



E³UDRES²

Engaged and Entrepreneurial European University as
Driver for European Smart and Sustainable Regions

Long-term Vision & Mission Statement

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1 Starting Point, Motivation, Status Quo and Members

E³UDRES², the Engaged and Entrepreneurial European University as Driver for European Smart and Sustainable Regions, was initiated by St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences in fall 2019.

The idea of E³UDRES² was triggered by the fact that a large part of the European population lives in small or medium-sized towns and their rural surroundings and that regionally anchored universities with a focus on professional higher education, applied research, challenge-based innovation and engaged knowledge exchange with regional communities make a significant contribution to the European Higher Education Area.

Manifold regions strongly contribute to the high quality of life as well as the cultural identity of Europe and regionally anchored SMEs make relevant contributions to the European economy. Therefore, bottom-up initiatives must shape the future of Europe and address both regional and global challenges in order to have regional impact and share insights in pan-European networks. These initiatives have to be driven by mixed knowledge-creation teams including young and mature students, trained as practice-oriented professionals and citizens, as well as open-minded educators, researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs – in close collaboration with various stakeholders across the knowledge square.

Top-ranked scientific universities clearly act within a global competition in a digitally connected world. Thus, they are usually linked to urban centers, focus on scientific publications and other established academic performance indicators and collaborate with global ventures rather than with regionally-anchored SMEs and engaged citizens within regional communities. There is evidence that innovation tends to be higher in urban (capital) regions as R&D expenditure as well as highly skilled talents and experts are concentrated in these districts. Future-oriented concepts and great efforts are, therefore, required to close these existing innovation gaps. Regionally anchored but globally connected universities have the potential to play a crucial role in addressing these challenges, especially if they increase knowledge exchange and join forces in pan-European networks to achieve the critical mass, visibility and recognition needed for sustainable development and impact.

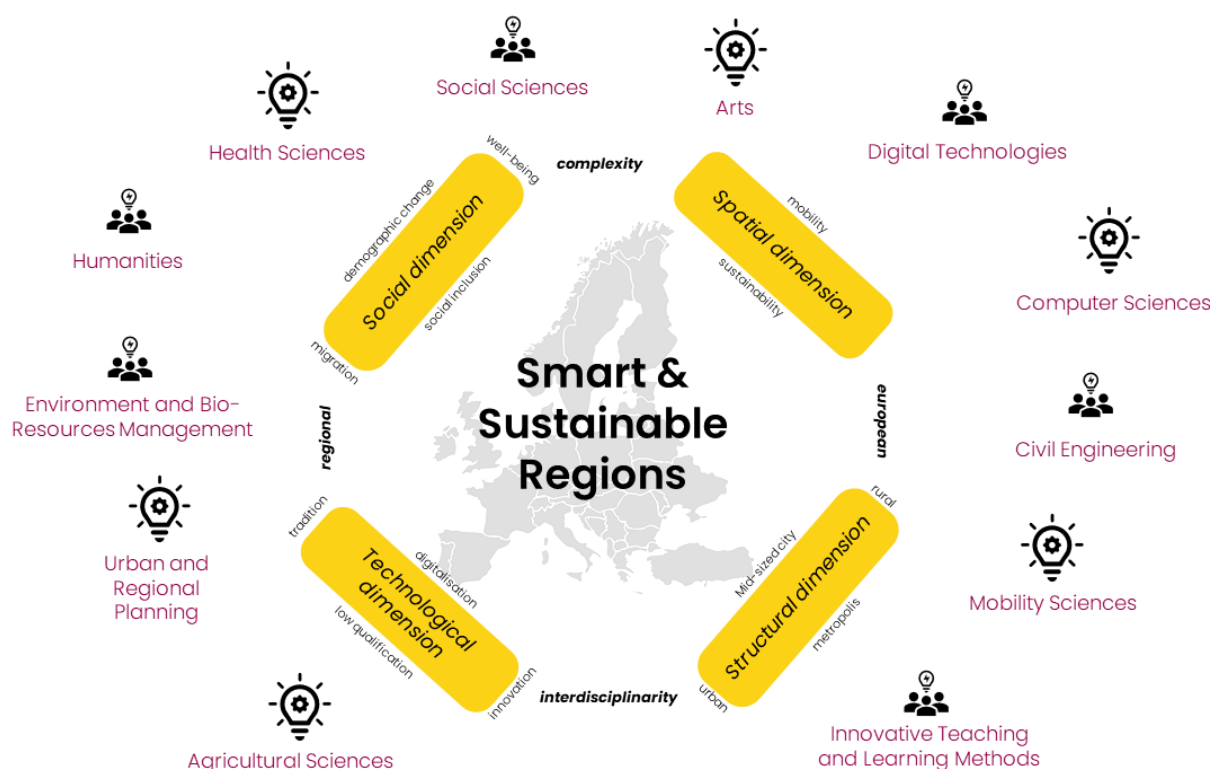


Image 1: E³UDRES² – A University Alliance as Driver for European Smart and Sustainable Regions

Thus, E³UDRES² joins forces, pools talents, expertise and experience, shares resources, infrastructure and best practices and collaborates with regional as well as European stakeholders across the knowledge square to strive for future-guiding approaches to challenge-based education, mission-oriented and applied research, human-centred innovation and engaged knowledge exchange with (regional) ecosystems, interested citizens and the wider public.

E³UDRES² started from scratch in October 2020 with the following six universities:

- St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences (Lead), <https://fhstp.ac.at/>
- Politechnic Institute of Setúbal, <https://www.ips.pt/>
- Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, <https://www.uni-mate.hu/>
- UC Leuven-Limburg UAS, <https://www.ucll.be/>
- Politehnica University Timișoara, <http://www.upt.ro/>
- Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, <https://va.lv/>

The implementation and further development of the alliance has been funded by the corresponding Erasmus+ project within the European University Initiative. In October 2021 the E³UDRES² Entrepreneurship and Innovation Network for Smart and Sustainable Regions (E.I.N.S.) was established as one of the first pilot-projects of the EIT HEI Initiative in order to strengthen the innovation capacity of the alliance and its (regional)

innovation ecosystems. In October 2022 the project E³UDRES² Ent-r-e-novators, funded by Horizon Europe – Widening participation and spreading excellence and coordinated by the E³UDRES² member Politechnic Institute of Setúbal, started in order to bridge the gaps between entrepreneurs, researchers, educators and innovators (Ent-r-e-novators) and to strengthen the research capacity of the alliance. In collaboration with some other partners E³UDRES² is also participating with five of its members in the Horizon Europe project „Accelerate Future HEI“, which is coordinated by its associated member UIIN – University Industry Interaction Network.

In the course of 2022, the following three additional members were selected in a comprehensive expansion process from more than 25 universities that had expressed their interest in becoming a member of the alliance:

- Fulda University of Applied Sciences, <https://www.hs-fulda.de>
- Saxion University of Applied Sciences, <https://saxion.edu>
- Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences, <https://jamk.fi/>

They first joined the E³UDRES² Alliance as Associated Members, already participating in board meetings, strategy forums and many other activities. From October 2023 they will become new full members.

The E³UDRES² alliance thus unites two scientific universities and seven universities of applied sciences with a strong affinity for applied research and innovation. Four of the nine E³UDRES² members are located in one of the widening countries according to Horizon Europe regulations. The comparatively high proportion of both universities of applied sciences and members from widening countries is seen as an important distinguishing feature compared with other European University Alliances and the overall statistics of the European University Initiative. E³UDRES², thus, supports the diversity and complementarity of the European University Initiative.

All nine E³UDRES² members were selected based on the following criteria in particular:

- Existing strategic commitment and acknowledged expertise and experience for the further development of smart and sustainable regions
- National and/or international recognition for their authentic and innovative Open Learning methods
- Commitment to professional higher education, applied research, challenge based innovation and community engagement

- Recognised expertise, activities and good practices in particular in the context of
 - future universities and concepts for engaged and entrepreneurial universities
 - innovative teaching and learning methods, future-oriented curricula, flexible learning paths and inspiring learning environments
 - high-quality, mission-oriented and participatory research
 - human-centred innovation
 - community engagement and service with/for society
- Recognized as engaged players in regional innovation ecosystems as well as pan-European and global networks

In addition, E³UDRES² members meet most of the following criteria:

- Ambitious, flexible, small or medium-sized university (<15,000 students)
- Located in a non-capital, small or medium-sized European city (<250,000 inhabitants)
- Located in one of the smaller European countries (<20 million inhabitants)

In December 2022 an association under Austrian law was founded as an umbrella organisation and supporting association of the E³UDRES² alliance:

- E³UDRES² – Verein zur Förderung, Koordination und Weiterentwicklung der European University Allianz für smarte und nachhaltige Regionen
 (E³UDRES² – Association to the promotion, coordination and further development of the European University Alliance for Smart and Sustainable Regions)

The key-objective of this umbrella organisation is to support, promote and represent the E³UDRES² alliance and its further development into a fully-fledged European university as an independent legal entity.

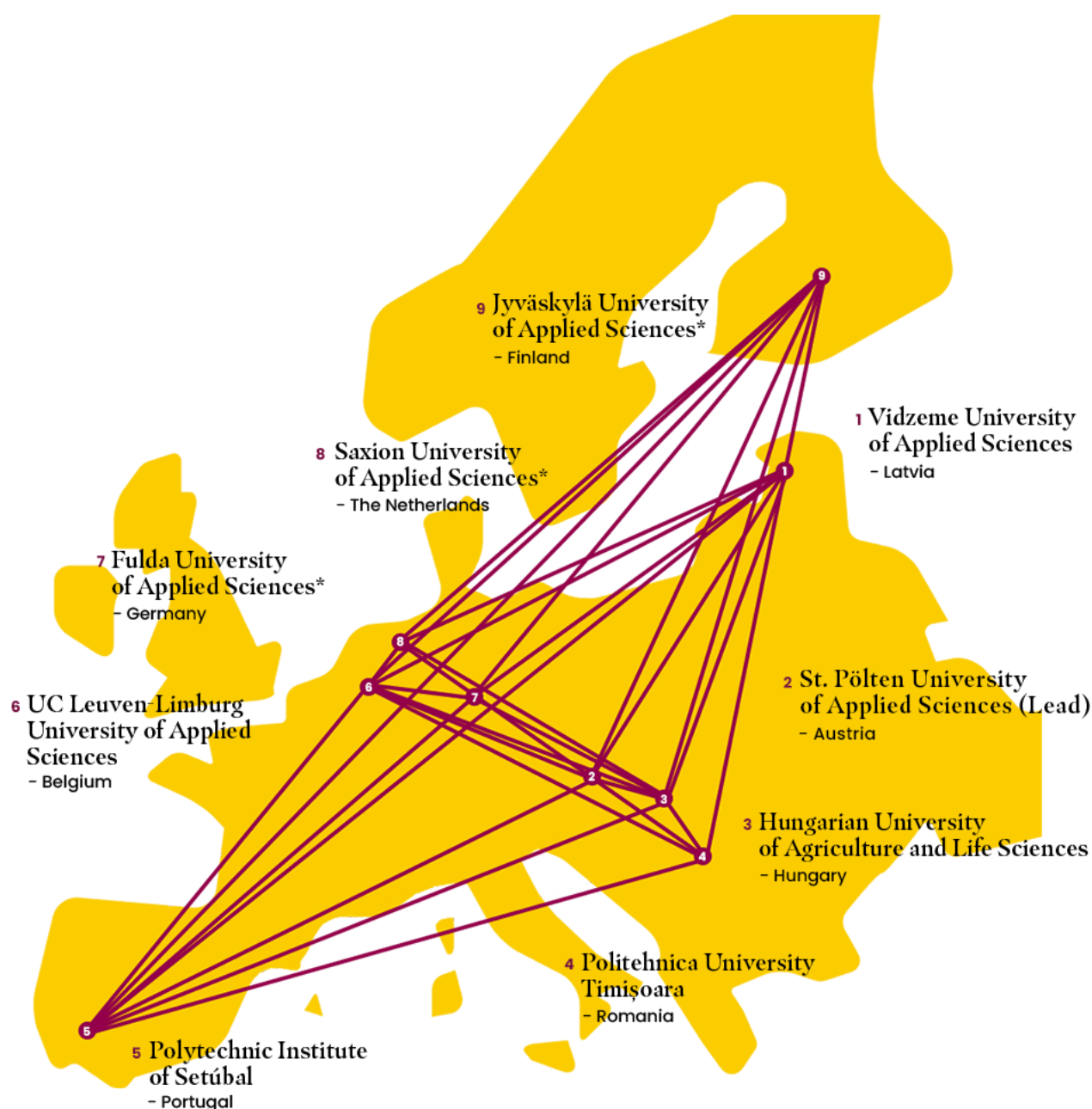


Image 2: The E³UDRES³ alliance (new partners marked with *)

2 Vision and Mission

2.1 Vision

E³UDRES² Vision Statement

We promote Smart and Sustainable Regions (S²-Regions) to shape a peaceful and prosperous European future for responsible citizens as a pioneering full-fledged Engaged and Entrepreneurial European University (E³-Universities).

E³UDRES², the Engaged and Entrepreneurial European University as Driver for European Smart and Sustainable Regions, is focusing on the following main topics:

- Co-Innovate Smart and Sustainable European Regions
- Co-Ideate a Future University
- Co-Create a European Multi-University Campus

E³UDRES² promotes the development of small and medium-sized cities and their rural environments into smart and sustainable regions and shapes a prosperous future with the best possible quality of life for a self-determined people in a progressive European society.

E³UDRES² co-creates outstanding ideas and concepts for future universities, integrates challenge-based education, mission-oriented research, human-centred innovation as well as open and engaged knowledge exchange as interrelated core areas and establishes an exemplary multi-university campus across Europe.

2.2 Mission

E³UDRES² Mission Statement

We inspire open-minded people to co-create solutions for environmental, societal and economic challenges, support individual learners to unleash their talents and develop future-oriented skills, empower creative ent-r-e-novators (entrepreneurs, researchers, educators and innovators) and act as an inclusive and engaged platform for collaborative innovation that strengthens a smart and sustainable society.

- E³UDRES² is committed to the further development of small and medium-sized cities and their rural surrounding areas into smart and sustainable regions.
- E³UDRES² is a unique European university that is widely recognized for ground-breaking approaches to challenge-based higher education, mission-oriented research, human-centered innovation as well as engaged knowledge exchange.
- E³UDRES² provides a platform for collaborative innovation for multidirectional, cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral, cross-actor knowledge exchange.
- E³UDRES² is exemplary as an engaged and entrepreneurial European university that responds to the social, environmental, and economic challenges of the 21st century and is committed to sustainable development goals.
- E³UDRES² acts as a living laboratory for the society of the future in progressive European regions and connects research, innovation, education and service to the community (knowledge square).
- E³UDRES² strengthens the diversity of European cultures and uses their manifold potentials to collaborate with transnational partners to develop sustainable solutions.
- E³UDRES² contributes to a human-centred digital transformation that strengthens the overall quality of living.
- E³UDRES² promotes creativity, creates space for experiments and demands agile management and flexible action to develop exciting ideas into sustainable products and smart services.
- E³UDRES² is committed to excellence and strives for the highest quality in all areas of activity in order to promote, support and challenge motivated learners, employees and various partners in regional, European and global contexts.
- E³UDRES² brings together smart individuals with different social, economic and cultural backgrounds to act at a regional level and adopts a European perspective at the same time.

3 Values, Culture and Core Principles

3.1 Core Values

E³UDRES² is based on the European Union's fundamental values as defined in the Treaty of Lisbon (2009) and is strongly committed to standards and guidelines of the European Higher Education Area. In addition, E³UDRES² defines the following core values as guidance in all activities:

- Ethical behaviour
- Gender equality
- Diverse communities
- Inclusive approaches
- Intercultural commitment
- International orientation
- Regional roots
- Societal engagement
- Entrepreneurial mindset
- Free and open science
- Future-oriented excellence scientific expertise
- Learner-centered education
- Transnational and transcultural learning environments
- Future-oriented, life-long learning
- Responsible research, sustainable innovation and progressive education
- Creative, curious and inspired co-ideation
- Problem-based, solution-oriented and efficient approaches
- Human-centered, inclusive and participatory action
- Team-oriented collaboration
- Outcome and impact-oriented co-creation

3.2 Co-Create a vibrant Multi-i-Culture for Future Universities

Adapting to agile management, open innovation and multidirectional knowledge exchange, smart work, new business models, new communication, user-centered development, co-ideation and co-creation is crucial for a shift towards a future university for smart and sustainable regions. Successful companies in the so-called "new economy" as well as innovation experts point out the importance of a new corporate culture in order to tackle challenges, inspire people, promote ideas, empower talent and promote innovation. Thus, E³UDRES² co-creates a vibrant Multi-i-culture for challenge-based higher education, mission-oriented research and innovation and knowledge exchange together with learners, educators, researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs as well as various other stakeholders and the wider public.

The “ Multi-i” stands for

- inclusive, inspiring and intense,
- innovative, interactive, interdisciplinary and intersectoral,
- intercultural and international.

This future-oriented Multi-i-culture is exemplary for progressive European universities of the 21st century and points the way towards smart and sustainable regions with the highest possible quality of living.

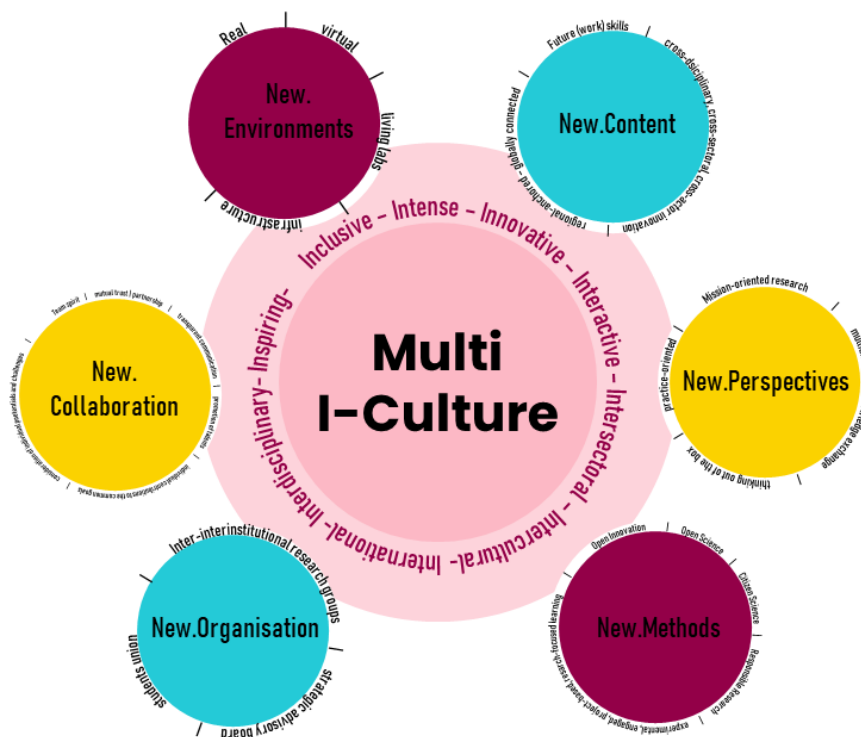


Image 3: Multi-i-Culture for Future Universities

The open, agile, holistic and inclusive culture is based in particular on the following pillars:

- Enable mission-oriented people
- Focus on cross-disciplinary content
- Consider challenge-based perspectives
- Implement human-centered methods
- Enhance engaged collaboration
- Establish Multi-i-Environments

3.2.1 Enable mission-oriented people

E³UDRES² enables mission-oriented people and particularly aims to inspire, motivate, involve, train and coach smart learners, to support ent-r-e-novators (entrepreneurs, researchers, educators and innovators) and empower non-academic staff to co-shape the intended transformation of higher education, research and innovation. These mission-oriented people act as change agents for a peaceful and prosperous European future, both transforming their neighborhoods into smart and sustainable regions and contributing to solving global challenges. They act regionally anchored, contribute to pan-European activities and are globally networked.

3.2.2 Focus on cross-disciplinary content

The 21st century is shaped by globalisation, urbanisation, environmental crises, social inequality, digital transformation and rapid technological progress. These developments lead to complex and, in many aspects, disruptive changes that result in the grand challenges as discussed in various policy papers and addressed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals. E³UDRES² is convinced that the development of small and medium-sized cities and their surrounding areas to become smart and sustainable regions has great potential as an important key to innovative solutions for a prospering European society of the future. In order to make the best possible use of these opportunities, however, new content for higher education is required that fulfils the following criteria:

- Educate future (work) skills
- Enable cross-disciplinary, cross-sectoral and cross-actor innovation
- Consider regional needs and values as well as intercultural aspects
- Act within regionally-anchored, globally connected ecosystems
- Develop human-centered and regional-anchored solutions
- Support experimental, engaged, challenge-based, research-focused learning

E³UDRES² develops innovative content for higher education leading to shared modules and joint study programmes that contribute to smart and sustainable regions.

3.2.3 Consider challenge-based perspectives

E³UDRES² looks at complex challenges from new perspectives and contributes to exemplary solutions through holistic problem-based and mission-oriented approaches. Consistent inter-, trans- and anti-disciplinarity play a crucial role. A close and systematic link of higher education, mission-oriented research and innovation, and multidirectional knowledge exchange contributes to innovative environments that are designed to think “out -of -the -box”, to venture off the beaten scientific tracks and to open the proverbial

academic ivory towers for creative ideas and new inspiration. E³UDRES² enriches the scientific discourse as well as practice-oriented, applied and professional action in society and economy and offers service to the regions.

3.2.4 Implement human-centered methods

E³UDRES² promotes and develops new methods for learning, teaching, research, innovation and knowledge exchange as well as service to the community that arouse curiosity and inspire people from diverse backgrounds. They promote the development of individual talents and support the acquisition of key skills for reflective action towards smart and sustainable regions in a global, digital information and knowledge society. E³UDRES² enriches the current state of higher education with unique contributions and best practice examples, is fully committed to problem and challenge-based, engaged, experiential, inclusive, research-focused learning and promotes Open Innovation, Open Science, Citizen Science, Responsible Research and other methods (e.g. design thinking, future workshops) for mission-oriented research and innovation.

3.2.5 Enhance engaged collaboration

E³UDRES² acts as an exemplary platform for collaborative innovation for smart and sustainable regions. New formats of cooperation in diverse partnerships support intensive knowledge exchange. While the output and outcome of E³UDRES² make recognizable contributions to innovation for society and economy in smart and sustainable regions, the inputs from manifold cooperating partners contribute to the continuous further development and quality improvement of the European university. This new quality of collaboration is first expressed in the internal cooperation of all members of the university and especially in the interaction between learners, educators, community representatives and researches. The following values are of particular importance:

- Team spirit
- Mutual trust
- Partnership
- Intensive collaboration with external stakeholders
- Transparent communication
- Promotion of talents
- Individual contributions to the common goals
- Consideration of individual potentials and challenges
- Fostering mobility, both physically and virtually, to enable the building of new teams

As a result, the quality of new collaboration is, of course, also expressed in various partnerships that acknowledged individual representatives as well as institutions from science, research and innovation, administration and politics, business and industry, art and culture at the regional, national, European and international levels.

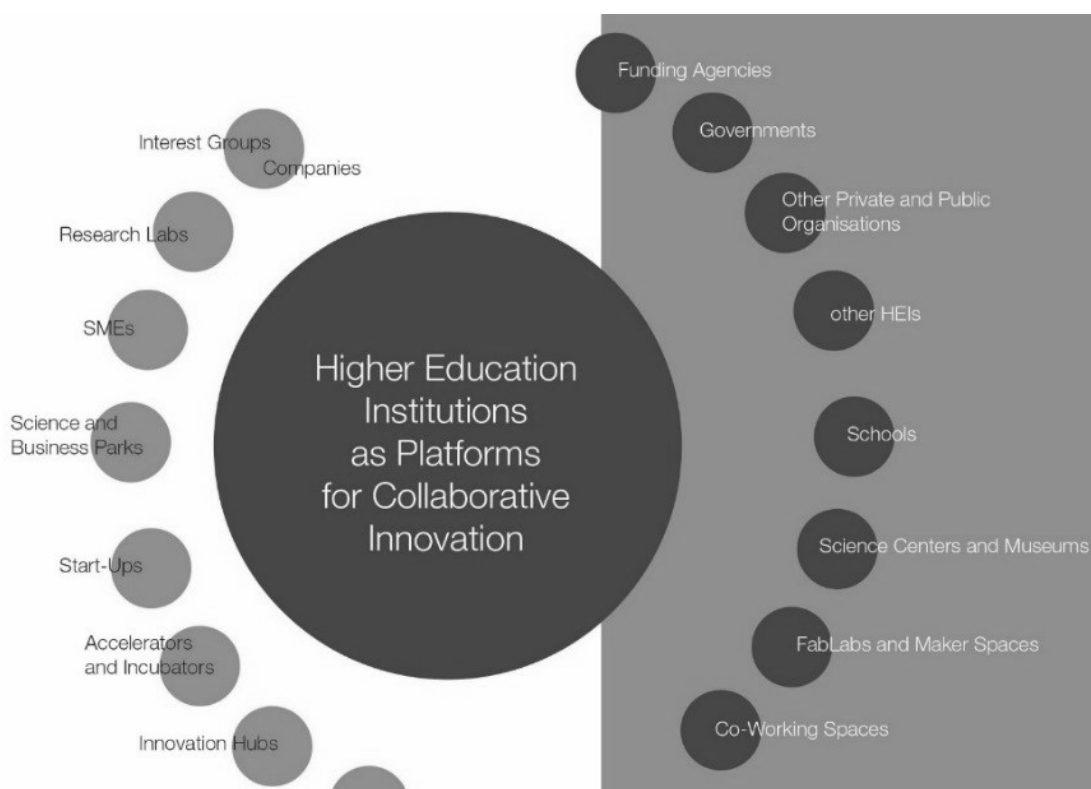


Image 4: E³UDRES² as a platform for collaborative innovation

3.2.6 Establish flexible learning environments

In line with the intended open inclusive, inspiring and intense, innovative, interactive, interdisciplinary and intersectoral, intercultural and international Multi-i-Culture, E³UDRES² establishes flexible learning environments to enhance (higher) education, life-long learning, research, innovation and multidirectional knowledge exchange as well as service with and for society within mixed European knowledge creating teams in real, virtual and blended scenarios. These flexible environments enable creativity, curiosity, impact orientation, societal engagement, challenge based open innovation, empower entrepreneurial mindsets and strive for gender equality and social inclusion. Various opportunities for open communication and interaction promote individual creativity and the quality of cooperation at all levels. E³UDRES² shares Living Labs for smart and sustainable regions in which learners, educators, researchers, developers, innovators, entrepreneurs and engaged citizens, interact and collaborate with regional SMEs and global ventures, digital makers and diverse creative individuals as well as the wider public. The flexible learning environments strongly contribute to regional innovation

ecosystems for human-centered, smart and sustainable solutions that integrate scientific experience, cross-disciplinary knowledge, applied professional skills and practical experience and are connected in strong pan-European networks.

3.3 Core Principles

The further development of E³UDRES² is based on the following core principles

- Multi-i-Innovation Cycles
- Multi-i-Campus
- Multi-i-Living Labs
- Multi-i-Research Networks
- Multi-i-Open Innovation Labs

3.3.1 Multi-i -Innovation Cycles

E³UDRES² initiates resonating Multi-i-Innovation Cycles that adapt innovation methods, such as human-centered design, co-ideation, co-creation, business model canvas, value proposition canvas, minimum viable products, lean start-up or design thinking to the specific needs of future universities. These resonating Multi-i-Innovation Cycles are maturity spirals that start with small, manageable, easily calculable, prototypical tasks and actions. While the analysis of errors and inadequate results serves as the basis for new ideas and concepts, the following steps are iterated with promising approaches:

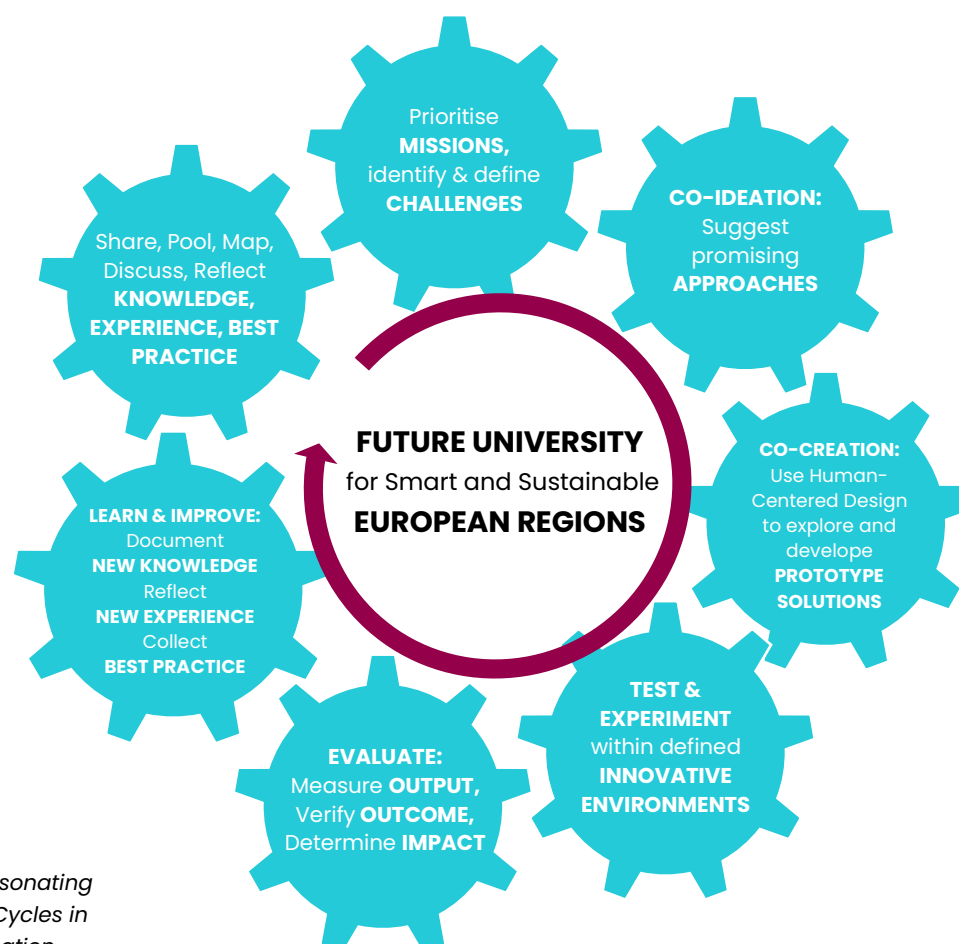


Image 5: Resonating Innovation Cycles in Higher Education

- Share, pool, map, discuss and reflect existing knowledge, experience and good practice
- Prioritise missions, identify and define challenges
- Co-ideate promising approaches
- Co-create with human-centered design to develop and explore prototype solutions
- Test and experiment within defined environments and frameworks
- Evaluate: measure output, verify outcome, determine impact
- Learn and improve: document new knowledge, reflect new experience, collect good practice

3.3.2 Multi-i-Campus

E³UDRES² establishes its exemplary Multi-i-Campus as a multi-institutional European university alliance, which strives to overcome institutional boundaries. This shift from individual higher education institutions to a vibrant European network of engaged and entrepreneurial universities advances ideas and concepts towards future universities and reshapes the role and tasks of all members.

The E³UDRES² multi-university campus promotes mobility (both physically and virtually) for students at all levels as well as both academic and non-academic staff. E³UDRES² enables students and staff to gain intercultural competences (incl. language competences) and broaden the perspective from the regional perspective to the European sight. Not only academic and non-academic staff members, doctoral candidates, life-long learners and at least 50% of bachelor and master students benefit from seamless mobility opportunities to study, train, teach, do research, work, or share services and resources from any of the member institutions but manifold regional stakeholders across the knowledge-square and pan-European networks and associations as well.

The Multi-i-Campus highlights, implements, contributes and further develops innovative teaching and learning methods beyond the current state of the art. Interdisciplinary and intersectoral approaches, STEAM education integrating arts and humanities into science, technology, engineering and mathematics, future (work) skills, digitally enhanced learning and teaching, open education and a shift from teaching to learning enabled by flexible education paths for students as well as life-long learners play a crucial role.

Thus, E³UDRES² promotes a shift

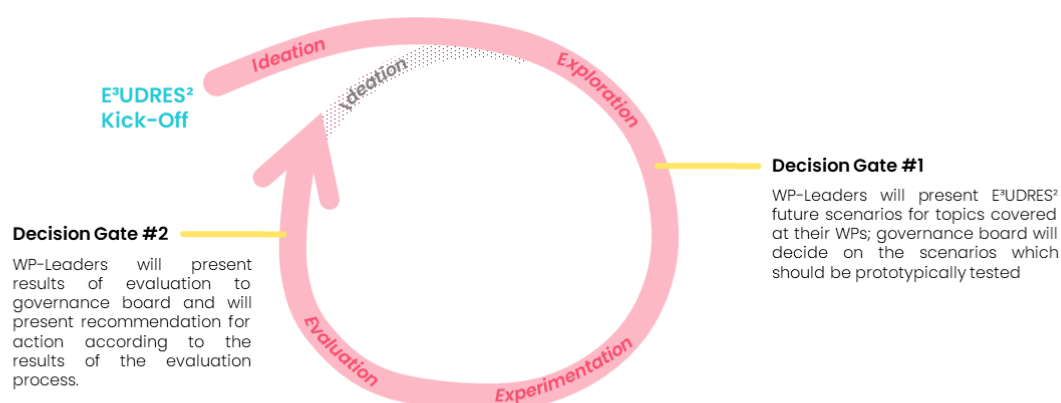
- from teaching to learning
- from all-knowing professors to experienced, competent, instructional coaches, educational entrepreneurs, T-profile innovators and living lab orchestrators
- from mass education to individual and flexible learning paths
- from traditional lectures to flipped/inverted classroom, game-based learning, learner-centered, challenge-based, experimental, engaged learning
- from exclusively theoretical education to practical and work-based experiences
- from rigid curricula to modular approaches, micro-credentials and life-long learning
- from single-institution study programmes to jointly delivered degree programmes
- from traditional textbooks to open educational resources
- from academic ivory-towers to open innovation ecosystems
- from administration to service
- etc.

Within this Multi-i-Campus, E³UDRES² co-creates and jointly approves guidelines, frameworks, methods and contents for joint open educational resources, joint open lectures, joint modules and joint (micro) curricula as well as it jointly awards badges, micro-credentials and (European) degrees.

3.3.3 Multi-i-Living Labs

Closely related to the resonating innovation cycles, E³UDRES² establishes I-Living-Labs for future universities and smart and sustainable regions. Again, the “I” stands for inclusive, inspiring and intense, innovative, interdisciplinary and intersectoral, interactive, intercultural and international. E³UDRES² adopts the concept of Living Labs for the development of “Future Universities” as well as for smart and sustainable regions. Living Labs are defined as user-centred, open-innovation ecosystems, often operating in a territorial context, integrating concurrent research and innovation processes within a public-private-people partnership. The concept is based on a systematic user co-creation approach integrating research and innovation processes in real-life use cases that involve cross-disciplinary teams with experts from various stakeholders. User communities are not integrated as observed subjects only but also collaborate as a source of creation. The Multi-i-Living Labs apply design research methods and iterate the following main steps:

- **Co-Ideation & Co-Creation:** bring together technology push and application pull into a diversity of views, constraints and knowledge sharing that sustains the ideation of new scenarios, concepts and related artefacts.
- **Exploration:** engage various stakeholders, especially user communities, at the earlier stage of the co-creation process for discovering emerging scenarios, usages and behaviours through live scenarios in real or virtual environments
- **Experimentation:** implement the proper level of technological artefacts to experience live scenarios with a large number of users while collecting data which will be analysed in their context during the evaluation activity.
- **Evaluation:** assess new ideas and innovative concepts as well as related technological artefacts in real life situations through various dimensions such as socio-ergonomic, socio-cognitive and socio-economic aspects; make observations on the potentiality of a viral adoption of new concepts and related technological artefacts through a confrontation with users' value models.



Ideation: generating of various ideas | **Exploration:** select and elaborate potential E³UDRES² scenarios

Experimentation: prototypically testing of E³UDRES² scenarios | **Evaluation:** evaluation and recommendation for implementation or re-designing

Image 6: E³UDRES² co-creation process

3.3.4 Multi-i-Research Networks

With Multi-i-research networks E³UDRES² promotes an innovative approach to co-ideate and co-create mission-oriented research, challenge-based, human-centred innovation and open and engaged knowledge exchange as well as to motivate, encourage and strengthen (young) researchers as well as learners, innovators, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders to participate in European collaborations. Multi-i-research networks therefore enable mixed European knowledge creating teams to contribute to the further development of smart and sustainable regions and a future-oriented transformation of the European Higher Education, Research and Innovation Area. The research networks introduce the principles of resonating innovation cycles into research and are based on cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration towards relevant challenges.

3.3.5 Multi-i-Open Innovation Hubs

As an entrepreneurial university E³UDRES² co-creates a pan-European network of regionally anchored Multi-i-Open Innovation Hubs. E³UDRES² therefore enhances regional innovation ecosystems and connects them across Europe in close collaboration with a wide range of associated members, a sound network of additional strategic partners and manifold stakeholders across the knowledge square.

While innovation is highly concentrated in metropolitan districts in an age of digitalisation, globalisation and urbanisation, E³UDRES² focuses on the further development of smart and sustainable European regions and particularly supports small and medium-sized cities and their rural environments in order to bridge evident innovation gaps.

E³UDRES² involves various stakeholders, like students and life-long learners, academic and non-academic staff, entrepreneurs, innovators, SMEs, leading companies, incubators and accelerators, venture capital funds, think tanks and policy makers, business agencies, public administration and politics etc. to run hackathons, bootcamps, (rural) innovation residencies and new formats beyond the current state-of-the-art for mixed European knowledge creating teams.

Triggered by challenges from (regional) stakeholders the pan-European network of Multi-i-Open Innovation Hubs particularly enhances the European dimension of human-centred innovation and entrepreneurship for and with smart and sustainable regions as a promising complementary approach to the more technology-oriented policies and strategies to promote disruptive technologies and digital transformation in global urban contexts.

E³UDRES² enhances entrepreneurial mindsets and innovation capacities, contributes to entrepreneurial education, innovation research and management as well as related policies on regional and European levels. Entrepreneurial activities by students and staff members are particularly supported and promoted through the pan-European network of Multi-i-Open Innovation Hubs. In addition, E³UDRES² strives for new forms of cooperation beyond the current state of the art with innovative start-ups that can make exciting contributions to Smart and Sustainable Regions, Future Education and EdTech (Education Technologies) in order to provide future-guiding input for the further development of the alliance.

Universities have defined themselves as creative and innovative expert organisations', which tend to have trouble accepting platform-based context and have problems with an outside-in approach where outsiders engage in much of the creative activity with their (non-academic) expertise and (practice-based) experience. In line with its Multi-i-

Culture, E³UDRES² therefore truly opens academic ivory towers and attaches great importance to intensive cooperation with external stakeholders and the full recognition of their knowledge and experience. Above all, the pan-European network of Multi-i-Open Innovation Hubs enables E³UDRES² to value external inputs in order to enrich education, research and innovation with unique impulses and ideas off the beaten academic tracks. Thus, the Multi-i-Open Innovation Hubs strive for an intense multidirectional exchange of resources, expertise, experience and good practice to enrich common approaches for technology transfer.

4 Core Activities, Focus Areas and Strategic Objectives

4.1 Core Activities

Based on an inspiring, open, agile, holistic and inclusive academic culture E³UDRES² is committed to high quality in four core activities:

- Challenge-Based Education
- Mission-Oriented Research
- Human-Centered Innovation
- Open and Engaged Knowledge Exchange

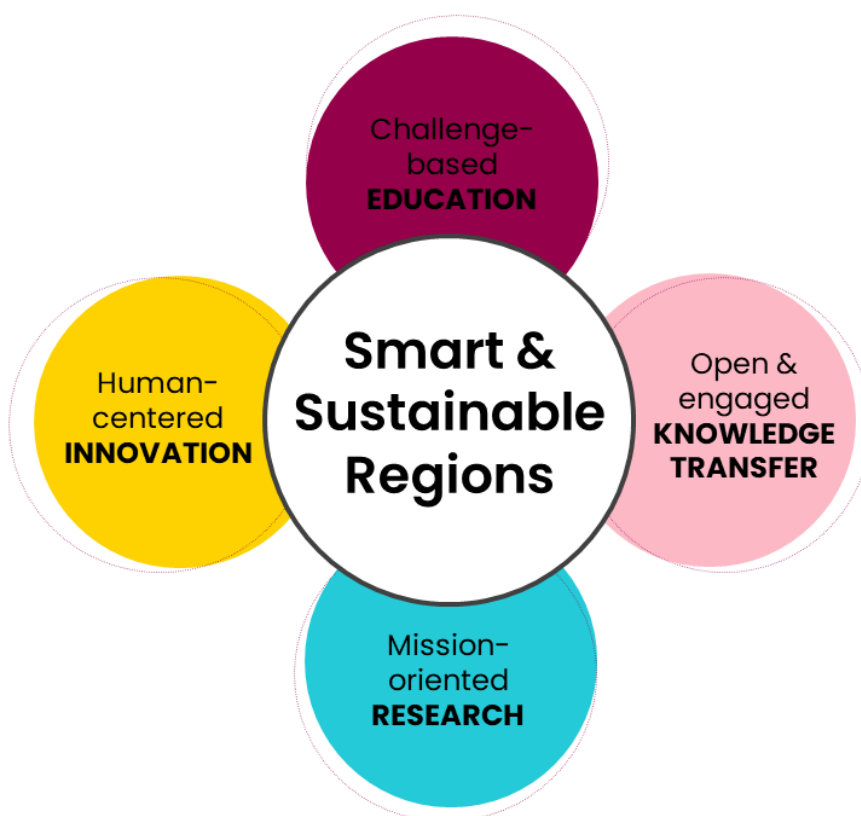


Image 7: E³UDRES² Core Activities

Triggered by regional challenges, all four fields of activity are closely connected and stimulate each other within Multi-i-Culture, Multi-i-Living Labs, Multi-i-Research Centers and Multi-i-Open Innovation Hubs, so that resonating cycles of innovation arise and turn the knowledge square into a reality. Together with the smart and sustainable regions and their diverse communities, these core areas will act as perpetuum mobile. Once activated they will reciprocally keep themselves in motion.

4.2 Focus Areas

Regarding the specific challenges, opportunities and assets of the regions, and their strategic approaches to smart specialisation (RIS3) as well as the (complementary) strengths and institutional (strategic) interests of its full members, E³UDRES² builds on four future-guiding focus areas:

- Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion for Regions
- Digital Solutions and (Applied) Deep Tech for Regions
- Resilient Economy and Innovation for Regions
- Creative Industries for Region's Identity

4.2.1 Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion for Regions

The focus area “Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion” addresses most urgent societal challenges arising from the ageing society, rural exodus and migration, as well as from substantial gaps between urban areas and rural regions. Technologies and innovation contribute to and serve the European values and their realization in people's life, empowering and strengthening democracy. Moreover, a more intense exploitation of the potential of social innovation helps creating new jobs and economic growth in the regions. E³UDRES² plays a strong role in developing, highlighting and sharing good practices from the regions, addressing forms of neighbourhood support and the resiliency of small communities.

4.2.2 Digital Solutions and (Applied) Deep Tech for Regions

The focus area “Digital Solutions and (Applied) Deep Tech for Regions” constitutes the enabling and fast developing framework for several regional challenges. The development and deployment of these technologies in real products and services for society and economy, as well as the skills needed for people to use, implement and further explore them, are the key to overcoming regional challenges. Digital tools and deep tech such as VR/AR, AI, IoT and blockchain technologies contribute to bridge the innovation gap between urban areas and (rural) regions and attracts new deep tech talents in the regions themselves.

4.2.3 Resilient Economy and Innovation for Regions

The focus area “Resilient Economy and Innovation for Regions” addresses the challenges of developing and implementing infrastructures, living and working environments, manufacturing, transportation, agriculture and food production which are resilient, green, innovative, supported and enhanced by digitalisation, attractive for people, and strongly connected in a path of regional development. The full potential of the green and digital transition can only be exploited by designing and developing the future of different economic sectors with a strongly connected, overarching, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach to education, research and innovation.

4.2.4 Creative Industries for Regions’ Identity

The focus area “Creative Industries for Region’s Identity” addresses the fact that creativity is one of the most important key competencies of our time. Moreover, the role of cultural and creative spillovers as cross-sectorial innovation motors is widely acknowledged as a stimulant in society and the wider economy. Creative industries are not only important for region’s identity and the preservation of their cultural heritage, but they have been one of the first to experiment and adopt digital technologies as well. Cultural content has fueled the development of the internet and creative ideas have always shaped European future. Thus, creative industry is amongst the most important employers in Europe. The particularly high number of self-employed people and SMEs in this sector, as well as the high affinity for remote work, co-working and other approaches of New Work offers numerous opportunities for S²-regions to strengthen innovation capacity and create future-oriented jobs.

4.3 Strategic Key-Objectives

In order to establish widely recognised interconnected smart and sustainable European regions, E³UDRES² pursues the following strategic goals:

- Enable Smart Learners to unfold talents
- Empower Ent-r-e-novators to accelerate future universities
- Serve as a platform for collaborative innovation to connect entrepreneurial minds
- Engage in regional communities to contribute to a peaceful and prosperous society
- Shift to a fully-fledged European university to ensure excellent quality

4.3.1 Enable Smart Learners to unfold talents

E³UDRES² takes a learner-centered approach and facilitates individual learning paths in order to empower, support and challenge creative talents for future work in smart and

sustainable regions. Of course, E³UDRES² universities teach subject-related, state-of-the-art knowledge, but they also focus on transferable skills for the present and future (working) world. E³UDRES² guarantees excellent teaching with innovative methods that aim at a distinctive competence profile. Students as well as life-long learners are encouraged to think independently, critically and creatively and learn various methods for analysing and solving socially relevant problems. In addition, interdisciplinary cooperation, dialogue orientation and self-determined learning are promoted.

4.3.2 Empower Ent-r-e-novators to accelerate future universities

E³UDRES² Ent-r-e-novators (entrepreneurs, researchers, educators and innovators) including young talents, experts, management, SMEs, local authorities and engaged citizens interact across the knowledge-square and bridge existing gaps between education, research, innovation and services with and for society as well as between metropolitan districts and small and medium-sized cities and their rural areas. These ent-r-e-novators combine experienced research knowledge, open innovation skills and entrepreneurial mind-sets. As they think out-of-the-box and (inter)act with ecosystems off the beaten tracks, they are recognized as most important change-agents. They support the development of HEIs from scientific institutions with partly rigid structures and a still widespread “publish or perish” mentality into open platforms for collaborative innovation that are in close contact with various stakeholders and interconnected with industry and society. Thus, ent-r-e-novators significantly enhance and accelerate the intended transformation of the European Higher Education, Research and Innovation Area with well-established European University Alliances.

4.3.3 Act as a platform for collaborative innovation to connect entrepreneurial minds

Universities may be regarded as product-based providers of higher education and research offering study programmes and degrees to students as well as scientific publications or prototypes, patents and other research outcomes to industry and society. However, they have a strong potential to develop into platform-based innovation hubs. According to Housers (2014) there are not many platforms besides the university that provide such a vehicle for individuals from different disciplines to interact with each other on such a regular basis. Higher education institutions commonly not only attract ambitious and smart people, but also assemble various disciplines that deal with social and economic challenges from various perspectives. Finding overlaps and using synergies between the different needs of the various stakeholders, disciplines, social and economic challenges is key to sustainable success in this context.

E³UDRES² acts as an inclusive platform for collaborative innovation that includes and interacts with a broad variety

- of institutions and organisations, such as global companies as well as regional SMEs and start-ups, NGOs, schools and training centres, health care entities, science centres and museums, co-working spaces and innovation hubs, accelerators and incubators, science and business parks, research labs and other higher education institutions, regional and federal governments, interest and pressure groups, funding agencies and others
- of ambitious and smart individuals, such as pupils, students and alumni, lecturers, scientists and developers, artists, practitioners and industry experts, business angels and investors, decision-makers, and responsible citizens
- of various disciplines and industrial sectors
- of business models and processes as well as learning, teaching, research and innovation methods especially emerging from digital technologies

E³UDRES² attaches importance to independent and responsible entrepreneurial thinking and acting and therefore positions itself as an "Entrepreneurial University". E³UDRES² promotes self-reliant entrepreneurial action by staff and students and makes important contributions to increasing innovation taking particular account of challenges and potentials from smart and sustainable regions.

E³UDRES² pools and shares already existing activities, knowhow and experiences of its members towards an entrepreneurial university and comes up with joint initiatives including:

- Innovative formats and modules for entrepreneurial education
- Structured support for startups and student entrepreneurship
- Structured support for spin offs and employee-driven innovation and entrepreneurship
- Knowledge exchange and further development of concepts and activities towards „Entrepreneurial Universities“

4.3.4 Engage in regional communities to contribute to a peaceful and prosperous society

E³UDRES² acts as an "Engaged University", assumes full social responsibility and initiates a lively exchange with different social target groups of a broad public. The activities are based on international standards, guidelines, policy papers and scientific publications about „Engaged Universities“ and contribute to their further development. Rather than treating public engagement as an "add on" or fringe activity, E³UDRES² embeds public engagement into the way it approaches its work and integrates engagement and interaction with communities into education, research, innovation and knowledge exchange.

E³UDRES² members share their expertise, develop and improve concepts and offer activities of „Engaged Universities“, such as

- Diverse activities in the field of science education for the general public
- Integration of citizen scientists in the knowledge development process
- Recognition and integration of the expertise of people and institutions outside of university or academic networks
- Full commitment to open access, open knowledge, open data, open science, open innovation etc.
- Sharing of ideas, talents and resources with various communities
- Open lectures, workshops and other activities for and with people from outside the universities
- Innovative concepts, formats and activities for interaction with people and institutions from various target groups in inspiring environments

4.3.5 Shift to a fully-fledged European university to ensure excellent quality

As essential basis for the intended transformation and change processes, E³UDRES² jointly establishes and continuously improves sound structures for efficient governance, comprehensive quality assurance and development, agile management and implementation-oriented operations as well as joint training, coaching and continuous education for academic and non-academic staff including leaders, experienced staff, high potentials and young talents.

E³UDRES² establishes a shared pool of scientists, pools of already existing expertise within multinational research networks in order to further expand knowledge and experience in order to guarantee distinctive expertise for the further development of smart and sustainable regions.

An independent legal entity supports, promotes and represents the European University as a joint umbrella organization and sponsoring association.

5 Achievements and Results

E³UDRES² strives for the following longterm achievements and results to co-create impact for European Smart and Sustainable Regions and related pan-European as well as for the European Education, Research and Innovation Areas:

- Exemplary model for the governance of a progressive fully-fledged European University
- Well-established I-Living Labs
- Joint educational model for students
- Open educational resources and shared modules
- Joint lectures, moduls and (micro-)degrees fitting needs of E³-universities & S²-Regions
- Well-established I-Research Networks
- Well-established network of regionally anchored Open Innovation Hubs
- Recognized activities to promote open and engaged knowledge exchange

5.1 Exemplary Model for the Governance of a Progressive European University

E³UDRES² develops and implements an internationally competitive and attractive evidence based future HEI governance model that integrates open learning, regional development and RDI operations to improve the quality and impact of both learning and RDI. The model is in accordance with all the EC Open Science principles including open innovation and citizen science (CS).

5.2 Well-Established I-Living-Labs

E³UDRES² establishes I-Living Labs for future universities as well as for smart and sustainable regions that integrate challenge-based education, mission-oriented research, open innovation and knowledge exchange and focuses on future (work) skills in inclusive, open, inspirational environments.

5.3 Open educational resources, shared modules and E³UDRES² labeled activities

To widen the access to knowledge and higher education, E³UDRES² aims to develop open education resources and make them easily accessible using digital technologies. E³UDRES² expertise will be pooled in shared modules and E³UDRES² labeled activities to strengthen the knowledge transfer between disciplines and institutions and supports collaboration and project-based learning.

5.4 Joint lectures, moduls and (micro-)degrees to promote E³-universities & S²-Regions

To strengthen the European perspective in teaching and learning, E³UDRES² evaluates the development of joint lectures, classes, modules and micro-degrees as well as joint (European) degrees on bachelor, master and doctoral level. Depending on the national legislation and legal frameworks E³UDRES² members will implement these degree programmes in their education opportunities.

5.5 Well-established I-research networks

E³UDRES² establishes mission-oriented, cross-disciplinary, cross-sector and cross-actor I-research networks that deal with the development of smart and sustainable regions in its four focus areas Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion for Regions, Digital Solutions and (Applied) Deep Tech for Regions, Resilient Economy and Innovation for Regions and Creative Industries for Region's Identity. These research networks connect experience in diverse scientific core disciplines, which are already well-established on several member-campus with recognized scientific staff. The I-research networks include not only researchers, but learners, innovators, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders and (regional) communities that will interact with the international scientific communities and innovation ecosystems and provide widely acknowledged scientific results.

5.6 Well-established network of regionally anchored Open Innovation Hubs

E³UDRES² establishes a pan-European network of regionally anchored Open Innovation Hubs to foster entrepreneurship and innovation in S²-Regions and strengthen the role of higher education institutions as relevant change-makers in (regional) innovation ecosystems. Particular attention is paid to the implementation of the E³UDRES² I-cubator as the alliance's network of (pre-)incubators existing at campus of individual members. The OI-Hub network and the I-cubator fit the needs of smart and sustainable regions and connect regional innovation ecosystems to the European level. They contribute to the economic and social attractiveness of small and medium-sized cities and their rural environments, enable SMEs and regionally anchored companies to master the green and digital transformation and supports startups and spin-offs with innovative services or products to scale across European regions.

5.7 Recognized activities to promote open and engaged knowledge exchange

E³UDRES² co-creates exemplary activities that promote open and engaged knowledge exchange, contribute to and interact with regional communities, and are acknowledged as good practice on a European level. E³UDRES² is fully committed and internationally acknowledged as an engaged university, pushes open science and open innovation, provides open educational resources and open access to expertise, experience and good practice concerning smart and sustainable regions and future universities.

E³UDRES²

Engaged and Entrepreneurial European University as
Driver for European Smart and Sustainable Regions

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