

## **EURASHE statement on the future of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)**

In view of the forthcoming revision of the Regulation establishing the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and the adoption of its Strategic Innovation Agenda for the period 2021 - 2027, EURASHE expresses its support to the EIT's efforts to integrate the knowledge triangle of higher education, research and innovation and, thus, to reinforce the Union's innovation capacity and address societal challenges. Although certain progress has been made since the creation of the EIT, much more needs to be done to bring more concrete results and tangible benefits in the future.

In this context, the EURASHE calls for more and better opportunities for involvement of Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS)<sup>1</sup> in the existing and forthcoming Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). This call is motivated by the proven capacity the UAS have to connect with the real economy, in particular the SMEs, and the society. The close cooperation between UAS and companies is not only evident in their applied RTI-profile, but also in the profile of their researchers. Besides their specific scientific competences they also have the necessary practical experience in the respective professional fields, and the ability to adopt the entrepreneurial perspective and to convey this perspective to their students. In many places new business centres and SMEs' incubators have been established, as well as office facilities and others services for students finding new businesses.

The EIT's support and attention to the UAS will, therefore, have a multiplier effect on all components of the knowledge triangle. EURASHE is at the disposal of the EIT and the European Commission to facilitate the participation and the engagement of the UAS in the EIT's activities, which at present are underrepresented.

The joint activities with the business sector in identification and development of future skills, necessary for the economy and the society, are particularly relevant for EURASHE and its members. A strong link to the world of work and reflecting their views is one of the key underlining principles of professional higher education, cooperation with private, as well as public and non-governmental sectors have been reflected in all learning and teaching, research and innovation activities of universities of applied sciences and other professional higher education providers. We are willing to share our experience in this field with EIT and to support

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<sup>1</sup> EURASHE represents besides UAS also other institutions of professionally-oriented higher education, especially those in the countries without a clear separation into a binary higher education system.

the efforts of the different KICs in fine-tuning the existing schemes, in particular as regards the UAS' engagement at the regional level.

Under the education action line, the EIT funds education training and training activities at master's and doctoral level, focusing on the delivery of entrepreneurship and innovation skills. These activities have a time frame of two and four years, respectively, which clashes with the EIT annual grant process and creates uncertainties, in particular, for the higher education institutions.

The focus of the EIT on master and PhD-level education makes those programmes inaccessible for many players of professional higher education. The sector is very diverse with only a few countries accommodating master studies and even less PhD-level education. However innovation and entrepreneurship are relevant to all levels of education. This constitutes a real paradox, bearing in mind the well-acknowledged importance and the consolidated role of the professional higher education organisations in linking and structuring the reports between all elements of the knowledge triangle. EURASHE is willing to work with EIT to remedy this problem in the future.

EURASHE views that the role of EIT and the EIT labelled programmes are still insufficiently known by key stakeholders and potential beneficiaries. This problem is to be seen in the context of the persisting complexity of European research and innovation funding programmes and instruments. Thus, for the next MFF, further efforts are needed to simplify and streamline these programmes and instruments. These efforts should be accompanied by more and better designed communication and awareness-raising activities, which EURASHE will be eager to support and participate in.