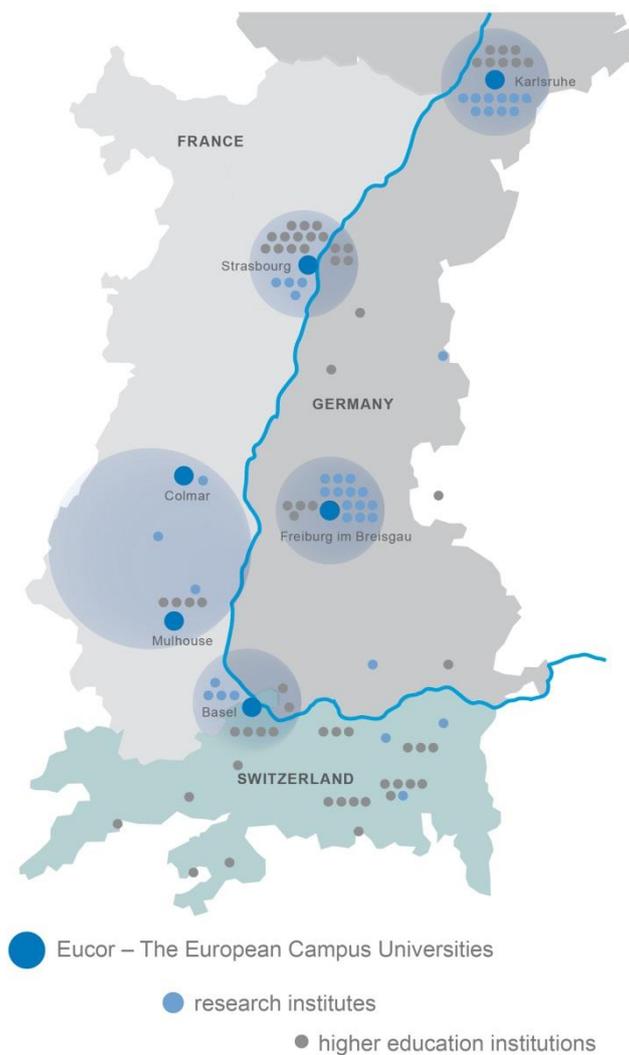


Concept paper

Universités Européennes



Concept paper *Universités Européennes*

In his address on European policy at the Sorbonne on September 26, 2017, French President Macron suggested establishing at least 20 *Universités Européennes* by the year 2024.

In order to realise this Euro-political vision, substantial amounts of funding from the European Union and its member states are required to build and promote the *Universités Européennes / European Universities* in a sustainable manner.

The present concept proposes institutional support for selected territorial / regional and thematic, institutionalised university alliances from 4-6 existing universities and / or universities from at least three member countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as *Universités Européennes / European Universities*.

A prerequisite for funding as a *Université Européenne / European University* is proof of excellent research and teaching by the partners involved, a noticeably positive development of partners' cooperation in the past, effective cross-border governance structures and coherent strategy development as well as the expected high social impact of the partners' university alliances.

The goals for creating *Universités Européennes / European Universities* include:

- promoting European integration in the areas of science, culture and society,
- securing a competitive leadership position in the areas of European research and education on a global scale,
- funding and expanding scientific excellences in the areas of European research and education,
- raising the ability to innovate while increasing the internationalisation of our institutes of higher learning across Europe,
- strengthening the autonomy of European institutes of higher learning,
- promoting innovation, competitiveness and economic growth in the European regions, in particular the border regions.

In order to achieve the desired sustainable effect of the suggested funding measures, it appears it will require around 10-20 million euros per year per university alliance in funding, which corresponds approximately to the amount of funding of the university consortia in the German Excellence Strategy.

A great example of a successful initiative to create a territorial *Université Européenne / European University* is the consortium *Eucor – The European Campus*, which includes the Universities of Basel, Freiburg, Haute-Alsace, Strasbourg and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology.

Founded in 1989 as the European confederation of Upper Rhine universities, *Eucor – The European Campus* has consistently increased its collaboration over the years. In 2015 the European Consortium for Territorial Cooperation (EVTZ) was founded, which has been named a separate legal entity. The consortium is currently taking steps to develop a coherent structural plan. Parts of the joint research strategy are already being applied. The consortium's financing is currently based largely on volatile programme resources, in addition to contributions from the partner universities. At the moment it appears that its intensive collaboration, however, may not be sustainable without further secured financing.

1. The opportunities institutionalised European university alliances pose: 'Universités Européennes' / 'European Universities'

Sponsors and supporters of the European idea

Universités Européennes are an effective tool for strengthening citizens' identification with the European project, for promoting economic and political integration as well as strengthening European societies. They encourage critical and open dialogue amongst researching and teaching Europeans and can thus become a place to renew the commitment to the European project. In the early years of European integration, establishing European institutes of higher learning (Collège d'Europe, 1949; European University Institute, 1955) represented the transition of Europe toward a place of peace and prosperity.

Universités Européennes renew the classical concept of education according to European tradition and transfer it into the 21st century academic environment by promoting intercultural exchange and intensive dialogue across borders. They educate their students to become European denizens who learn how to self-reflect and understanding other people's points of view by having intense experiences, exchanges and collaborations with other cultures.

Guarantors for a competitive leadership position in the areas of European research and education on a global scale

Within the differentiated academic environment of the future, strategically focussed consortia and networks amongst science, business and other players will take on an ever increasingly important role. The development in recent decades has shown the rise of financially strong, partially state-supported players in the global higher education system. Through targeted, strategic image development and appropriate financial engagement, universities in Asian countries in particular have become world leaders in higher education. Only a few universities in Continental Europe are currently equipped to be globally competitive with the best minds and ideas; European efforts for a horizontal (by scientific field) and vertical (according to the scope and quality of the research) differentiation of universities (German Excellence Initiative, French Initiative d'excellence, IDEX) have responded to this new challenge, but so far their lack of financial strength (and sustainability) have only had a symbolic effect. Only those players with the respective size and visibility will be able to help shape the future globalised system of higher education.

A closer network between institutes of higher learning and universities is required for science purposes as well. More than ever future questions regarding modern, globalised societies bring a high level of complexity and require a close network of specialised scientific skills.

This bundling of scientific competence seems to occur particularly in knowledge regions with a high density of higher education institutions (i.e. the decision by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to award a consortium in Berlin and Brandenburg the German Internet Institute). Considering the length of time construction typically takes, the length of its use and the considerable investment and operating costs, building (vast) research infrastructures requires a close national cooperation more than ever. The realisation of cross-border research infrastructures in particular considerably increases the attractiveness of

a region for leading scientists and junior scientists; it signifies a meaningful gain for the respective academic location. Joint investment in research infrastructures and related prioritisation requires resilient and sustainable governance structures that a *Université Européenne / European University* provides.

Furthermore, *Universités Européennes / European Universities* make it possible to gainfully bring together specific competencies and experiences from various European universities in the area of university instruction and explore new forms of research-based teaching. More than ever before, 21st century societal challenges require skills such as critical and reflective thinking, solution-orientated analytical skills and an awareness of ethical and intercultural issues. *Universités Européennes / European Universities* can become a central vehicle for the modernisation of the European educational arena through the joint development of innovative methods and formats of research-orientated teaching.

Engines of regional development and instruments for the development of border regions

By promoting territorial or regional *Universités Européennes / European Universities*, positive impulses for growth and employment in the European regions can be expected. Such *Universités Européennes / European Universities* are cross-border consortia from and for the region in which they operate. Geographical proximity contributes to more than just facilitating mobility. It also promotes European integration and strengthens the scientific and economic areas in border regions. Through intensive interaction of creative participants from universities and companies, these consortia take on the priorities of regional cluster policies and develop them further in the knowledge triangle of education, research and innovation. Through appropriate image building and efficient transfer structures, *Universités Européennes / European Universities*, relying on their unique innovation potential, can become the foundation for the regions' smart specialisation and support corresponding cross-border cluster policies.

In "concentrated" regions *Universités Européennes / European Universities* can act as an intermediary between various nationally structured political systems and serve as a gateway for investors. Attaining a critical mass of excellent researchers from various European universities in a region makes it more attractive for investors, thereby strengthening the regional integration and making an essential contribution to the (further) development of European scientific regions with partners from science, business, culture and civil society.

Models for innovation and internationalisation of members

Universités Européennes / European Universities generate significant value for the participating universities. The effective, sustainable use of synergies and augmentations in the joint consortium builds on the respective strengths of each institution while balancing out their weaknesses. These synergies between different scientific cultures, specific skill sets and potentials strengthen the excellent research achievements, enrich instruction and also provide more efficiency - for example in the joint use and operation of research infrastructures. In this way they demonstrate a high potential in innovation for both individual member universities as well as for the higher education system as a whole.

Universités Européennes / European Universities are an expression for the internationalisation of science. As a transnational university, regional university alliances, in particular, that enable low-threshold forms of

mobility, allow for the daily exchange of students, teachers and administrative staff across borders. European university alliances' international strength and attractiveness provide a better opportunity to recruit the best minds internationally, thereby strengthening their competitive edge globally. In this way, the *Université Européenne* can act as a facilitator and sponsor of institutionalised global partnerships and multilateral networks, thereby making a significant contribution to the internationalisation of European universities and enhancing excellence through the emergence of new global networks.

The *Université Européenne* draws its modelling skills from the commitment and stability of long-term institutional cooperation between its members, setting common strategic objectives for cooperation, which are anchored in the member universities.

Strengthening national institutions of higher education in Europe

In the form of institutionalised European university alliances, *Universités Européennes / European Universities* can build on long-standing scientific networks between European universities and colleges. A further centralisation of the higher education system or the creation of additional European institutions that would have to compete with colleges and universities in Europe does not seem sensible. As territorial or thematic university consortia, *Universités Européennes / European Universities* benefit from the strengths of the European higher education system and at the same time increase the global innovation and competitiveness of all members through targeted pooling of their skills in selected research fields. By promoting *Universités Européennes*, sites in the national periphery can also be networked to become globally competitive knowledge regions.

Universités Européennes / European Universities comprise of autonomous universities and are carried by them. They form the basis of an enabling structure that strengthens collaboration and simplifies cross-border cooperation. With a lean head office and a strong anchoring in the universities, they create value for the individual universities and increase their competitiveness and attractiveness by bundling their skills - regionally, nationally and internationally. While maintaining the autonomy of their members *Universités Européennes* will pave the way for the future of the European higher education. They are taking new steps to answer European-related questions about the challenges facing the 21st century higher education system.

2. Conditions for a successful 'Université Européenne'

Establishing *Universités Européennes / European Universities* is only possible when based on the long-term funding of key tasks. Voting and implementation processes require reliable resources in a consortium of autonomous European universities. Examples of existing university consortia show the limited scope of funding models via university funds or short-term programme financing (mostly from ERDF funds).

If *Universités Européennes* are to lead to permanent institutional cooperation, they must build on a viable core of joint research and teaching projects that require substantial funding. Collaboration financing with the intention of having an image-building effect and international scope cannot be carried financially by the participating universities' base budget. Previous funding instruments for the intensification of partnerships and networks through cooperation at the university level ("Strategic Partnerships", maximum funding of 125,000 euros) are not sufficient to build long-term structural cooperation.

Minimum requirements for a Université Européenne (sample calculation)

a) Organising the head office

A European university has an administrative office that acts as coordinator and director for the consortium's tasks. Additional professional administrative and consulting tasks can be provided by the respective departments of the member universities.

Managing director/director

Advisor for research and technology, study portal and e-learning, communication, finance

Clerical work

Material and mobility costs

circa 500,000 euros p.a.

b) Resources for the decentralised organisation at the universities

A European university is attached to its member universities. Coordinating, informing and further developing programmes and projects in the member universities are carried out by decentralised coordinators.

Decentralised coordinators (with 5 member universities)

Material and mobility costs

circa 400,000 euros p.a.

Mobility resources for students, instructors and administrative staff
(with 5 member universities)

circa 5,000,000 euros p.a.

circa 5,900,000 euros p.a.

c) Resources for research and teaching

European research hubs for research and research-orientated teaching in joint key areas

A European university is based on close collaboration in excellent research and teaching. The desired depth of networking and cooperation is only achieved by establishing internationally visible and competitive research and training facilities. A European University is therefore based on one to four structural European research hubs, which rely on a coherent strategy and significantly sharpen the profile of the member universities.

Led by a consortium of excellent scientists from member universities, the research hubs are designed to increase the attractiveness of European universities for international post-docs and doctoral students.

In addition, the research hubs should develop innovative methods and formats for integrating university teaching (especially at the advanced M.A. level) on the basis of excellent research and thus contribute to a sustainable strengthening of research-orientated teaching at the member universities as a teaching laboratory.

A funding period of at least five years with around 3 million euros annually is recommended.

circa 3,000,000 euros p.a.

With three research and teaching Hubs: ***circa 9,000,000 euros p.a.***

Integrated graduate schools

The training of excellent young scientists in the research hubs for research and research-orientated teaching takes place in innovative graduate schools based on the model of the European Training Networks (ETN) sponsored by Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. They are characterised by cross-border research and support as well as the combination of basic and application-orientated research. The funding period should be at least 5 years with a proposed funding amount of 1-2 million euros.

European graduate academy with a focus on physics/chemistry or the life sciences:

circa 2,000,000 euros p.a.

European graduate academy with a focus on the humanities, social or culture sciences:

circa 1,000,000 euros p.a.

With three research hubs / European graduate academies: ***circa 4,500,000 euros p.a.***

d) Resources for teaching

Bachelor's and master's degree programmes in research profiles attract the best minds in Europe as well as internationally and prepare young academics for research and business. These programmes should have innovative teaching formats - European universities are also the labs of tomorrow's teaching and must, for example, enable digitisation, innovative language teaching formats, professional integration and intercultural coaching. The funds should be calculated per member university.

circa 1,000,000 euros p.a.

With five member universities: *circa 5,000,000 euros p.a.*

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Funding requirement: *circa 19,500,000 euros p.a.*

e) Strategy package

A European university should be able to act with sustainability and stability. In line with the divergent framework conditions of universities in the European educational area, a strategy package should allow for special measures to deepen cooperation and implement strategic pilot measures.

A flat-rate policy of approximately 5% of the total funding is proposed.