

Position Paper EU Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2020

With contributions from

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To whom it may concern:

The EuroTech Universities Alliance brings together four European top-class universities committed to finding technological solutions to the grand challenges facing society. We very much welcome the envisioned Entrepreneurship2020 Action Plan by the EU Commission as well as the initiative of the DG Industry and Enterprise to reach out to stakeholders in a consultation process, since we are committed to encourage entrepreneurship as a central device of transforming research into a greater benefit for society.

Start-up ideas arise from discoveries

Technology-based and growth-orientated start-ups are particularly important for the goals of this action plan, as they help to tackle societal challenges and enable our economies to stay innovative. Outstanding universities of technology, like the EuroTech Universities Alliance members TUM, DTU, TU/e and EPFL, offer great opportunities to promote innovation and to foster the development of technology-based and growth-oriented businesses. As a natural source of high-tech spin-offs we have initiated extensive entrepreneurship activities at our universities to help scientists transform their knowledge and technologies into companies becoming Europe's growth engines of tomorrow.

EU measures can create a supportive framework for growth

University-based support in business creation is most successful when it acts in a favorable and supportive framework. Thus we see great potential in the dialogue with the EU Commission about future policy measures

- promoting the entrepreneurial culture, in particular through exposures, role models and mentors
- enhancing the flexibilization of regulation concerning transfer opportunities between regular employment and entrepreneurial activities
- adjusting evaluation criteria for scientific grants to include acknowledgement of scientist's involvement in start-up activities
- increasing training possibilities for students in entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship throughout their education
- promoting early internationalization of start-ups by encouraging exchange of entrepreneurs within Europe
- promoting cooperation of start-up companies with industry, especially with SMEs
- helping to tap entrepreneurial potential of women, e.g. through networking amongst female investors and entrepreneurs

- strengthening possibilities of financing promising innovation projects at universities that are close to becoming new high-tech start-up companies through e.g. so-called proof-of-concept or gap funding.
- easing access to early stage investments from public and private investors for high-tech start-up companies. In this regard we want to stress the important role of the European Investment Fund, who can function as an anchor investor for early-stage venture funds and help to attract further investments from public and private partners
- ensuring protection of intellectual property rights by universities for early stage findings and enhancing the process from proof of principle to proof of concept
- creating a single digital market, since we see the lack thereof as one of the main disadvantages of EU start-ups against US competitors
- fostering joint activities of the Commission's DG Research & Innovation and DG Industry & Enterprise to reap the great potentials that lie in an effective collaboration between business and science for entrepreneurship.

EuroTech Universities Alliance Representation Office in Brussels

The EuroTech Universities Alliance (www.eurotech-universities.org) is a strategic partnership of four of Europe's leading technical universities: Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne; Technical University of Denmark; Eindhoven University of Technology and Technische Universität München. Together, the EuroTech Universities are strongly committed to finding technical solutions to address grand societal challenges.

The Alliance's unique profile is provided by its member universities' proven capabilities to combine research excellence, technological know-how and an entrepreneurial culture, including strong collaborative arrangements with leading technology intensive companies, SMEs and research organizations. These capabilities are fully applied in offering education and training of the highest academic quality and relevance. This integrated approach provides a concrete demonstration of the "knowledge triangle" in action.

The EuroTech Universities are pro-active in pursuing the key aims and objectives of the European Research Area and articulate an increasingly strong and clear voice within the changing research, innovation and higher education landscape in Europe and beyond. The EuroTech Universities Brussels office officially opens in October 2012.

For further information on this initiative and other connected requests, please contact

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