

**Consultation:
From Challenges to Opportunities:
Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU
Research and Innovation funding**

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The European Consortium of Innovative Universities ECIU welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to consult with relevant stakeholders on the future of European research and innovation funding. As a consortium of research universities that define themselves as innovative and entrepreneurial through applied research, technology focus, links with industry and regional actors, technology and knowledge transfer, and modern pedagogy, ECIU wishes to react to the questions brought forward by the European Commission. ECIU acknowledges the publication of previous relevant publications like the Europe 2020 strategy, and the Flagship Initiative Innovation Union, which have set the scene for the future development of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area. ECIU strongly believes that universities are at the core of the delivery of these initiatives, and hopes to contribute to a successful implementation, last but not least through its position papers on current EU policy issues. ECIU has formulated input on the Flagship Initiative Innovative Union, which was submitted in January 2011, as well as to the Modernization Agenda of Higher Education, which was handed in in early May 2011. With the paper at hand, ECIU hopes to contribute to the development of future EU policy on research and innovation

1. How should the Common Strategic Framework make EU research and innovation funding more attractive and easy to access for participants? What is needed in addition to a single entry point with common IT tools, a one stop shop for support, a streamlined set of funding instruments covering the full innovation chain and further steps towards administrative simplification?

The European Commission (EC) had made significant efforts towards the simplification and streamline of the 7FP. Nevertheless, it is crucial to developed additional measures, in order to increase the participation of excellent researchers and companies.

The next Framework Programme should have **less instruments and be more user-friendly**. A focus of coherent instruments to address European grand challenges will be instrumental in the delivery of Innovation Union by means of a Common Strategic Framework. Overlap between instruments should be reduced.

Additionally, the **administrative burden for participants should be diminished**, for instance, by simplifying the reporting requirements (number and size of reports), and become more **flexible**. The **reduction of time-to-grant** will be a decisive factor in order to increase the participation of industry, in particular SMEs. Thus, significant efforts should be taking in order to **simplify the rules regarding award of grants**.

Reduction of the administrative burden will facilitate university-participation and increase SME-participation. For instance, SME recognition can be done at a national level by each member state. In Portugal this scheme is already in place regarding cohesion funds. This suggestion fits into the proposed high-trust approach as referred to in our answer to question 6.

2. How should EU funding best cover the full innovation cycle from research to market uptake?

The full innovation cycle needs to be supported, that is from fundamental research to applied research, and to the exploitation of results. The EU already has many instruments in place that address different stages of the innovation cycle, but coherence and interoperability are lacking.

ECIU supports the idea that bottom-up instruments such as the European Research Council Grants and FET-Open function as seeding instruments for new technologies and concepts. The output of these instruments is best developed in a coherent Strategic Framework Programme, which specifically aims at the Grand Societal Challenges and supports the Key Enabling Technologies. By integrating and strengthening the current programme for Competitiveness and Innovation, and by allowing demonstration activities and the development of prototypes, the Strategic Framework Programme will cover the core of the innovation cycle. EIT can best be included as independent unit under the general policy of the new Common Strategic Framework.

The future Strategic Framework Programme needs a stronger focus on technology transfer and dissemination of research results. This will increase the efficiency of the Programme and will optimize the contribution to competitiveness of the European Union.

The ECIU expects the European Innovation Partnerships to contribute to synergies that can be obtained within a future Common Strategic Framework.

3. What are the characteristics of EU funding that maximise the benefit of acting at the EU level? Should there be a strong emphasis on leveraging other sources of funding?

The major benefits of funding at EU level are the reduction in fragmentation, increased impact and increased cross-border cooperation. Funding at EU level seems to be favorable for Knowledge Institutions and large industry, but not attractive for SMEs. The leveraging of other sources of funding can be used to make European funding more attractive for SMEs. The approach to optimize leveraging of funding is highly dependent on the complementarities that can be achieved between the framework programme and other sources of funding, which include funding at member state level, but also the structural funds. The use of excellence as a single criterion (i.e. excellence in science & technology, excellent implementation, training and impact) for research stimulates the competitiveness between researchers. ECIU wishes to point out that this principle should remain and the Commission and Member States must step up their efforts to take away other hurdles for successful participation, such as restricting conditions in Member State financing that inhibit matching of EU-funds and complex requirements for administrative procedures.

4. How should EU research and innovation funding best be used to pool Member States resources? How should Joint Programming Initiatives between groups of Member States be supported?

EU research and innovation funds can be used to incentivize Member States to pool resources by co-financing successful projects that show EU-added value.

5. What should be the balance between smaller, targeted projects and larger, strategic ones?

Both large and small projects are important factors in the success of research and innovation programmes. Stakeholders can use large projects in strategic research lines, building on existing networks and consortia. The smaller projects have a high added value for stakeholders in investigating new directions and building new networks. These objectives cannot be combined in a single instrument. The current balance seems appropriate, where ECIU points out that a shift to more, larger projects will disadvantage SMEs and will discourage new stakeholders to participate in European programmes.

6. How could the Commission ensure the balance between a unique set of rules allowing for radical simplification and the necessity to keep a certain degree of flexibility and diversity to achieve objectives of different instruments, and respond to the needs of different beneficiaries, in particular SMEs?

The current Framework Programme has evolved over the years and more and more instruments have been added, each of them with their own set of rules. It will be a major achievement to drastically reduce the diversity in rules and stakeholders will greatly appreciate a coherent and consistent set of rules for a future Common Strategic Framework. This justifies a thorough approach by the Commission and it offers an opportunity to demonstrate the strength and benefits of a well-structured Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. ECIU offers its expertise in research and innovation management and will continue to contribute to this discussion.

The ECIU believes that it is possible to convert the current set of rules into an integral toolbox of rules and criteria. Each instrument can use a selected set of tools from this “rulesbox”, in line with its objectives. Additional rules should only be applied in exceptional cases, justifying these exceptions in the relevant work programmes.

The success of a “rulesbox” will highly depend on the implementation by evaluators and Project Officers. The Commission has a leading role in ensuring the homogeneous implementation. The high degree of personal responsibility for Project Officers in the current Framework Programme unnecessarily complicates the execution of projects.

In order to simplify the evaluation phase of projects for stakeholders, ECIU proposes that, in the future Common Strategic Framework, it is characterized by a high-trust approach based on national accounting practices. Acceptance of national certification of (in particular) small businesses will simplify participation of SMEs.

Earlier discussions on the reduction of administrative burdens suggested the use of result-based funding. ECIU believes that this funding method may be a fitting approach at the end of the innovation chain, but will seriously compromise the innovation capacity of the European research community. Research results are not always predictable and easily measurable, possibly leading to discussions at the evaluation stage of projects whether the results are actually the expected results. Discussions at the evaluation stage should not center on this topic, but rather on the meaning of the results for future EU-activities in research and innovation.

**7. What should be the measures of success for EU research and innovation funding?
Which performance indicators could be used?**

The methodology that is used to evaluate the current Framework Programme is satisfactory and gives large volumes of data related to performance of the Framework Programme. A similar approach seems appropriate for future research and innovation funding programmes. Introduction of more indicators and targets is not expected to give more insight into the performance of a Framework Programme.

8. How should EU research and innovation funding relate to regional and national funding? How should this funding complement funds from the future Cohesion policy, designed to help the less developed regions of the EU, and the rural development programmes?

The vast majority of funding for research and innovation currently originates from Member States. ECIU believes that national funding plays an important role at a strategic level. Synergy with these funds can be found in similar strategic and coordinating activities at the European level, including stimulation of particular sectors. Effective regional funding is typically focused on competitiveness in specific topics and this will only increase with the further implementation of smart specialization. Synergy between European and regional funding can thus be found in (for example) specific expertise areas and dedicated infrastructures.

In order to achieve optimal synergy with funding programmes at Member State level, Joint Programming, ERA-Nets and Article 185 must be exploited to their full potential. By the introduction of the European Innovation Partnerships a new platform has been established for strategic discussions to this extent.

The European cohesion policy is, in general terms, in line with regional objectives, but needs to be focused more on the Grand Societal Challenges as long term directions and innovation as a means to achieve progress. These are exactly the topics that EU research and innovation programmes can bring in the future relationship between these areas.

The future research and innovation funding programme should maintain excellence as the only criterion. In order to optimize the synergy between Cohesion policy and the Common Strategic Framework, mentoring programmes can be used for further development of initiatives that have been initiated under Cohesion instruments. Alignment of the long-term objectives of both policies, bilateral involvement (or joint calls) for bordering initiatives and interoperability of programmes are pre-requisites for real synergy.

9. How should a stronger focus on societal challenges affect the balance between curiosity-driven research and agenda-driven activities?

ECIU appreciates the increasing focus on societal challenges, but points out that agenda-driven research is fueled by curiosity-driven research and the key enabling technologies. It is therefore important to safeguard the position of curiosity-driven research and the key enabling technologies. Curiosity-driven research is typically characterized by bottom-up activities. Agenda-driven research needs a strong focus on interdisciplinary and intersectoral activities. Key enabling technologies can form an important bridge between these two types of research.

10. Should there be more room for bottom-up activities?

The FET instruments are an excellent example of how the Commission can stimulate breakthroughs in innovation. The ERC functions as a “greenhouse” where new ideas are developed. Both instruments are valuable and should be strengthened in a future Common Strategic Framework Programme, without reducing the cooperation-type activities.

Bottom-up activities are expected to be beneficial for SMEs if the Commission can reduce time-to-funding and simplify the administrative progress. Easy access for SMEs to these instruments will be a critical factor.

11. How should EU research and innovation funding best support policy making and forward-looking activities?

The research activities in the European Union create a large volume of output that is relevant in policy making. Even though many tools are available to bridge the gap between research outcomes and policy making (Trendcharts, Barometers, Scoreboards), a better structuring of the available data will make it more accessible for policy makers.

12. How should the role of the Commission's Joint Research Centre be improved in supporting policy making and addressing societal challenges?

The Joint Research Centres (JRC) has its main role in providing science support to policy. In this sense, it provides a forward-looking analysis of future research developments to serve as a basis for European joint strategy. In the light of the future Common Strategic Framework, alignment of the JRC with societal challenges will be important.

13. How could EU research and innovation activities attract greater interest and involvement of citizens and civil society?

ECIU believes that citizens and civil society are important stakeholders and involves them through (mainly) regional activities, based on providing information, discussing relevant issues and showcasing success stories. EU activities can add value to the debate by facilitating stakeholders to exchange and transfer best practices. Best EU-added value is achieved by focusing on the relation science-society, more than the role of the EU.

14. How should EU funding best take account of the broad nature of innovation, including non technological innovation, eco-innovation and social innovation?

ECIU members strongly believe that the role of universities in innovation does not end when a technology has been developed: innovation is the successful application of this new technology in practice. This means that universities have a role in guiding the development of new technologies to the market. Social innovation (including organizational innovation and innovations in regulations) play an important role in this development.

15. How should industrial participation in EU research and innovation programmes be strengthened? How should Joint Technology Initiatives (such as those launched in the current Framework Programme) or different forms of 'public-private partnerships' be supported? What should be the role of European Technology Platforms?

Industrial participation in Framework Programmes is currently at a historically low level. In the preceding text we have already referred to time-to-funding, bottom-up activities and the balance between large and small projects. ECIU believes that increased industrial participation in future funding programmes can be achieved by allowing demonstration activities and prototype development and by increasing flexibility and interoperability.

16. How and what types of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) should be supported at EU level; how should this complement national and regional level schemes? What kind of measures should be taken to decisively facilitate the participation of SMEs in EU research and innovation programmes?

ECIU universities have intensive relations with SMEs, through regional, national, European and international collaborations, through spin-off activities, etc. Growth of these SMEs is seriously hampered by poor IP-conditions and the lack of a single European market. The future Common Strategic Framework can show additional value to this category of stakeholders by offering support in overcoming these typical EU-barriers. Simplification, interoperability, flexibility and other issues mentioned earlier in this contribution remain important.

17. How should open, light and fast implementation schemes (e.g. building on the current FET actions and CIP eco-innovation market replication projects) be designed to allow flexible exploration and commercialisation of novel ideas, in particular by SMEs?

In addition to the already mentioned flexibility, simplification and time-to-funding, dedicated top-up schemes, such as the current “proof of concept” call at ERC, can be useful. This instrument will have high added value if it is properly administered to projects under cooperation. Retaining a dedicated fraction of FET-like instruments with bottom-up activities facilitates exploration and commercialization and is best accompanied with the continuous calls (as in the current FET-Open), or by opening several calls per year.

18. How should EU level financial instruments (equity and debt based) be used more extensively?

EU financial instruments can be efficient use of money and a useful addition to existing instruments. ECIU wishes to point out that regional instruments currently seem to be most effective, as they can cater to specific needs and are in close contact with SMEs. Future EU-instruments must keep in mind that easy access by small industry is key-element. Co-funding of proven regional instruments may be an effective addition, just as a service-oriented one-stop-shop, possibly with regional or travelling offices to ensure close contacts with SMEs.

19. Should new approaches to supporting research and innovation be introduced, in particular through public procurement, including through rules on pre-commercial procurement, and/or inducement prizes?

ECIU is in favor of introducing an innovation-earmark in public procurement, but points out that the definition of innovation in this context needs to be clear-cut and not open for misinterpretation. Member States are responsible for the largest fraction of public procurement, but the EU can contribute to cross-border challenges (environment, transport) and common European (global) themes such as energy, ageing and climate change.

20. How should intellectual property rules governing EU funding strike the right balance between competitiveness aspects and the need for access to and dissemination of scientific results?

Currently, the participation of companies in the FP is considered determinant to accomplish Europe 2020 objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Nevertheless, **intellectual property rules may be a drawback for their participation in project proposals**. Companies expect to have a benefit from their participation, which can then be used to strengthen their business.

Intellectual property rules should incentivize technology transfer and the commercial exploitation of research results. Therefore, it should be **assigned to partner's companies the right of first refusal** regarding intellectual property rights created throughout the project.

Open access to research results is generally welcomed by ECIU members, but care should be taken that this approach does not hamper industry-involvement.

21. How should the role of the European Research Council be strengthened in supporting world class excellence?

The ERC is considered a success in terms of simplicity, accessibility and flexible application procedures. This initiative has supported the development of frontier research, being excellence the underlying factor of projects' selection. Nevertheless, the success rate is low and too many excellent applications are rejected. An increase in funding for ERC would be a logical measure, although this should not occur at the expense of cooperation activities.

Members of ECIU wish to point out that the current evaluation panels of the ERC do not accommodate end-of-innovation-research, such as product design. As these activities are crucial for market-uptake and are generally considered a true discipline, the introduction of a design panel is justified.

22. How should EU support assist Member States in building up excellence?

Building excellence is an area where the EU can demonstrate a clear added value. ECIU highly values current initiatives such as COST, Marie Curie and ERC, which finance excellent research and researchers, while spreading and coordinating this excellence through mobility and coordination.

Building up excellence requires significantly different competencies, funding schemes and incentives than the current Framework Programme can accommodate. ECIU therefore supports the approach that structural funds are aimed at building up excellence. In the future joint initiatives for the construction of research infrastructures and mentoring programmes may be instrumental in aligning the activities.

23. How should the role of Marie Curie Actions be strengthened in promoting researcher mobility and developing attractive careers?

Researches are the key element in ERA building. This means that excellence in science and research is a consequence of excellent and talented researchers. For that reason, **Marie Curie Actions are fundamental** for improving researcher's skills and competences, as well as allowing the development of a career in science.

This programme should continue to support cross-border and intersectoral mobility, allowing researchers to have access to top research infrastructures, as well as be integrated in industry or in a different sector of activity. Future funding programmes need to **better promote mobility between academic and the industrial sector**, in order to improve technology transfer and innovation in companies. Development of additional competences, such as (research) management and entrepreneurial skills must receive sufficient attention in order to make the next generation of researchers attractive future employees in the private sector. This is especially relevant for young researchers that are starting a research career, and where developing of their own business is an option.

A valuable addition to the Marie Curie programme can be an instrument by which retiring researchers can be incentivized to transfer their networks, experience and other best practices to the next generation researchers. Such a scheme will make the career development of young researchers much faster and it will address the knowledge-drain that accompanies the ageing population of researchers.

24. What actions should be taken at EU level to further strengthen the role of women in science and innovation?

ECIU strongly believes in the value of diversity at all levels of the university system and society in general. The EU current activities to counter gender prejudices while maintaining the principle of excellence may be strengthened and continued in the next generation funding programmes. One approach that can be followed is to pay specific attention to “family-friendliness” of European activities.

25. How should research infrastructures (including EU-wide e-Infrastructures) be supported at EU level?

In order to efficiently develop top-level research infrastructure the EU can exploit synergies between the funds for research and innovation and the Structural Funds. As regions will be the first beneficiaries of positive effects of research infrastructures, close cooperation with regional authorities will be necessary. Universities must assume their role in this discussion and facilitate the vocalization of the region's needs in terms of research infrastructures linked to European initiatives such as ESFRI.

26. How should international cooperation with non-EU countries be supported e.g. in terms of priority areas of strategic interest, instruments, reciprocity (including on IPR aspects) or cooperation with Member States?

European Commission needs to **reinforce its links with non-EU countries**, mainly those with an outstanding track on research and innovation. Also, a coordination of efforts is needed to address grand societal challenges, which go beyond European boundaries.

Although the participation of third countries in the framework programme has increased in recent years, several initiatives could be developed in order to raise this participation. The European Commission can facilitate this by increasing the number of strategic S&T agreements, for example, together with the reciprocity measures (for instance, risk sharing). This would be important for improving researcher's participation in global knowledge networks and access to top knowledge centers outside Europe. In these cases IPR rules will need special attention..

27. Which key issues and obstacles concerning the ERA should EU funding instruments seek to overcome, and which should be addressed by other (e.g. legislative) measures?

Mobility of researchers depends highly on their family situation and social security. Regions and universities must work closely together to accommodate researcher's family needs, for example by providing job searches for partners and assistance in finding schools or daycare. The Commission can contribute by facilitating exchange and transfer of good practices for such support.

Social security, including continuous build-up of pensions, is a topic that cannot be addressed by universities alone. Member States and the Commission can facilitate the cooperation between stakeholders.

Appendix 1: ECIU members innovative profiles

Aalborg University, Denmark

- Academic staff 1.285
- Students 13.814
- International students 1.134
- Annual budget 226.5 Million Euro

Innovative profile

A characteristic feature of Aalborg University, AAU, is the ability to find new paths within research and education. As a result, AAU is a leading university in innovative ways of cooperating with the surrounding world at a local, national and international level. AAU has adopted an interdisciplinary, problem-oriented approach to research and education, and is today one of the world's leading universities within problem-based learning. OECD describes it as an almost perfect learning method, and AAU has become synonymous with the method, widely known as the "Aalborg Model".

Innovative practices – selected examples

As a key partner in regional development, Aalborg University has set up various schemes to ensure the creation of new knowledge intensive companies in the region.

Incubator:

The region of northern Jutland has a strong ICT cluster, but due to the financial crisis, several large companies in this cluster were forced to close down by the end of 2008, leaving a large amount of engineers unemployed. In an attempt to create new start-up companies and keep highly skilled labor in the region, Aalborg University set up an incubation program target solely at the unemployed engineers. In the program, the participants were given the opportunity to tap into Aalborg University's facilities and knowledge in order to qualify and start up new ventures in an academic environment of relevance to the business opportunity at hand. Participants were offered office space at the university, access to laboratories and databases, business mentoring, academic counseling relevant for their business, professional guidance, access to competent business guides and a range of courses focusing on business planning and development. This program was later merged with the ordinary incubation program at Aalborg University allowing experienced participants to collaborate and network with entrepreneurial students and post graduates. The incubation program at Aalborg University now encompasses anyone (student, staff, post graduate or industry spin-off) with a business opportunity that benefits from having access to Aalborg University's facilities, networks or knowledge & know-how.

Research programs and start-up companies in collaboration with industry:

Together with a major cleantech company in the region, Aalborg and Aarhus University had been developing a commercially and academically highly interesting field within cleantech. Because of restructuring of the company due to the credit crunch in mid-2009, the cleantech company decided to shut down this particular field, and R&D engineers together with company IP, developed in a collaboration project with Aalborg University, were being abandoned by the company. Together with

two key R&D engineers within this field of interest, Aalborg University approached the company, and the IP was handed over to Aalborg University, in order for the University to found a new company together with the two entrepreneurial R&D engineers and a venture capital fund.

The foundation of the company has been beneficial for the university and the region in two ways: it has been a key element in further developing the research field at Aalborg University, and the newly founded company has given numerous positive effects for job creation in the region through employments in the company and the university through joint research projects.

In order to further working on an open innovation paradigm in the region, this will be a story of best practice of how IP and entrepreneurs can work together with universities in founding new companies on the basis of work already done at companies, and securing that these companies can have access to the technology at a point in time more beneficial and opportune for the company.

University of Aveiro, Portugal

- Academic Staff 1081
- Students 13.368
- International students 426
- Annual budget 74.7 Million Euro

Innovative Profile

The University of Aveiro is more than a node in the Portuguese higher education network: it is a network in itself. It embodies university departments, research units, interface units, polytechnic schools and a relevant vocational education network, articulating and harmonizing the teaching and research environments. This enables the construction of individual education paths, from post-secondary vocational education to doctoral programs, including vocational training and different kinds of postgraduate specializations. Teaching activities are developed in a research-based environment, and along the academic year tens of national and international conferences are organized, generating a dynamic and multicultural atmosphere for the students. The University of Aveiro is very much concerned about the current issues of the modern society, always looking for the best resolutions for its problems. Technical and scientific partnerships, both with the industry and with several private institutions, enable the university to understand and to respond with accuracy to the present time issues, assuming a prospective position.

Innovative practices – selected examples

A new Triple Helix approach in Aveiro region

The new guidelines for the deployment of European Union (EU) Structural Funds created a range of opportunities that are leading to innovative approaches in the link between the University of Aveiro and its region. The EU policy agenda promotes co-operation between municipalities at sub-regional level, and simultaneously stimulates the emergence of new methodological approaches to policy making processes, a new set of development initiatives and broader institutional networks and governance practices.

In this context the university and an association of the 11 Municipalities in the Aveiro region, with about 375 thousand inhabitants, decided to take a bold step by traditional standards: they established a partnership for the design of a regional development program. This initiative has a twin aim: first to mobilize the diversity of disciplinary knowledge existing in the university to help to address the problems and expectations of the different municipalities and the regional community as a whole; second to initiate the process of developing a shared understanding of regional development dynamics and challenges, which indeed could and should lead to a re-interpretation of needs and expectations. This one year long project allowed putting together a common strategy recognized as being among the best in the Central Region of Portugal. Moreover, it allowed the opportunity to broaden the partnership between the university and local authorities, bringing into the process representatives of the economic fabric of the region, so building a Triple Helix approach on the basis of a broad consensus on (regional) development goals.

The articulation between the priorities of the Europe 2020 strategy and the community-based policy

agenda is a well-recognized challenge for development policy, as is the compatibility between science driven approaches to development objectives and the prosaic world of short term pressure of everyday problems and expectations. The University of Aveiro therefore set up a specific program, structured around the organization of informal meetings on selected topics, bringing together a small number of academics with complementary disciplinary backgrounds and relevant expertise, one or two staff members of the 11 municipalities and the coordination team with expertise on strategic spatial planning. Such meetings were held under the aegis of the local authorities association and the university, and were enlarged to accommodate the participation of members of regional entrepreneurs associations. The aims of the meetings were to create favorable ground for the alignment between i) science and technology perspectives, ii) local agenda perspectives, iii) robust policy frameworks, iv) entrepreneurial dynamics and v) opportunities provided by the new EU structural funds. In other word, this methodology allowed for innovative ways to bridge a path dependent on local agendas with new combinations of scientific and policy knowledge with entrepreneurial dynamism.

The process resulted in significant side benefits. As mutual knowledge and trust was further developed between local authorities and the university, a wider range of initiatives were taken. At the level of the association of local authorities, a new application for a EU financed programmed was prepared under a similar partnership, now focused on “Urban Networks for Innovation and Competitiveness”, which was built around five selected topics: education, culture, health, climate change and entrepreneurship (including social entrepreneurship). At the level of individual municipalities, other initiatives were taken often in the framework of international networks, namely under EU Interreg and Urbact programs. A new relationship between local government, small and medium sized firms and the university is emerging, integrating local public policy, economic modernization and revitalization and multidisciplinary research activity.

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

- Academic staff 3.080
- Students 50.474
- International students 2.151
- Annual budget 269.7 Million Euro

Innovative Profile

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) contributes knowledge and innovation to society at large. It equips professionals with profiles to match society's needs. The UAB has extensive research experience, which contributes knowledge and innovation. It prepares professionals with the profiles needed by society and holds an intense scientific research by hosting research centers and institutes, which together with the departments, forms the research consortium known as Esfera UAB. Its infrastructure is created entirely for university life, with all the academic, research, cultural and social activities on the same central campus. It is very committed to international projection, taking part in international programs and student exchange programs in Europe, Latin America, North America and Asia. It is strongly compromised (through policies and research) to the environment, thus addressing society's grand challenges like climate change.

Université de Technologie de Compiègne, France

- Academic staff 330
- Students 3.600
- International students 15 %
- Annual budget 50 Million Euro

Innovative Profile

The University of Technology of Compiègne (UTC) was founded in 1972 as an experimental public university combining the characteristics of the prestigious French engineering school system (Grande Ecole) with those of a classical French research university. Many innovative features distinguished UTC from other higher education institutions in France. The introduction of a two semester year and a modular structure for the courses were new and the university statutes permitted UTC to recruit a third of its academic staff directly and select students based on academic performance. The inclusion of two training periods of six months each in the final years of study also created a new kind of relationship between the university and industry encouraging the integration of industrial representatives in the educational process as well as facilitating innovative industrial research projects. UTC has 8 double degree program and 143 active international exchange agreements enabling more than 50 % of its students to study at least one semester abroad

TU Dortmund University, Germany

- Academic staff 2.448
- Students 24.000
- International students 2.750
- Annual budget 226 Million Euro

Innovative Profile

TU Dortmund University has been researching and teaching at the global intersection between man, nature and technology since its establishment in 1968. It has developed a unique profile with a special combination of faculties in the natural sciences and engineering, the social sciences and the humanities. This structure produces new knowledge, methodologies and technical innovations. It also provides deep insights into how technology drives cultural change. All this is achieved through a wide spectrum of innovative research and in more than 60 bachelor's and master's programs including a broad-based teacher training curriculum.

Innovative practices – selected examples

Innovation lab

The new project “innovation lab” supports growth-oriented high-tech projects and spin-offs both at very early stage as well as during the growth process. The project was selected for funding in the context of a European regional development competition, initiated by the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology of the state of Northrhine-Westphalia. The innovation lab is part of a regional innovation network, branded the “innovation location”. In cooperation with other initiatives, this network aims at fostering technology and knowledge transfer between science and the economy, primarily small and medium sized companies, in order to establish an innovation culture within the region. Members of the network are TU Dortmund University, the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Dortmund, the City of Dortmund, the chambers of commerce and crafts, the Technology Center in Dortmund and the economic development agency of the City of Hamm. The funding of the three-year project is supposed to start in January 2011. It offers an innovation academy, screening of business ideas and growth-oriented business plans, teambuilding tools, consultancy and interdisciplinary workshops for the further development of 12 to 15 target enterprises per year. The project focuses on knowledge-based start-ups and growth-oriented enterprises with a research background and is tailored towards research staff both from TU Dortmund University as well as from public research institutes in the region.

Culturepreneurship initiative

The “culturepreneurship initiative” (kultur.unternehmen.dortmund) supports students, staff and alumni in the development and realization of start-up ideas in the creative industries. The initiative is coordinated by the research and knowledge transfer unit of TU Dortmund University. The project is embedded into the nationwide network EXIST, funded by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, and the “G-DUR” network which supports research based spin-offs in Dortmund and the region. Within the “culturepreneurship initiative”, TU Dortmund University cooperates with the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Dortmund, the City of Dortmund, its start-up competition,



the network of regional technology centers, a local center for art and media and the an incubator for IT start-ups. Support tools include interdisciplinary project and business plan seminars, a start-up workshop (over a period of three months), information and networking events, start-up offices and coaching services. Over the last three years, 125 students have participated in the seminars, 22 companies have made use of the start-up offices and over 80 participants have completed the intensive workshops.



TUHH Technical University Hamburg, Germany

- Academic Staff: 470•
- Students 5.000
- International students 1.000
- Annual budget 55 Million Euro

Innovative Profile

Located in Hamburg, TUHH is a competitive entrepreneurial university focusing on high-level performance and high quality standards dedicating to the principles of Humboldt (unity of research and education). TUHH has a strong international orientation and also focuses on its local environment. It does so by contributing to the development of the technological and scientific competence of society, aiming at excellence at the national and international level in its strategic research fields. TUHH educates young engineers and academics within demanding programs using advanced teaching methods. Being essentially a public institution, TUHH is actively engaged in private-public partnerships and has set up the Northern Institute of Technology & Management (nIT) and the Hamburg School of Logistics (HSL), which has just started as the new Kühne Logistics University.

Linköping University, Sweden

- Academic staff 1.900
- Students 26.000
- International students 2.000
- Annual budget 300 Million Euro

Innovative Profile

Linköping University (LiU) is renowned for its innovative educational spirit, and its long-standing tradition of cross-disciplinary studies and research. The dual criteria of scientific excellence and societal benefit are guiding principles for the university's strategic enterprises. During the past decade the university has experienced rapid growth, involving the establishment of a new campus in the twin city of Norrköping and a doubling of the student population to today's 26 000. Education and research is conducted within four faculties: Arts and Sciences, Educational Sciences, Health Sciences & Medicine and the Institute of Technology.

Innovative practices – selected examples

The foremost strength – a coordinated regional innovation system, GrowLink®

The GrowLink® network is an initiative from Linköping University gathering all publicly founded organizations with a growth related agenda – in order to promote the start-up and growth of knowledge-intensive/innovative companies in the region. The operational idea of the network is to be a common, coherent regional arena where entrepreneurs and ideas in different development phases can be guided forward through an effective utilization of common resources. The goal is to create an entrepreneurial and dynamic business climate in the region to the general benefit of regional growth, public welfare and prosperity. To be a model to others, nationally and internationally, on how cooperation in the innovation system can create success stories. Key actors in the network includes: The University as coordinator; The Regional Development Council; The County Council; The County Administrative Board; Science Parks and Incubators in the region; Municipalities and all publicly funded Venture Capital organisations and foundations.

Empowering entrepreneurship, VentureZone

VentureZone offers a “one stop shop” sounding board and support function for all employees and students at the university, a free-of-charge advice on all aspects of enterprising under complete confidentiality, an inspiration and aid to the creation of new business and an internal access point the regional innovation system. VentureZone supports and inspires the thought of entrepreneurship by the distinct offer of physical meeting points on the three campus areas, supporting people and ideas with personal guidance, pre-incubator space and experimental facilities (CRL). The so called Concept Realization Laboratory aims to further improve the design of products and services by providing a creative test bench and market validation. The laboratory represents a meeting space where the two spheres of commerce and creativity can successfully interrelate as a support structure to the Venture Zone concept. On a yearly basis about 200 ideas are processed within the system producing some 40-50 new companies.

In close contact with business and society, LiU Liaison Offices

Five University Liaison offices covering all adjacent municipalities, in total 20, constituting a bridge between the university and working life in regional businesses, companies and public sector. An organization co-financed by

the university, municipalities and regional development council's, adopting a pull strategy, market needs seeks research ideas, rather than a push strategy were research discoveries and innovations seeks a potential market. The liaison officers are knowledge brokers involved in projects that create long-term capacity-building in the region, contributing to economic growth and public wealth. They are the natural entrance for the region's SMEs and contact point for student/researcher – company relations, involved in more than 500 company visits per year. LiU Liaison offers a comprehensive offer for the development of joint R&D resources, regional and international development projects, student placements; commissioned education and research; verification and evaluation schemes etc. A proof of concept organization generating a 1 to 4 cost benefit outcome.

Networks, Medleys, Clusters and focused areas of Product development

"How can we develop new business opportunities and cooperation in the field of xxx?" This the question put by LiUs Innovation Office on a regular basis. There are several ongoing initiatives ranging from BioMedley, a life science cluster, to MDPU, a focused effort of environmentally driven product development within CleanTech Östergötland, the regional competence center for environmental technology. The aim of this project is to strengthen regional business competitiveness and revenue, increase the competence and understanding of market needs and legislators demands on environmentally sound products and services. The program involves product development projects in 35 regional SMEs, supported by researchers from the university and business coaches from the regional innovations system. The goal is focused and clear: 70% of the projects should reach a commercial market within 3 years.

Technical University of Lodz, Poland

- Academic staff 1510
- Students 20.023
- International students 72
- Annual budget 93,5 Million

Innovative Profile

Technical University of Lodz, renowned for its entrepreneurial spirit, has been persistently aiming at combining its educational nature with crucial industries in order to foster partnerships between academia, research and business and to achieve a leading position on the innovation market. Considering the demand for highly professional engineers Technical University of Lodz has been constantly extending its educational and scientific offer willing to establish increasingly more cross-border linkages. TUL takes the high 4th position among Polish engineering universities. TUL as the only university in Poland belongs to the exclusive group of European education institutions that are holders of the ECTS Label awarded by the European Commission, a prestigious certificate which acknowledges introduction of the standards ensuring good quality of studies and international exchange.

Innovative practices – selected examples

The development of research co-operations with industry is an important task for TUL. The university collaborates with companies like Procter & Gamble, ABB, Siemens or Gillette. Cooperation with industry is intensified by scientific and industrial consortia. TUL takes part in the research activities of six Advanced Technology Centres and coordinates two of them, one of them BioTechMed. BioTechMed was established in 2004 and contains 15 institutions from Lodz region. The purpose of BioTechMed is to carry out long-term research as well as the development and implementation works aimed at elaborating innovative technologies having applications in the protection and improvement of the people's health and environment. The result of the activity of BioTechMed was the establishment of the European Centre of Bio- and Nanotechnology at the Technical University of Lodz in 2008. The main activity of ECBNT is the creation of a unique research center based on close cooperation of academic and industrial research institutes and integration of research activities in biotechnology, nanomaterials and nanotechnology. ECBNT received financial support and in 2015 will be opened one of the most modern R&D center in Europe.

TUL actively engages in development of Lodz region and country. In 2003, TUL joined the Industry and Technology Park Bełchatów Kleszczów Ltd. contributing its know-how in the form of innovative technologies. TUL is also strongly committed to the Łódź Regional Park of Science and Technology Ltd. In 2012, BIONANOPARK - Research Centre for Business will be completed. BIONANOPARK contains two laboratories: Laboratory of Industrial Biotechnology and Laboratory of Molecular and Nanostructural Biophysics.

A number of initiatives taken by TUL, seeking to establish effective cooperation between scientific and industry institutions, are supported by the Technology Transfer Office. Business activities of TTO



are supported by commercial company Technology Transfer Centre Ltd TUL. This is the first company in Poland whose founder and sole owner is the university.

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

- Academic staff: 1.281
- Students: 25.105
- International students: 2.590
- Annual budget 276.6 Million Euro

Innovative Profile

The roots of the University of Strathclyde lie embedded in the revolutionary thinking of an 18th century educator who believed in the right to education for all and the relevance of education for a prosperous society. Today, the commitment to relevance remains equally strong. The University of Strathclyde aims for excellence in education, research and knowledge exchange and its achievements — graduate employment rates, research funding levels and commercialization successes — bear that out. The aim of the university's founder was to create a 'place of useful learning' — the University has combined an enterprising approach with the commitment to that concept to address the requirements of an increasingly challenging world.

Innovative practices – selected examples

Research Pooling:

The University of Strathclyde is an active participant in the Research Pooling Initiative created by the Scottish Funding Council in 2003. Research Pooling aims to encourage researchers across Higher Education in Scotland to pool their resources in dynamic collaborations between research departments in order to gain a competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive international environment. The resulting enhancement of the research base has been significant across the subject areas included – engineering, energy, physics, chemistry, life sciences, economics, geological and earth sciences, marine sciences, informatics and computer sciences and mathematics. Strathclyde has been particularly active in the pooling of energy research across Scotland delivered through the Energy Technology Partnership (ETP), an alliance of Scottish universities engaged in world class energy research, development and demonstration (RDD) that is actively engaged in numerous UK and international partnerships, including well developed links with industry and a strong track record in the delivery of RDD.

Business Incubation, entrepreneurship and start-ups:

'Technology transfer' and 'commercialization' are two phrases used to describe the transfer of technology and innovation from universities to industry, and on to the marketplace. One way to achieve this transfer of technology is via the formation of new companies based on University-owned IP, commonly referred to as spin-out companies. Additional terminology such as 'entrepreneurship' and 'enterprise' are also frequently referred to in the context of company creation. All these terms are recognized globally as key elements of economic development activity; forming new companies stimulates economic growth at a local, national and international level. The University of Strathclyde has embraced all aspects of company creation by providing practical support to Strathclyde students, graduates and researchers striving to launch new companies. Here the return on investment remains likely to be commercial and in the form of excellent PR, but includes the prospect that a Strathclyde-

related entrepreneur will donate some of their future wealth to the University, such as in the case of Sir Tom Hunter and the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship at Strathclyde.

One example of the way in which Strathclyde supports company creation is Strathclyde Entrepreneurial Network (SEN), a community of practice that delivered 19 new companies in the academic year 2009/10. SEN is a forum that connects entrepreneurial activities at Strathclyde and promotes entrepreneurship in practice as a core value of the university. This unique network provides an informal yet sophisticated mechanism for the exchange of ideas, information and material.

The three key elements of the SEN community of practice are: 1) The University of Strathclyde – the University has a long and established history of invention, of developing applied research for the benefit of industry and the greater good of society. 2) The SEN network – a virtual incubator, it could be termed; producing a pipeline of entrepreneurial talent and commercial prospects, a center of excellence for Strathclyde persons interested in starting a new business. 3) Strathclyde100 – facilitated by SEN this is a Strathclyde alumni network of experienced business people, who become key connectors in this ‘hub and spoke’ entrepreneurial network, connecting budding entrepreneurs to funding and expertise.

Cooperation with multi-national companies and SMEs, innovation networks and platforms:

The University of Strathclyde prides itself in being a dynamic institution which is responsive to, and providing solutions for, the major global challenges of the 21st century. One means whereby Strathclyde maintains a presence as a leading international technological university is through the development of productive partnerships with industry, external academic communities and policy makers. A program that exemplifies this approach is the £30M Advanced Forming Research Centre, the first of its kind in the UK; a collaborative venture between the university, Scottish Enterprise, and engineering firms including Boeing, Aubert and Duval, Mettis Aerospace, Timet and Rolls-Royce. The aim of the center is to make the UK’s aerospace, energy, marine and automobile industries more competitive globally by delivering advanced products to the market quicker and more cost effectively.

Another mechanism used to engage with companies from global names to SME is Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP). Strathclyde is one of the leading exponents of KTPs in the UK.

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships is a UK-wide program to enable businesses to improve their competitiveness, productivity and performance. A KTP achieves this through the forming of a partnership between the business and the academic institution, enabling access to skills and expertise to help develop the business.

Strathclyde Links is a Scottish Government and ERDF funded project set up to help small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) access university research and consultancy services by facilitating introductions, providing support and funding, and networking opportunities via a series of events. Strathclyde Links supports companies from any sector to work with researchers from across the University, signposting to other suitable sources of internal and external support if appropriate. The team at Links works closely with Interface, a Scottish Funding Council sponsored matchmaking service connecting businesses quickly and easily to world-class expertise, knowledge and research facilities available in all of Scotland’s Universities and Research Institutes.

Strathclyde also prides itself in being one of only 12 recipients of the UK-wide Knowledge Transfer Account (KTA). The Strathclyde Knowledge Transfer Account is a program which aims to develop the

engagement between the University and external organizations and is funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. There are a number of types of funding available to support these engagements, varying in length from 2-3 months to 2-3 years. The industrial sectors being targeted are Power and Energy, Chemicals and Biotechnology, Advanced Manufacturing and Defence, Electronics and Communications, and Healthcare. The Strathclyde Institute for Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences (SIPBS) Knowledge Exchange (KE) Hub fosters collaborative links with industrial partners by providing funding for pre-commercial work and KE-trained Project Champions to support companies in accessing further funding, commercial opportunities and people exchange.

Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia

- Academic staff 1.112
- Students 13.739
- International students 420
- Annual budget 1.049 Million EEK

Innovative Profile

Tallinn University of Technology's mission as a university is to provide internationally competitive education, research and innovation services in the areas of engineering and entrepreneurship, which are significant for Estonia's sustained development. The Tallinn University of Technology campus is located approximately 7 kilometers from the center of Tallinn. It includes modern facilities and up-to-date computer labs, the brand new best research library in Estonia in engineering and business, new dormitories for students, indoor and outdoor sport facilities. Tallinn University of technology highly values internationalization in higher education and continues the pursuit towards a student-centered, entrepreneurial university.

University of Twente, The Netherlands

- Academic staff 1.496
- Students: 7.849
- International students: 607
- Annual budget 320 Million Euros

Innovative profile

The University of Twente (UT) is well-known for its entrepreneurial mindset. In little over twenty years, the university has generated over 600 spin-off companies. Their survival rate is high, thanks to university support in the early years of their existence. Furthermore, UT's major research institutes recently started business accelerator initiatives to shorten the time-to-market of promising scientific ideas. Within Kennispark Twente, scientists and entrepreneurs meet in the lab: this is stimulated by facility sharing and new on-campus business opportunities.

Innovative practices – selected examples

From Entrepreneurial University to Entrepreneurial Region

The most salient characteristic of the valorization activities in Twente, is that the approach includes the regional governments: the university, the city and region, the province and the Saxion university of applied sciences. Together they started a foundation called Kennispark Twente and the aim is to create new jobs for our region. Initiatives include:

Investment capital

TOP – Temporary Entrepreneurial Positions

In the 1980s the University of Twente started with so called Temporary Entrepreneurial Positions. This program enables university researchers to start their own company. It includes support in drawing up a business plan, coaching by a research group and a business coach. It is also possible to get an interest-free loan of 20.000 euros for the start of the company. These support measures are available to participants for 1 year and the participants are screened and monitored throughout their participation in the program. About 30 companies make use of this program a year.

www.utwente.nl/top

Informal Investment

This year UT started a network called 'Meesters van de Toekomst' (Masters of the Future). This network offers support by informing new informal investors about the do's and don'ts, helping companies prepare for informal investment and by organizing matchmaking sessions between companies and informal investors. The network includes over 200 active informals that have invested millions over the last few years. The key success factor is that it links experienced entrepreneurs that have become informal investors to startups. www.meestersvandetoekomst.nl (Dutch)

Seed Investment Fund

In 2010, the University of Twente founded a seed investment fund of approximately 18 M€ together with a regional fund and a number of wealthy regional entrepreneurs. The fund invests in promising starting firms and is based on a strong management team with links to the larger funds that are available in the European environment.

Business Development Support

Venturelab Twente

VentureLab Twente offers business development support for technology-based start-up businesses and is a business growth accelerator for well-established companies. The one-year business development program jump-starts and provides sustainable growth for young businesses, as well as long-standing companies, which aim to grow further and more rapidly. Venturelab Twente is about creating a team with people that have different skill and is a cooperation between the University of Twente and Saxion University of applied sciences. www.venturelabtwente.com

Open innovation Centers

Thermoplastic Composites Research Center

In Twente there are have several Open Innovation Centers in which companies and the UT actively collaborate in R&D. One example is the Thermoplastic Composites Research Center. TPRC is an open innovation, research- and development center that aims for Thermoplastic Composites for a broad range of end use markets. In this research center Boeing, Ten Cate, Stork Fokker and the University of Twente participate. As Tier 1 members in the center, they have access to the IP that is developed. Kennispark Twente helped this center in its first steps by acting as a neutral party, helping organize the collaboration and acquiring external funds. <http://www.tprc.nl/>

HighTech Factory

Recently the UT opened its new cleanroom and laboratory for nanotechnology. Its old cleanroom is being transformed to a production facility for companies that are active in micro- and nanotechnology. This enables them to focus on business development and growth, instead of the expensive infrastructure that they need. Hightech Factory also offers the 20 companies involved an operational lease facility for the necessary equipment. This enables the companies to scale up their production. www.hightechfactory.com

Events - Powered by Twente

Powered by Twente is a foundation that organizes events that focus on innovation and entrepreneurship. Each year 100 – 150 small and large events are organized. These events have several goals:

- Networking and getting to know more potential partners and customers
- Knowledge sharing: what are the current trends in the market and what could be future trends according to science
- Workshops that focus on certain skills for (high-tech) entrepreneurs
- Events that promote entrepreneurship and that put successful entrepreneurs in the spotlight
- Events that bring students into contact with SME's
- Events that link between investors and investees

These events make sure that the right people come into contact with one another and that makes it a unique selling point for the Twente area. Kennispark is more than an area with facilities and office space, it is an active network that you join when you move your business to our innovation campus Kennispark Twente.

ECIU Associate partners – beyond Europe

Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico

- Academic staff 8.448
- Students 92.875
- International students 4.524

Innovative Profile

Seeking to educate professionals and equip them with the skills needed to succeed in the business world, Tecnológico de Monterrey has developed into an institution recognized, nationally and internationally, for the academic excellence. Tecnológico de Monterrey was the first Latin American university to connect to the internet and was also a pioneer in the use of wireless technologies in Mexican businesses. The use of technology for education has been a landmark and now Tecnológico de Monterrey is the first university offering courses direct to your PDA. The university system is spread throughout Mexico, and it currently extends its educational services to other Latin American countries by way of the Virtual University.

Southern Federal University, Russia

- Academic staff 3.047
- Students. 49.123
- International students 500
- Annual budget 13.7 Billion Roubles

Innovative Profile

The Southern Federal University is a dynamic, modern university with high standards in teaching and research and a growing reputation for enterprise, employment and opportunity. At present SFedU, the legal successor of Rostov State University, comprises Technological, Teachers' Training and Architecture Institutes, 35 faculties, 23 branches, 70 Research units. SFedU has 2 campuses in Rostov and Taganrog. SFedU has well established international links with 300 universities from 40 countries. It is the largest center of education, science and culture in the south of Russia. One of the most exciting features about study and research at SFedU is its breadth. It encompasses humanities and arts, education, business, social and behavioral sciences, engineering and natural science.

Swinburne University of Technology, Australia

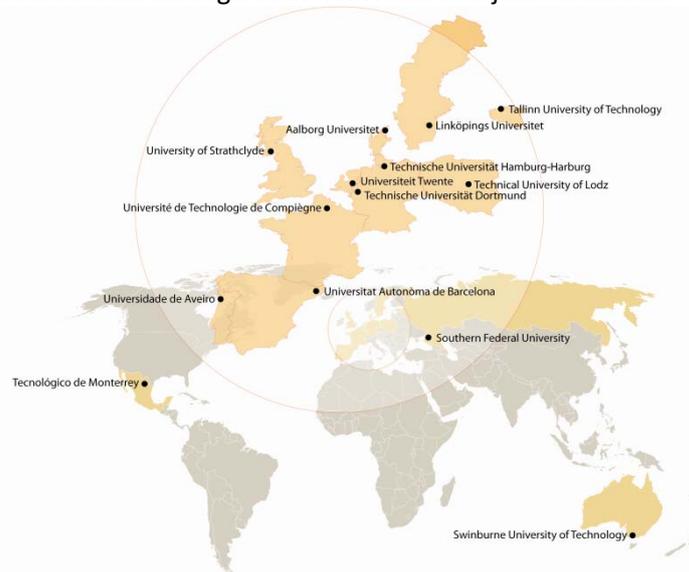
- Academic Staff: 1.130
- Students: 59.334
- International students: 7.677
- Annual budget 354 Million A\$;

Innovative profile

Swinburne has a strong reputation in Australia and overseas as a provider of career orientated education and as a university with a commitment to research. The university maintains a strong technology base and important links with industry, complemented by a number of innovative specialist research centers which attract a great deal of international interest. A feature of many Swinburne undergraduate courses is the applied vocational emphasis and direct industry application through Industry Based Learning (IBL) programs. Swinburne was a pioneer of IBL, a program which places students directly in industry for vocational employment as an integral part of the course structure. Swinburne is now one of a few Australian universities whose responsibilities span the range of programs from apprenticeships to PhDs. In keeping with this breadth of involvement, the university continues to play a leading role in creating new approaches to integration between sectors.

Appendix 2: The European Consortium of Innovative Universities ECIU

The European Consortium of Innovative Universities is a network of universities who are united by a common profile, by shared beliefs and interests, and mutual trust. The ECIU universities see themselves essentially engaged in the Knowledge Triangle: promoting the interaction between research, education and innovation. They are innovative in that effect that they are not only open to new approaches in this field, but they also strive for the implementation of these new approaches. The ECIU member universities are strongly committed to the development of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area. They support the goals of the EU 2020 Agenda and wish to contribute to its success through their individual and joint activities.



ECIU member universities as of summer 2010

ECIU maintains the profile of a network of universities that are relatively young, entrepreneurial, and progressive and have close ties with industry and the region where they are situated. The ECIU universities all have academic strengths in engineering and social sciences; also life science and humanities are strongly represented within ECIU. The partners are very committed to developing and implementing new forms of teaching, training and research, to assuring an innovative culture within their walls, to experimenting with new forms of management and administration, and to supporting and nurturing internationally-minded staff.

Core areas of enhanced commitment are:

- International education and student mobility (including joint educational programs)
- Human resource development through mobility and the Leadership Development Programme
- The Knowledge Triangle (technology transfer activities and cooperation with the region)
- European policy

The spectrum of activities is amended by offering a platform for additional joint projects, e.g. in the area of international benchmarking, and for finding international partners and facilities for research.

Competitive Advantage

The ECIU is a unique network of universities with its base in Europe, but building on the experience and insights of institutions in other parts of the world to reflect the global nature of Higher Education in the 21st Century. Whilst many consortia today are innovation based, ECIU member institutions were pioneers in pursuing an innovation agenda. The ECIU now has a collective wealth of experience and expertise in innovative education, research, knowledge exchange and administrative structures and practices. The ECIU offers a pool of resources e.g. in the field of problem based learning; in promoting entrepreneurship amongst students and staff and in treading new roads in the collaboration with business, industry and the public sector which provides a sound basis for the ECIU's various activities.

ECIU membership is a vehicle for maintaining a competitive edge, allowing members to learn from each other and to take forward activities that individual institutions could not pursue on their own. By combining resources, ECIU institutions develop top quality activities by picking out the very best of education and research activities in selected institutions and combining this into offering e.g. new joint masters programmes. Externally, the ECIU provides a collective, more powerful voice with greater impact than individual institutions engaging in European public debate on their own.

ECIU Strategy

The ECIU's strategy is to remain a small, tightly-knit, consortium that collaborates on different activities and makes a difference to both its member institutions and the surrounding society. The ECIU's activities reflect the broader EU 2020 strategy and contribution to Europe's development with the ECIU's focus on best practice in technology transfer and the emphasis on making use of research outcomes either through commercialisation, spin-out formations or through network collaboration and strategic partnership with industry.

Examples of ECIU activities benefiting students and staff are:

- Curriculum development through the Graduate School
- Offerings of new European Joint Masters programmes
- A European cross-institutional Leadership Development Programme
- Staff Development through tailor-made programmes for administrative staff
- Opportunities to pursue European funding to support activities such as DIFUSE; a project on best practice across the ECIU in technology transfer
- Joint responses to EU consultation processes

The ECIU engages in the debates on the EU 2020 strategy, new innovation policies and the creation of a European Higher Education Area and efforts to contribute to policy developments in the field of education and innovation in particular.