

EURASHE Statement on the Seal of Excellence awarded to Alliances within the European University Initiative

EURASHE, as a representative organisation for applied universities is pleased to observe the evolution of higher education institutions through initiatives such as the European Universities Initiative (EUI). We [warmly welcomed](#) the recent funding of new European University Alliances and the establishment of a Community of Practice (CoP) to promote collaboration and best practice sharing among these alliances. These developments are critical to fostering a more integrated and resilient European Education Area and a way further to implement the European Higher Education Area principles and tools.

However, while we applaud the success of newly funded alliances, EURASHE is concerned about the potential demotivation of those alliances that, despite submitting excellent proposals, were not awarded funding. Instead, many of these alliances were granted the Seal of Excellence, recognizing the high quality of their submissions. **EURASHE and its community are committed to these alliances and take seriously the significance of the Seal of Excellence, calling for appropriate support mechanisms.**

We believe its essential that these alliances, despite not receiving Erasmus+ funding, remain fully engaged in the EUI. Their innovation, potential, and excellence must not be overlooked. EURASHE strongly advocates for equal recognition and inclusion of these alliances in all aspects of the initiative, ensuring they have access to future opportunities for partnership and growth as those funded directly by Erasmus+. The equal visibility and co-ownership of the initiative is of utmost importance for those awarded the seal.

EURASHE and its members that form part of alliances are committed to testing new tools and initiatives, such as the European Degree and Quality Assurance frameworks for partnerships. As was foreseen, these instruments will be available to all higher education partnership models in the future, regardless of their funding status; we believe it is crucial to maintain engagement with all alliances, including those awarded the Seal of Excellence, to ensure they remain active participants in the evolving landscape of transnational cooperation, and do not miss out on future opportunities for collaboration and development.

Looking forward, EURASHE urges the creation of a clear, comprehensive roadmap and outlining concrete steps to ensure that Seal of Excellence recipients are not left behind. To ensure this, EURASHE calls for the following actions:

- **Encourage national governments to support Seal of Excellence recipients at the national level**, offering these alliances the same funding opportunities as Erasmus+-funded alliances, including potential access to European Structural and Investment Funds.
- Alliances that have received the Seal of Excellence should be invited to and maintain contact with their peers within the Community of Practice. This will ensure they benefit from the same knowledge-sharing and peer learning activities as funded alliances.
- These alliances should be listed alongside funded partnerships on the European Commission's website, recognizing their quality and encouraging future collaboration.
- **Involve Seal of Excellence alliances in the funding scheme information flow**, ensuring they are included in discussions about future funding calls and supported with mechanisms to secure alternative sources of funding.
- **Create mechanisms to support Seal of Excellence alliances in funding calls**, such as ensuring they have equal access to any future research funds earmarked for European University Alliances.

EURASHE has also taken proactive steps to ensure that applied universities continue to play a central role in the EUI. By [establishing a dedicated Sounding Board](#), EURASHE ensures that the voices of applied universities are heard and that they benefit from the initiative, regardless of whether their alliances are funded through Erasmus+ or other sources.

One key focus of this Sounding Board is developing a sustainable funding pathway that balances excellence and cohesion. This must include recognition and support for those alliances that have received the Seal of Excellence. The path should also value all the missions of higher education institutions, particularly their contributions to local communities, which will be highlighted at a forthcoming [workshop during the European Week of Regions and Cities](#). Furthermore, EURASHE emphasizes the importance of regularly monitoring alliances and ensuring that sustainable funding mechanisms are set to allow for equal success for various types and profiles of institutions.

EURASHE is committed to ensuring that all alliances, irrespective of their funding status, are recognized and supported. Their excellence in work and contributions to European higher education must be met with the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.