# The European Higher Education Package

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# Empowering European Higher Education

A **European vision** for the **future of universities** and how the **Union can support**

A **call to Member States and higher education institutions** across Europe **to join forces**

**Proposed recommendations** for effective **European Higher Education cooperation**

**Commissioner Mariya Gabriel**

The European strategy for universities and the proposal for a Council recommendation on transnational cooperation *"will benefit the entire higher education sector, first and foremost our **students**. They need modern transnational campuses with easy access to mobility abroad to allow for a truly European study path and experience. We stand ready to join forces with the Member States and higher education institutions across Europe. Together we can **bring closer education, research and innovation in service to society."***

**EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR UNIVERSITIES**

SUPPORTING AND ENABLING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS ACROSS EUROPE

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A **European shared vision** to support **all types of higher education institutions** to adapt to changing conditions across **all their missions**

**Priority areas for transformation based and clear objectives**

**Concrete actions at EU level** to enable and support the sector

**Synergies with actions and national reforms**

**Council Conclusions adopted by EYCS Council 5 April 2022**

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# Four key objectives

**1** **Strengthen the European dimension in higher education and research**

Bringing transnational cooperation to a higher level contributes to a culture of excellence and inclusion, a true European identity, and global competitiveness and attractiveness

**2** **Consolidate universities as lighthouses of our European way of life**

**Strengthen quality and relevance for future-proof skills**

*In a fast changing environment, universities need to strengthen their capacities to equip young people, lifelong learners and researchers with the right competences and skills*

**Foster diversity, inclusiveness and gender equality**

More institutional changes are needed for universities to become places of truly equal opportunities

**Promote and protect European democratic values**

Universities need to be places of freedom: for speech, thought, learning, research

**3** **Empower universities as key actors of change in the twin green and digital transitions**

**Develop skills, competences and technological innovation for the green and digital transition**

Universities are key actors for the green transition and for a more sustainable world. We need to make 'connected universities' a reality

**4** **Reinforce universities as drivers of Europe's global role and leadership**

Universities are instrumental in building Europe's connections with the world

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# Four flagship initiatives

Expand to **60 European Universities with more than 500 universities by mid-2024**, with an Erasmus+ indicative budget totalling EUR 1.1 billion for 2021-2027.

Examining the need for and feasibility of institutionalised cooperation instruments, such as a possible **legal status for alliances of higher education institutions:** pilot as of 2022 under Erasmus+ the implementation of existing European instruments

Explore common criteria leading to a potential **European label for joint programmes**, to be piloted as of 2022 under Erasmus+. Later on, the possible design and delivery, on a voluntary basis, at national, regional or institutional level, of joint degrees at all levels, based on these co-created European criteria, could be envisaged

Widening the implementation of the **European Student Card initiative**.

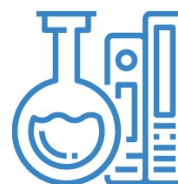European Commission

# Proposed actions EU level
## *quality and relevance for future-proof skills*

- ❑ **European framework for attractive and sustainable careers in higher education in 2023**
- ❑ Support the future-proof **skills development and entrepreneurship competences** of graduates and **co-design of curricula** (link to Erasmus+ Alliances for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills)
- ❑ Extend **EIT label** to lifelong learning activities
- ❑ Uptake the **joint EU/OECD-INFE financial competence framework**
- ❑ Reach **100 000 Erasmus+ trainees abroad every year**
- ❑ Mainstream **new innovative approaches to learning and teaching**
- ❑ **ERA Hubs:** reinforce universities' role in local innovation ecosystems
- ❑ Strengthen role of universities in **ERA4You**
- ❑ **Innovators at school** & a **toolkit for universities** for the development of incubators
- ❑ **Annual European Talent Fair**

**SUPPORT UNIVERSITIES AS LIGHTHOUSES OF OUR EUROPEAN WAY OF LIFE:**

Higher education and research in Europe support our European way of life through their trifold focus on 1) quality and relevance for future-proof skills, 2) diversity and inclusion 3) democratic practices, fundamental rights and academic values and freedom of scientific research. Flexible and attractive academic careers, valuing teaching, research, entrepreneurship, management and leadership activities need to be promoted.

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# Proposed actions EU level

## *diversity, inclusion, gender equality*

- ❑ **European framework for diversity and inclusion**, including gender gaps
- ❑ **Roadmap** to address the underrepresentation of **women in STEM**
- ❑ Support for **researchers at risk** with guiding principles for universities to facilitate their inclusion.

## *Promote and protect democratic values*

- ❑ Roll-out and monitor the new **Erasmus Charter for Higher Education** and the **new Erasmus Student Charter**
- ❑ foster academic debates on values and democracy **under Erasmus+ Jean Monnet** Higher Education activities
- ❑ **Guiding principles on protecting fundamental academic values** in synergy with **Action plan** for protecting academic freedom and the freedom of scientific research under ERA
- ❑ Support for implementing guidelines on foreign interference in R&I

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# Proposed actions EU level

## *Green transition*

- ❑ Promote **whole-institutional approaches** to sustainability, climate and environmental literacy and **mainstream environmental sustainability** in education offer
- ❑ **Higher Education Climate Frontrunners**
- ❑ **Green villages**
- ❑ **Green and Blue Erasmus+**
- ❑ **EIT European Battery Alliance Academy**
- ❑ **Implementation of strategic R&I action plans** on the green energy transformation and the greening of key industrial ecosystems.

## *Digital transition*

- ❑ **transnational cooperation to develop the digital skills and competences (Digital Education Action Plan)**
- ❑ **Specialised education and training programmes** (**Digital Europe Programme**)
- ❑ **European platform** to promote cooperation between higher education institutions
- ❑ **Erasmus+ Jean Monnet measures** to recognise at EU level the efforts of universities driving the digital transformation across the EU
- ❑ **co-developing guidelines and principles** for allowing **mutual access to services** and enabling **seamless knowledge and data exchange**, reflecting the need for interoperability and openness

**EMPOWER UNIVERSITIES AS ACTORS OF CHANGE IN THE TWIN GREEN AND DIGITAL TRANSITIONS:**

Support the full engagement of universities in unfolding green and digital transitions. The EU will only meet its ambitions on equipping more young people and lifelong learners with digital skills and skills for the green transition, or developing green solutions through technological and social innovation, if the higher education sector pulls its weight.

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# Proposed actions EU level
**_Building Europe's connections with the world_**

- ❑ **Team Europe approach**
- ❑ **'Study in Europe' portal** to foster international exchanges
- ❑ **peer-learning among universities and agencies on internationalization**
- ❑ **partnerships with priority regions** e.g. Western Balkans, the Neighbourhood and Africa, based on reciprocity,
- ❑ **alumni networks**
- ❑ **mobility** between Europe and other regions of the world

**REINFORCE UNIVERSITIES AS DRIVERS OF THE EU'S GLOBAL ROLE AND LEADERSHIP:**

Through deeper international cooperation within Europe and beyond, support universities in becoming more outward looking and competitive on the global scene, and in contributing to the strengthening of higher education systems in partner countries, in line with European values. This will help in turn boosting Europe's attractiveness not only as a study destination, but also as an attractive global partner for cooperation in education, research and innovation.

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# Make the Strategy a reality

### Mobilise adequate financial support to higher education and research

*Achieving inclusion and excellence requires appropriate funding for universities*

MFF 2021–27 + NextGenerationEU = EUR 80 billion dedicated to the higher education sector

Promote **synergies between the European Education Area, the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area** in a fit-for-purpose and flexible manner

### Set-up a European Higher Education Sector Observatory to monitor progress

*The Observatory will combine the best of the current EU data tools and capacities in one single place and make it possible to:*

▸ Monitor the implementation of European policy priorities
▸ Support data needs of Member States and higher education institutions
▸ Promote competitiveness and attractiveness of higher education institutions and attracting talent

**Reporting** through the European Education Area strategic framework and the European Research Area governance

# BUILDING BRIDGES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION COOPERATION

**FACILITATING TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**FIRST STEP TOWARDS:**

- Institutionalised cooperation instruments (e.g. legal status for alliances)
- Common criteria for a European label for joint programmes, followed possibly by voluntary joint degrees based on these European criteria

**SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCES**

**WIDENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN STUDENT CARD INITIATIVE**

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Reinforce **European transnational cooperation** by building bridges

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Support **all higher education institutions** and enhance the **coherence** of European higher education systems

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**Full implementation of existing instruments and exploring avenues for new ones**

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Recommendation for **national reforms and European support**

**Council Recommendation adopted by EYCS Council 5 April**

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# Thank you

**More information:**

Higher education initiatives | European Education Area (europa.eu)

Commission Communication on a European strategy for universities | European Education Area (europa.eu)

Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation

Council conclusions on a European strategy empowering higher education institutions for the future of Europe