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E³UDRES² European University Alliance Kicks Off Next Phase

On 2 October, the E³UDRES² European University Alliance enters its second phase: The main focus is on systemising, intensifying and expanding the existing cooperation of the now nine partner universities throughout Europe. Until 2027, the European Commission will support the network with funding amounting to 14.4 million euros

With a successful start in 2020 and the constant expansion of the alliance, the E³UDRES² network was able to convince the EU Commission: The funding for the European University Alliance has been extended until 2027. The university network, focusing on comparably small, flexible institutions from all over Europe, already has impressive plans for the coming years. "With the extension we can make a significant contribution to strengthening the European higher education, research and innovation area. Our alliance is seen as a best practice example in the European higher education area – so we are particularly pleased to be starting the second phase with this confirmation," says Hannes Raffaseder, Lead Coordinator of E³UDRES² and CEO of the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences.

After the launch of the university alliance in 2020, numerous universities from all over Europe had shown interest to join E³UDRES². In spring 2022, the network was finally expanded to include Fulda University of Applied Sciences (Germany) and Saxion University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands). In summer 2022, the network welcomed Jamk University of Applied Sciences (Finland) joining as the last partner. With the start of the next phase of the alliance, all nine partners are now equally on board and can make use of the funding, expertise, and resources of the whole network. Over 100,000 students can benefit from the network's diverse activities as well as the numerous opportunities for mobility and intercultural exchange of experiences – around 70% more than those studying in the entire Austrian university of applied sciences sector, for example. The jointly achieved increase in quality also benefits students and employees.

With the start of the next phase of the E³UDRES² alliance, which unites higher education institutions from non-metropolitan regions, intensive partnerships will also be developed with six further universities from Ukraine, the Republic of Kosovo, and Albania over the next few years. In addition, 36 business networks, business agencies, NGOs and other regional stakeholders contribute as associated members to the establishment and expansion of the E³UDRES² Alliance as a particularly socially committed and entrepreneurial European university to strengthen regionally anchored innovation ecosystems with networks at the European level.

With the start of the next phase of the alliance, the focus areas and research networks will be expanded around the topics of “Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion”, “Digital Solutions & (Applied) Deep Tech”, “Resilient Economy & Innovation”, and “Creative Industries for Regions’ Identity”. In addition, new joint degrees, joint PhD programs, centers of excellence for research, innovation hubs for collaboration with start-ups and leading companies and an expansion of activities for and with society are planned. “We have already founded a joint supporting organization in St. Pölten and are therefore the first European University Alliance with its own legal status and headquarters in St. Pölten. With the new structures, we will coordinate the strategic developments of the participating universities even better and further develop them together in order to take big steps closer to the common goal of establishing a fully-fledged European University in the next few years,” states Raffaseder.

E³UDRES² Forum 2023: Connecting European Universities and Regions

The successful completion of the first phase of the alliance was duly celebrated as part of the “E³UDRES² Forum 2023: Connecting European Universities & Regions”, which took place from 18 to 19 September at the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences in Austria. International experts such as Vanessa Debiais-Sainton (Head of Unit Higher Education, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission), Raffaele Trapasso (Senior Economist at the OECD), Jiří Nantl (Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic) and Gerald Bast (long-time Rector of the University of Applied Arts Vienna) contributed their expertise through keynote speeches as part of the event. Various other guests including Melinda Macho (Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research), Florian Krumböck (Member of the Lower Austrian State Parliament) and Harald Ludwig (Deputy Mayor of the City of St. Pölten) congratulated the network on the successes of the last few years.

At the same time, the forum was used to concretize the plans and further develop the alliance until 2027. "The diversity of the participants from students, university experts, entrepreneurs, regional authorities, urban developers up to policy makers from relevant ministries showed the strength of our international network. We have already implemented several projects and formats together so far to support the partnership capacity - this constructive cooperation will be intensified in the next four years," says Michal Karpíšek, Senior Policy Officer for E³UDRES² at the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences.

The E³UDRES² European University Alliance, founded in 2020, connects nine universities across Europe: St. Pölten UAS (Lead; Austria), UC Leuven-Limburg UAS (Belgium), Jamk UAS (Finland), Fulda UAS (Germany), Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (Hungary), Vidzeme UAS (Latvia), Saxion UAS (the Netherlands), Polytechnic Institute of Setúbal (Portugal), Politehnica University Timișoara (Romania). → www.eudres.eu

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