

EUA welcomes Commission initiative putting education at the heart of a more social Europe

The European University Association (EUA) applauds the European Commission's proposal to put education front and centre on Europe's social agenda. With its [Communication](#) on "Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture", published ahead of the European Social Summit, the Commission gives new impetus to European cooperation through education and culture and outlines its vision of a European Education Area for 2025. Given the common goal to provide quality education with equal access for all, EUA finds the European initiative timely and highly relevant. Improving education at all levels, with a clear emphasis on lifelong learning and inclusiveness is key to responding to challenges Europe is facing such as changing labour markets and digitalisation.

EUA supports the Commission's call for even closer cooperation between European universities, underpinned by the elimination of administrative and legal obstacles and the provision of adequate funding.

European-level initiatives are well-suited to further encourage and support cooperation on important issues such as innovative teaching, curricula development and the recognition of qualifications, which are already on universities' agendas and often require collaboration with other actors. A growing number of universities collaborate not only with employers (90%), but also with local communities (88%), primary and secondary schools (87%), and vocational institutions (73%).¹

Future EU funding programmes should not only focus on mobility, but also support universities in their efforts to improve provision, also through digital means and for lifelong learning. In this regard EUA welcomes the emphasis given in the Communication to higher education teaching. Future collaboration in this area should build on existing activities such as the [EUA Learning and Teaching Initiative](#) and consider the [European principles for the enhancement of learning and teaching](#).

Collaboration at the policy level within the EU through a new initiative like the European Education Area would need careful alignment with existing frameworks such as the Bologna Process, whose geographical scope goes far beyond the EU and includes governments and stakeholders alike. It should also consider initiatives under the [Renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education](#) launched in May this year, as well as the European Research Area (ERA). Policy fragmentation and the creation of parallel processes should be avoided. In this respect, EUA proposed recently recommendations for a better link between research, education and innovation policies at EU level in its position towards the 9th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP9).

¹ The forthcoming EUA TRENDS 2018 survey, conducted between March and August 2017, collected responses from 303 higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area.

More information about EUA's work on European education:

- [EUA response to the EU renewed agenda for higher education](#)
- [EUA response to the review of the EU's framework for key competences for lifelong learning](#)
- [EUA Learning and Teaching Initiative](#)
- [European Principles for the enhancement of learning and teaching](#)
- [EUA recommendations to the Erasmus+ mid-term review](#) and [additional points](#)
- [Focus on Automatic Institutional Recognition Project \(FAIR\)](#)
- [EUA proposals for the Next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation \(FP9\)](#)

The **European University Association** (EUA) is the representative organisation of more than 800 universities in 47 European countries and 33 national rectors' conferences. EUA works closely with its members to ensure that the voice of European universities is heard.

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