



UAS4EUROPE
Chaired by Hochschule Bayern e.V.
Prof. Dr. Christiane Fritze

Commissioner for Innovation, Research,
Culture, Education, Youth and Sport
Mariya Gabriel
Rue de la Loi 200
1000 Bruxelles

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Dear Commissioner Gabriel,

UAS4EUROPE – the informal network of more than 450 Universities of Applied Sciences in over 14 European countries - would like to thank you for all the initiatives you launched last year. UAS4EUROPE very much appreciates the strengthening of the European Research Area and the establishment of a European Education Area.

We also support your plan to add the third missing element of the knowledge triangle with the establishment of a European Innovation Area (EIA). With this letter, UAS4EUROPE would like respond to your invitation to make suggestions for the design of an EIA and before the start of the announced public consultation.

The establishment of a European Innovation Area is indispensable to build bridges between research & innovation. Europe should in the development of the EIA play to its strengths, values and priorities, while addressing the gaps that need to be filled to achieve our common goals. Europe is a leader in fundamental science and its leading educational systems, and we can turn our diversity of stakeholders to our advantage by breaking the silos between industry and academia, entrepreneurship and education, science and innovation. This bringing together of diverse actors to achieve science-based impact is precisely the role that Universities of Applied Sciences play in our regions and seek to accelerate at the European level.

The EIA should enable the European research and innovation community to realize its true potential for excellence and societal impact for the benefit of all European citizens. Applied research at Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) delivers, and through their research bridge the gap between fundamental science, businesses and society. UAS are strong knowledge and education hubs in the region. As such, they systematically interlink stakeholders in the regional ecosystem to tackle societal challenges together with citizens, public and private partners with a direct contribution to social and economic development as result. UAS are strongly rooted in the regions they serve, and facilitate collaboration and exchange between public, private, societal and academic partners. Their close collaborative approach on research and innovation projects with outside actors ensures that industry and the public sector receive the adaptive, skilled workforce they need, while



students receive the vital experience of contributing to finding practice-based solutions to societal and economic challenges. These smart partnerships for regional impact should be reinforced and boosted for even broader impact.

Europe's strength lies in such place-based innovation addressing global challenges. To maintain and strengthen this leadership it needs stable, balanced and sustainable innovation ecosystems with a maximum flow of energy. Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) are indispensable actors in Innovation Ecosystems in acting as regionally anchored connectors between citizens, industry, SMEs and public institutions. UAS act as international key players with their cross-border collaborations, their culture of openness, as well as their practice of knowledge and information sharing. Furthermore, Universities of Applied Sciences act as innovation drivers and contributors to European entrepreneurship.

A European Innovation Area would also help to build bridges between education & innovation. Europe needs a more symbiotic relationship between industry and academia, in order to better translate fundamental research into real-world applications, and in order to feed practical lessons of industry into research processes. In order to tap into the great potential of our science, higher education institutions should be more closely attuned to industry needs, and industry likewise should be more attentive to the potential of innovation investment and collaboration. Universities of Applied Sciences can be set as a good example as they have a legal mandate to ensure a culture of efficient knowledge on the one hand and technology transfer on the other. UAS offer their students project-oriented curricula which connect education and applied research and support industry to generate innovative products.

A European Innovation Area cannot be successful without Universities of Applied Sciences! They are vital regional hubs for innovation, serving citizens, companies and public institutions. Their culture of demand-driven knowledge transfer and meeting societal and industry needs make them essential actors in improving Europe's success in valorising research results. With their practical education they form excellent scientists and a highly qualified future workforce. More vitally, Universities of Applied Sciences offer a model of how Europe can be a global leader in the next wave of technology and innovation, by embracing a holistic model combining agile skills development with impact-focused, collaborative research addressing the global challenges we must face together.

UAS4EUROPE offers its support to the European Commission in the preparation process for the establishment of the EIA. The members of UAS4EUROPE can provide expertise in demonstrating and identifying possibilities for a more innovative Europe, including stimulation of synergies within and between/across funding schemes. We can provide experts for the enrichment of expert groups and for mapping a constructive proposal for an innovative Europe with high economic and social impact all over the world. We can provide researchers and program directors who are experts in designing, developing and fostering regional innovation ecosystems, and can build on years of experience in working with start-ups and scale-ups in their region.

We look forward to setting up a constructive collaboration in which UAS contribute to the design and shaping of the European Innovation Area.

Kind regards

Karin Lukas-Eder

on behalf of UAS4EUROPE