

French Presidency of the Council of the EU

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European University Alliances and the future of universities – How to foster civic engagement?

A European strategy for universities

In its recent communication on a European strategy for universities (January 18th 2022), the European Commission highlights its will to support all higher education institutions in Europe, to provide them with the necessary tools to adapt to a changing environment, to thrive and contribute to the resilience and recovery of Europe. As such, universities should become « lighthouses of our European way of life » and « actors of change in the twin green and digital transitions ».

European universities as key actors of change

As recognized knowledge powerhouses, universities are now expected to actively connect with local communities and societies at large to contribute to answering social challenges, in particular in connection to SDGs. This requires that universities transform the way they educate students by promoting project-based learning and encouraging local engagement as well as the way they do research: how do we empower learners to address complex societal and promote sustainability in our communities and beyond? How do we build a transformative research agenda that takes into account our surrounding ecosystems?

In the frame of the French Presidency of the council of the European Union, the MSMT, the DZS and the French Embassy in the Czech Republic wish to organize an event bringing together universities, local and national authorities and representatives of civil society to discuss these questions with a particular focus on the role of European university alliances, « a source of inspiration for the wider higher education community » (*Proposal for a Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation, 2022*).

How can EUA help design reproducible approaches to tackle this challenge? What has already been done? More generally, how does the frame offered by the European Union can contribute to changing our overall approach to this central issue?

Date: 11th May 2022

Location: Charles University – Patriotic Hall

Language: English

Target audience: universities (officials, academics, administrative staff, students), government agencies, community stakeholders (local authorities, companies, associations)

Tentative programme

8.30-9.15	<i>Registration and welcome coffee</i>
09.15-9.45	Welcome words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative of French Embassy - Representative of Ministry - Representative of DZS - Representative of Charles University
09.45-10.15	Keynote speaker on social engagement in the academic community
	Two round tables will tackle the topics of engagement in the field of education, in research as well as at the institutional level
10:15 - 11:05	<u>How to systematically embed civic engagement in training</u> <i>Topics to be covered : Internationalisation vs social engagement? ; A revolution in the pedagogical approach. How to embed societal challenges in the creation of study programmes and activities? ; Collaboration between academia and companies: placing students at the heart of the local economies</i>
11:05 - 11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.30 - 12:20	<u>Research and innovation with and for society</u> <i>Topics to be covered : Embedding research in education ; Transsectorial partnerships as a catalyst for growth and social innovation ; Engaging Europeans in the design, implementation and monitoring of research – the « Missions » approach</i>
12:20 – 12:30	Wrap-up and closing
12:30	<i>Cocktail</i>