as the development and use of shared facilities;
36. Underlines the need for effective and accessible awareness raising and information campaigns about the European Universities alliances to foster greater engagement, especially at local levels and among students, as recognition of the initiative is currently very low;
37. Calls on the Hungarian Government to comply with the rule of law and EU values and to put in place the necessary reforms so that Hungarian students, teachers and researchers of public trust funded universities may benefit from the Erasmus+ programme, including alliances under the European Universities initiative;
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38. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.