

EUROTECH UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCE – ERA IN ACTION

Explanatory Note to members of the Governing Board (GB)

1. This document has been prepared by the EuroTech Universities European Research Area Working Group (ERA WG) which was established by the “Brussels Group”. The members of the ERA WG are:

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The work originated in November 2012 with a series of discussions with the European Commission and within the EuroTech Universities, led by the Brussels Office. The ERA WG started its work in late March, with two meetings in Brussels on 28 March and 18 April. The period between the two meetings was used to work on the text and to discuss developments within each university partner. The ERA WG meeting on 18 April also included an open and informal discussion with an official from the European Commission’s Directorate on ERA.

2. The structure of the statement is in line with the European Commission’s Communication “A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth”, launched on 17 July 2012. The presentation of the statement is similar to existing ERA related Memoranda Of Understanding (European University Association, European Association of Research & Technology Organisations, League of European Research Universities, Nordforsk) and especially the draft MoU sent by CESAER to European Commission Director-General Robert-Jan Smits. In order to avoid duplication with CESAER, the document attempts to identify EuroTech Universities commitments which clearly go beyond the commitments of the CESAER document. The individual commitments are specified as either at the level of each partner university or at the level of the Alliance as a whole.
3. Subject to amendments and eventual approval by the GB, it is proposed that this document is sent officially by the EuroTech Universities’ President(s) to the European Commission - either to Commissioner Geoghagen-Quinn herself or the Director-General for Research, Robert-Jan Smits. GB members are kindly advised that while the contents of/commitments in the draft document should reflect “serious” intentions by the EuroTech Universities and by the Alliance as a whole, its possible transmission by the President(s) to the European Commission does not entail any legal obligations.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. The EuroTech Universities Alliance is a strategic partnership of four leading universities of science, technology and engineering, namely:
 - Technical University of Denmark
 - Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne
 - Eindhoven University of Technology
 - Technische Universität München
2. The Alliance's mission is to develop technical solutions which address grand societal challenges.
3. As members of the European University Association (EUA), the EuroTech Universities are already engaged in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the EUA and the European Commission, signed on 17 July 2012. In their capacity as members of the Conference of European Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research (CESAER), the EuroTech Universities endorse the draft MoU sent by the President of CESAER to the Director- General of DG Research and Innovation on March 2013.
4. The EuroTech Universities recognize that the structuring of the ERA will not be achieved through a "one size fits all" approach and cannot proceed as a single process. These simultaneous, multi-level, multi speed structuring processes also provide the rationale for member institutions of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) and of CESAER undertaking ERA related commitments which are additional to commitments they have made as members of EUA.
5. Durable, transnational, inter-university strategic partnerships, such as the EuroTech Universities Alliance are only practicable across a relatively small number of institutions - the experience gained by Networks of Excellence as a major implementation instrument in FP6 is fully in line with this conclusion. These types of partnerships are fully complementary and add value to the necessarily looser cooperation among members of larger networks.
6. The EuroTech Universities are determined that their strengthening partnership within the Alliance is used to promote cooperation with other institutions, stakeholder organizations and with societal actors

ACTIONS BY ALL EUROTECH UNIVERSITIES AND BY THE EUROTECH UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCE IN RELATION TO THE REINFORCEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

Within each of its four member institutions and/or at the level of the Alliance as a whole, the EuroTech Universities hereby state their voluntary intent to carry out the actions set out below with a view to achieving measurable progress by end of 2014. Such progress to be monitored by the Alliance's Governing Board and published on the Alliance's website.

POST GRADUATE RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND RESEARCH

The EuroTech Universities' excellence in research and education combined with their long-standing expertise in knowledge transfer ensure that PhDs involve a thorough training in research accompanied by an appropriate orientation to industry's needs. The first Alliance level joint doctoral activities are underway.

The EuroTech Universities will actively promote:

- Open recruitment / selection process of doctoral candidates, systematically sharing and jointly advertising open positions for PhD-candidates;
- Systematic sharing of information on open positions and publishing on all four partners' websites.

The Alliance is engaged in building shared educational and research platforms at the post graduate levels. It is committed to making measurable progress in relation to the following:

- Creation of a joint database on PhD courses;
- Cooperation and participation in Masters programmes on innovation, entrepreneurship and technology management;
- Joint doctoral education, including exchange schemes for PhD and PDEng students, and joint summer schools;
- Shared access to and creation of joint transferable skills courses (such as entrepreneurship, ethics, communication and industrial design) with a view to enhancing mobility between disciplines, between academia & industry and across borders;
- Depending on progress on above, development of a portfolio of interdisciplinary doctoral courses, taught by faculty across the members of the Alliance.

RESEARCH ATTRACTIVENESS, RESEARCH CAREERS

The EuroTech Universities are fully engaged in the continuing development, application, evaluation and exchanges of best practices in relation to attracting excellent researchers - especially but not exclusively the most promising young talent. Within this overall context, the Alliance has given careful consideration to the detailed contents of "Invitation to research stakeholders" in the ERA Communication (Section 2.3), under the heading "An open labour market for researchers."

Based on these considerations the EuroTech Universities, individually and the Alliance as a whole, commit themselves to make measurable progress in relation to the following points of the ERA Communication:

- Use of open, transparent and merit based procedures for fulfilling vacancies and exchange best practices in recruitment and retention of top talent in universities of science & technology, including through family-friendly recruitment approaches;
- Encourage debate on career development in universities. The first contribution to this debate will be a high-level public event on Tenure Track will take place on 10 June 2013 in Brussels.
- To the extent appropriate and practicable, make full use of the instruments offered by the European Commission, such as advertising all researcher vacancies on EURAXESS in line with



its common profiles from January 2014 onwards and exploring the use of HR Excellence in Research logo and the signing of the European Charter and Code of Conduct for Researchers;

- Promote mobility and exchange of academic and support staff across member institutions;
- Establish a joint network of young academic professionals (professors, postdocs e.g. “EuroTech Universities Academy of Young Professors”), aimed at creating linkages between researchers strengthening their professional skills, including through mentoring schemes.

ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY COOPERATION AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

The EuroTech Universities are all among the acknowledged leaders in various aspects of academia-industry cooperation, mobility and knowledge transfer. Based on their excellence in science, technology and innovation and on their societal mission, the EuroTech Universities members play based a strong role in regional innovation ecosystems and business clusters.

The Alliance will create a joint knowledge transfer and innovation platform through which the EuroTech Universities partners will work together to:

- Facilitate cooperation between the innovation ecosystems and open up opportunities for innovative companies and academia to meet and exchange expertise and foresight;
- Further professionalize knowledge transfer activities and develop improved output indicators, including patents, spin-offs and joint university-industry publications;
- Promote best practices and principles for knowledge transfer and support of regional innovation ecosystems regarding issues such as standardized contracts, entrepreneurship stimuli and business development. Special attention will be paid to the needs and involvement of the new Member States. A high level public event on this issue will be held in November 2013.
- Building on the EuroTech Universities partners’ integration in regional innovation ecosystems, the Alliance aims to strengthen the European scope of these ecosystems to exchange complementary expertise.

GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN RESEARCH

Universities of science and technology face special challenges in attracting female students and in recruiting female staff members. The EuroTech Universities are all currently engaged in addressing this challenge. Based on these foundations the Alliance is committed to making measurable progress in relation to the following:

- Based on exchanges of experience and best practice the Alliance will create a joint EuroTech Universities Gender Action Plan, with measurable targets, including support measures for various target groups (school age, students, researchers and teaching staff) as well as joint research and education projects. Measures will be jointly monitored, assessed and amended as appropriate.

OPEN ACCESS

The EuroTech Universities will work with academia, research organisations and networks on the national and international level to stimulate Open Access principles, standards, facilities and procedures to be developed and implemented.



COMMUNICATING ERA

Targeted communications and dissemination activities are essential to promote the ERA and to make it more attractive and competitive on a global scale. The EuroTech Universities Alliance is committed to ensure that its communications and knowledge sharing activities contribute to these ERA objectives.

The EuroTech Universities Alliance will take action in:

- Developing a EuroTech Universities joint platform for communicating science and technology to a range of target audiences including researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs and decision-makers at EU and national level. The activities of the platform will include the development and dissemination of best practices guidelines and success stories (e.g. on academia-industry cooperation).
- Launching a EuroTech Universities on-line consolidated e-learning programme of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in relevant scientific and technological themes;
- Supporting cross-border exchange among researchers through a series of dedicated workshops, which offer an opportunity to discuss and pave the way for cooperation in fields of mutual interest.