



**POSITION PAPER ON THE COMMUNICATION OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR
“A NEW ERA FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION”**



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swissuniversities



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POSITION PAPER on the Communication for “A new ERA for Research and Innovation”

UAS4EUROPE, as the main voice of more than 450 European Universities of Applied Sciences in more than 14 countries across Europe, welcomes the initiative to build up a stronger, renewed, and more efficient European Research Area (ERA).

We support in particular concrete measures such as engaging all European countries to collaborate, communicate, and coordinate actions to develop ERA. The European Research Area of the future should enable the European research community and industry to realize its true potential for excellence and impact for the benefit of all European citizens.

UAS4EUROPE comments on the following points:

- **Institutional transformation of universities**
- **Inclusiveness**
- **Symbiosis**
- **Synergies**
- **Governance**
- **Openness and international cooperation**

Institutional transformation of universities

UAS4EUROPE welcomes the stronger support for institutional modernisation of universities. This transformational agenda should take into account the different types of universities with their complementary strengths. In particular, it should recognise the value of impact-orientation and citizen engagement, which are at the heart of the institutional mission of Universities of Applied Sciences.

Inclusiveness

UAS4EUROPE agrees with the focus on excellence in a European dimension. In a world where traditional fundamental research and its norms still govern how excellence is conceived and supported in policy developments, it is important to alter the narrative to include societal challenges in the framework of assessing excellence. Excellent basic research does indeed provide the seed corn from which tomorrow's innovations may grow, but research results are currently underexploited. Universities of Applied Sciences play a pivotal role in translating such fundamental research into societal impact. This goal is best served by including all actors of the European research community. Europe's diversity and solidarity should be seen as a strength and has to include all European countries, regions, minorities, while respecting gender balance. Excellence includes not only the number of publications in prestigious journals, but should equally recognize industry and public sector collaborations, and knowledge and technology-transfer. UAS4EUROPE also proposes a focus on strengthening research and innovation across all regional ecosystems by increasing research management capacity at regional ecosystem hubs such as Universities of Applied Sciences. This can be done by increasing inclusion in European and national research programme development.

Symbiosis

UAS4EUROPE strongly supports a European Research Area which connects research, academia, and industry. The new ERA should promote a more symbiotic relationship between industry and academia: Higher education institutions should be more closely attuned to industry needs in addressing the skills mismatch and bolstering industry innovation capacity. Universities need industry, and industry needs universities, to translate R&I results into the economy. More project-oriented curricula, as already exist in the Universities of Applied Sciences, ensure a culture of efficient knowledge and technology-transfer, and close the gap between applied research and innovative products.

Synergies

UAS4EUROPE emphasizes deepened synergies between different policy programmes at European, national and regional level (see European Education Area, upcoming European Innovation Area, and European funding programmes). Duplication must be avoided and programmes should be complementary in nature while respecting inclusiveness. Programmes such as the European Innovation Ecosystems, to be implemented under Horizon Europe, should be a strong vehicle for promoting and strengthening inclusiveness of underserved research ecosystems and ecosystem actors like Universities of Applied Sciences.

Governance

UAS4EUROPE endorses a reinforced ERA governance structure. A stronger ERA is best served by a simplified and agile governance, with few governance bodies and ad-hoc working groups. This will allow transparent and fast actions to address the ERA priorities as laid down in the ERA roadmap, and to tackle challenges as yet unforeseen. Universities of Applied Sciences provide a resilient structure to expand and improve this potential.

Openness and international cooperation

Mobilizing Europe's full research potential will require adherence to strong open science principles in accordance with European values. The process of developing clear and practical open science principles and rules should be inclusive of all actors across the research value chain, in particular Universities of Applied Sciences. Open collaboration should also valorise international collaboration, encouraging participation of the best international partners in European research activities and creating framework conditions for mutual exchange.

Conclusion

Universities of Applied Sciences are essential partners in creating a renewed, stronger, and efficient European Research Area as defined by EU Council conclusions and the ERA Communication proposed by the European Commission.

Universities of Applied Sciences enrich the new European Research Area with:

- Smart partnerships for regional impact
 - Fulfilling the triangle of Knowledge, Research and Innovation
 - Research experts on Higher Education
 - Best practice collaboration between citizens, regional authorities, SMEs, and industry
 - Knowledge and technology-transfer in the regions and between all regional sectors
 - Bridging the gap between fundamental research and practical solutions for society
 - Addressing European societal challenges by practice-oriented research with citizens, regional bodies and industry
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UAS4EUROPE – Who we are

UAS4EUROPE is an informal network (founded 2016) representing more than 450 Universities of Applied Sciences from 14 European countries. The network aims to strengthen the voice of Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in Europe in the field of applied research and innovation. We are a networking platform for exchanging knowledge and for reaching out to European Institutions and other European stakeholders to ensure a better integration and visibility of UAS in Europe's research-and innovation policies and programmes.

The current network members are:

- **European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)**, representing over 600 institutions in over 40 countries within and outside the European Higher Education area.
- **Hochschule Bayern e.V.** (supported by the **Bavarian Research Alliance**), representing 20 UAS of Bavaria.
- **swissuniversities**, representing the Swiss Chamber of the 7 UAS of Switzerland.
- **Austrian FHK**, representing the 21 Austrian UAS.
- **University Colleges Denmark**, representing 8 UAS of Denmark.
- **The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (VH)**, representing 36 Dutch UAS.
- **Hochschulallianz für den Mittelstand (HafM)**, representing 12 German UAS.
- **Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (ARENE)**, representing 24 Finnish UAS.



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