RI4C2

Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

FOREU2 online meetings M1 to M18

Report

DELIVERABLE 8.5

MONTH 18

D8.5 – FOREU2 online meetings M1 to M18

Table of content

I. Executive summary

Overview of FOREU2

The creation of FOREU2 was initially proposed in the context of the preparation of SwafS projects submitted in November 2020 by all the second-generation Alliances (selected in 2020). The 24 alliances (ATHENA, AURORA Alliance, Circle U, E3UDRES2, EC2U, EELISA, ENGAGE.EU, ENHANCE, ENLIGHT, ERUA, EUNICE, EUNIWell, EURECA-PRO, EuroTeQ, Eut, FILMEU, INVEST, NeurotechEU, RUN-EU, T4E, ULYSSEUS, UNIC, UNITA, UNIVERSEH) have agreed, in their SwafS application documents, that they will ensure joint collaboration across their SwafS projects by creating a "Forum of European Universities 2 – FOREU2" where they will discuss and share good practices concerning R&I.

The EC2U Alliance is the coordinator of FOREU2, as this Alliance offered to coordinate the forum in their proposal. Such role will contribute to promoting EC2U Alliance values beyond the seven universities of the EC2U Alliance. The Alliance's involvement does not stop there. The aim is to work as much as possible with the first-generation of Alliances (selected in 2019), via FOREU1 the "mirror group" of 17 Alliances. To this end, the EC2U Alliance is in constant contact with the Alliance in charge of the coordination of FOREU1 (ECIU): this dialogue ensures regular cross discussions between the two groups of Alliances.

Ludovic Thilly as Coordinator of the EC2U Alliance SwafS project, RI4C2, acts as Chair of the "Global Forum" and Chair of the "SwafS projects" sub-group. As stated in the Grant Agreement N°101035803, the EC2U Alliance has to organise multilateral meetings every three months with the Global Forum and the SwafS projects sub-group. During the first 18 months of the RI4C2 project, eight meetings have been organised with the Global Forum and six meetings with the SwafS projects sub-group. Four joint meetings between FOREU1 and FOREU2 alliance coordinators have been organised. These meetings have allowed us to exchange common concerns and share good practices.

Most meetings are organised with an open part with one or more external guests to the Global Forum, followed by a second closed part with only the project coordinators (Alliance Coordinators or SwafS project coordinators). The external guests are often officials from the European Commission who are invited to answer questions on project management, financial and legal aspects, but also sometimes to present future developments of the European Universities initiative.

II. FOREU2 Global Forum meetings

A. List of meeting between M1 to M18

The FOREU2 Global Forum and the first sub-groups were created during the first two meetings on February 2021 and June 2021, as presented in deliverable 8.4 (Annex). In this deliverable, we focus on the meetings during the active period of the RI4C2 project, listed in the table below.

Joint meetings of FOREU1 and FOREU2 are also regularly organised but are not included in this deliverable.

Date	Main topics	Number of attendees
19/11/2021	Debriefing from meeting with French Minister Vidal	60
10/01/2022	Open part: The 2022 Erasmus+ Call for proposals; Closed part: European Initiatives & French Presidency	75
09/03/2022	Open part: Policy Objectives of European degree and legal statute / mid-term report; Closed part: General Affairs of FOREU2	72
14/04/2022	Q&A with the European Commission on the mid-term report	102
21/06/2022	Mid-term report, Events at the EU level & Ukrainian universities	50
04/10/2022	Open part: Discussion on the assessment of mid-term reports with EACEA representative(s); Closed part: 2023 Call & FOREU1 &2 Statements	63
24/11/2022	Response from Commissioner Gabriel / Mid-term / Events	35
08/12/2022	Open Part: Erasmus+ Call 2023 with EACEA & DG EAC	68

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

B.   FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 19 November 2021 (Kick-off meeting)

1.   Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
Global Forum Meeting
Online meeting

Friday 19th November 2021
15.30pm – 17.00pm CET

Agenda

1.   Debriefing from meeting with Minister Vidal (15/11) and follow-up actions (30 min)

2.   General information on European Universities initiative (next funding phase, mid-term reports) (15 min)

3.   General affairs of FOREU2 (incl. need to create new sub-groups) (15 min)

4.   Updates from FOREU2 sub-groups (15 min)

5.   Next FOREU2 Global meetings and guests from the European Commission (15 min)

6.   AOB

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2.   Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Debriefing from meeting with Minister Vidal and follow-up actions

Workshop with the French Minister: On 15 November, the Workshop took place with the French Minister of Higher Education & Research Frédérique Vidal in Paris. This event gathered the 41 coordinators of the 1st and 2nd call of Alliances of European Universities[1]. They organised the meeting in the context of the upcoming French Presidency of the EU. FOREU2 is currently drafting a letter to the Minister to thank her for their open mindless and the quality of the discussion. The afternoon debriefing was also important since potential follow up actions were added. An online version of this letter will be sent so that every Alliance can comment and consult with their teams. Concerning the Alliances contributions to the Minister's questions, it is possible to send them before 19/11.

During the meeting, Minister Vidal made two proposals:

1. identify possible funding programmes of relevance for specific access to Alliances ("fast track")
2. invite Alliances to actively participate to an event on the 25 and 26 January 2022 in Paris, under French Presidency. On the 25th, there will be a political event with the 27 Ministers. On the 26th, workshops will be organised with the 41 alliances., Ludovic Thilly (EC2U Alliance) and Olga Wessels (FOREU1 Chair) will meet with the French Ministry next week to organise the call for participation. Olga Wessels and Ludovic Thilly will send a document very soon proposing concrete contributions. This event will be registered under the French Presidency of the EU so it will give a very high visibility to the Alliances of European Universities.

Open discussion:
- French Minister Vidal did not put on top of the list of the priorities the legal statute of the European universities. Another point is that no major differences was observed between the contributions from the Alliances from the 1st call and from those from the 2nd call. All activities from 41 Alliances are now converging to similar states.
- During the afternoon meeting (15 November), two main points were discussed: Firstly, the European Degree, for which no solution will be found with the Commission in the short-term, since the European Commission is also waiting for solutions to come from Alliances. Secondly, Minister Vidal confirmed that if Alliances want to obtain more funding in the future, they have to demonstrate that they have succeeded to achieve their goals (incl. deliverables).
- The Commission does not know how to properly assess the Alliances' impact. Alliances have to be proactive in proposing their own indicators.
- What will be the consequences for the French Presidency of EU since there are elections in France next year? It is known that nothing will be solved within 6 months, so Alliances want,

---

[1] First call Alliances of European Universities: FOREU1
  Second call Alliances of European Universities: FOREU2

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

in the letter to Ministry Vidal, to make sure that her ambitions are common with those of the Czech Republic and Sweden (as a Presidency Trio). Alliances need to know if there is the same level of commitment between the different ministers.

2. General information on European Universities initiative (next funding phase, mid-term reports)

Call: Alliances are waiting for the call (for 17 Alliances and new ones) to be open mid-week 48.

Midterm report: the feedback from midterm reports from the 17 Alliances is rather positive. There is a general section for all the 17 reports which gives a global recommendation: this document will be shared with 24 Alliances. (See attachment to the e-mail)

3. General affairs of FOREU2 (incl. need to create new sub-groups)

Communication tools:

Mailing list: foreu2.globalforum@ml.univ-poitiers.fr

Online table (composition of sub-groups)

Note: Once there is an update made on the online table, please inform Carolina Lioré (EC2U Alliance).

Link to Teams Group.

Note: Reminder to use the Teams Group as an opportunity to list some topics for next meetings.

New sub-group: After approval by the Bureau and the Coordinators during this meeting, **a new sub-group called "Multilingualism"** will be created. This topic is a priority for the European Commission. The sub-group will be led by Ramona Baumgartner from ERUA. **Please update the table with the people that will be involved.**

4. Updates from FOREU2 sub-groups

Quality Assurance (Franck Wehinger - ERUA):
- 2 meetings: One organisational meeting and the second one was on presentations of each alliance on quality insurance.
- Goal: A paper in QA
- Next meeting on 6 December.

Cooperation with non-EU partners (Magdalena Sikorska - EUNICE):
- 2 meetings
- 6 areas will be developed:
    o Financial possibilities in terms of programmes, internships, joint projects between the alliances and non-EU countries.
    o Geopolitical Strategy to analyse the new priorities and opportunities for collaborations with different countries, universities and institutions.
    o Joint degrees (challenges and opportunities)
    o Global engagement
    o Financial aid for capacity building projects and volunteering projects
    o Sustainable development goals
- It was also agreed to invite the colleague of FOREU1. Ludovic Thilly will ask to FOREU1.

Legal entity (Dana Samson - Circle U):
- 2 meetings
- Focus on 3 aspects which are transversal: joint degree, hiring academic staff and applying for funds.
- Goals: For this first analysis, Alliances want to know how existing entities can help to overcome some of those obstacles.

Alliance coordination (Nuno Rodrigues - RUN-EU on behalf of Gijs Coucke - ENLIGHT):
- 2 meetings
- Discussions on how to solve problems of management from an operational point of view. In particular, it seems that some project officers have different approaches to solve issues and not everyone is getting the same answer to the same questions. The group felt that it was needed to communicate with the Commission on specific topics for a constructive approach:
    o Make sure that project officers have a common understanding of management issues (maybe a FAQ would help?)
    o Ask for flexibility regarding the impact of COVID on financial management
    o Raise the ceiling of the "other costs".

The group has thus written a draft letter to be sent to the Commission after approval from the Coordinators. This letter will be shared, with a deadline for feedback (cf. email). Once validated, Ludovic Thilly will contact FOREU1 to see if they want to join this initiative. Indeed, having a global message from the 41 alliances would be extremely important and influential.

Digital platforms (Vlad Petcu - UNITA):
- 2 meetings.
- Creation of a communication channel dedicated to technical persons within the Alliances.
- Project of a letter that will be presented in January to the Global Forum for approval.

Higher Education Transformation agenda (Anne-May Janssen - Aurora)
- 2 meetings
- An opportunity was given to submit some extra additional feedback to the Commission on strategy.

5. Next FOREU2 Global meetings and guests from the European Commission

Guests: FOREU2 will invite Commission representatives to the meetings (from DG EAC, DGF RTD or other DGs) to prepare for the mid-term report (Next Spring). 30 to 45 minutes during the open part can be allocated to this discussion. One of the topics to discuss will be: <u>What are the expectations for the mid-term report from the Commission?</u> the upcoming call (for the 17 Alliances) needs to be checked to get prepared for the discussion.

Next meeting: between mid-December and mid-January. The link for the doodle will be sent by email.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

C.   FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 10 January 2022

1.   Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
Global Forum Meeting
Online meeting

Monday 10th January 2022
14.00pm – 16.30pm CET

Agenda

Open Part

1.   Presentation from DG EAC (Tine DELVA and Ioana DEWANDELER) followed by Q&As (45 min)

Closed Part

2.   General information on European Universities initiative and French Presidency of EU (15 min)

3.   General affairs of FOREU2 (10 min)

4.   Updates from FOREU2 sub-groups (15 min)

5.   Next FOREU2 Global meetings and guests from the European Commission (5 min)

6.   AOB

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

2.   Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

OPEN PART

1. Presentation from DG EAC (Tine DELVA and Ivelina FEDULOVA)

The 2022 Erasmus+ Call for proposals (See the presentation attached)

The New call was launched in November, and the results will be announced in July 2022. We had an Info Session on the 15 December (Link to records and more detailed presentation: Info session).

The new call was delivered following Council Conclusions on the European Universities on 17 May 2021. The new call keeps the essential points of the first calls (see presentation attached) and provides bridge funding under Erasmus+ between the pilot phase and a future programmatic funding. The same call will be open in 2022, 2023 and 2024. The main and news points are the following:

- Long-term approach = 4+2 years bridge funding
- Competitive procedure based on qualificative criteria
- Evaluation by independent experts like previous calls
- Opening up the geographical scope of associated partners to all Bologna countries (only full partners can receive funding under these calls)
- Promoting the inclusion of more Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): currently, Alliances cover 5% of all HEIs across Europe, but with the new funding process, they can potentially reach 10% of HEIs.

Identified two topics based on quality criteria

After consultation with the Member States and stakeholders, two topics were identified based on quality criteria. First topic is the **intensification of prior institutional transnational cooperation,** and the second topic is the development of new deep institutional transnational cooperation. Topic 1 concerns directly the Alliances selected in the pilot phase. The Alliances selected in 2020 will have the possibility to apply next year. Of the two topics, the first one will have more funding. For new Alliances, there is no change; They will follow the same concept based on diverse cooperation models.

The award criteria

The award criteria will be based on three criteria, that are slightly different from the previous calls. Applications will be evaluated based on the project's **relevance, quality, and impact,** and the application form is simpler as a result of a standardisation of the tools with the new calls.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

<u>Who can apply?</u>

What is new compared with the last calls is the possibility to refer to a legal entity that each Alliance may set up under some national law. Alliances are allowed to add such legal entity as a full partner, meaning that the legal entity will receive funding, with the possibility to hire This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803 common staff, etc. However, this legal entity will not count for the financial bonus in case of Alliance expansion.

Mid-term progress report:

The mid-term and final reports are mandatory deliverables for each Alliance. The mid-term report will be simpler and more global in comparison to the one used for the Alliances selected in 2019. The mid-term report sections and questions are not specific to the European universities (they are generic to any European project). The templates will be available soon on the EU portal including (note: templates have been sent to Coordinators on 25/01/22):

1. need to provide information regarding the progress of the Alliance.

2. some yes or no questions.

3. a section to report per WPs includes milestones, deliverables and tasks.

There is some overlap with the content in the monitoring system, but in the template, there is space for providing more details regarding deviations, issues etc. The last part of the core template is mainly on the budget.

This progress report is very important since it will present the progress in the Alliance.

Note that the mid-term report deliverable encoded in your GA at month 18 will be automatically postponed to month 20 to provide with more time to work on the first 18 months of activity.

Special intervention from Gijs Couke (ENLIGHT), Chair of the sub-group on "Alliance Coordination (operational issues)":

The sub-group wants to signal a few difficulties around project management and communicative issues with some Project Officers (POs). Those issues have quite an impact on Alliances functioning. It is proposed to have a specific meeting with some key people at DG EAC and EACEA to discuss these matters. The aims are to make things more fluent and efficient.

Tine Delva (DG EAC) responds that the Commission is open to the dialogue and wishes to find a pragmatic way to solve issues.

Evelina Fedulova (EACEA) reminds that, sometimes, POs take a long time to give feedback since they have to consult different colleagues from the legal office, financial office, etc. However, POs try to give a coordinated and coherent answer to Alliances and are willing to discuss with Alliances.

Ludovic Thilly (EC2U Alliance - FOREU2 Chair) will consult Gijs Couke and FOREU2 Bureau and send an invitation to DG EAC and EACEA in the next weeks.

CLOSED PART

2. General information on European Universities initiative and French Presidency of EU

Forum of Universities for the Future of Europe (26/01/2022): The French Presidency team has sent the feedback in which conference the Alliances should intervene and inform them that the event will suffer some changes because of the current pandemic situation.

- The exhibition is dropped
- We need to register online
- The event will be online (and open to all)
- Ludovic Thilly, Olga Wessels (FOREU1) and other colleagues (from Commission and other stakeholders) will moderate the round tables and workshops. They will need to be present in the studios in Paris.
- Every Alliance will have a 3-minute intervention.

3. General affairs of FOREU2

The online table for participants to the different sub-groups is regularly updated, and it is needed to reach stable compositions by the end of January. Alliances are kindly requested to update the composition of the new multilingualism sub-group, because the Chair wants to organise the first meeting very soon.

4. Updates from FOREU2 sub-groups

- **Student communities (Lukas Redermam from Transform4Europe and Maxime Geers - CIRCLE.U)**

It is kindly requested to nominate representatives and update the online table. The sub-group is currently working on the participation of students at a different level (national, European). They are also working on the European Assembly that will take place early March in Strasbourg at European Parliament.

- **University-Industry cooperation (Jorgen Sjoberg - ENHANCE)**

The sub-group is currently more focused on sharing experiences but will soon address more specific topics.

- **Legal statute (Dana Samson - CIRCLE.U)**

Now that the new calls will involve the legal statute, more alliances will participate in the discussion. Some points for discussion (related to policy issues) will be proposed by the sub-group for the next Global Forum with Coordinators.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

- **Staff and student engagement (Konstantinos Petridis - ATHENA)**

The sub-group held already two meetings. They shared the good policies/practices and challenges to engage the community in Alliance actions. They are working on questions like "What will gain a member staff by participating in these projects?", etc.

- **A possible Sub-group on Gender Equality?**

Naveed Syed from ENHANCE & Melania Rivers from ULYSSEUS suggest to create a "Diversity & Gender equality" sub-group since the topic concerns all the alliances. There is also an aspect that concerns gender equality in some of the SwafS projects. The Bureau will come back to the group concerning this suggestion.

5. Next FOREU2 Global meetings and guests from European Commission

We will invite EAC and EACEG (Vanessa Debiais-Sainton and Tine Delva) since specific questions may arise with mid-term report and also it could be the way to follow up on the request of the sub-group on "Alliance Coordination (operational issues)".

We could invite Olga Wessels (FOREU1) to have feedback on the mid-term report.

D.   FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 09 March 2022

1.   Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
Global Forum Meeting
Online meeting
TEAMS

Wednesday 9th March 2022
10.00 am – 12.30 CET

Agenda

Open Part (10h – 11h30)

1. Presentation "Policy objectives of European degree and legal statute / mid-term report" (DG EAC and EACEA representatives) followed by Q&A (1h30)

Closed Part (11h30 – 12h)

2. General affairs of FOREU2 (10 min)

3. Updates from FOREU2 sub-groups (15 min)

4. Next FOREU2 Global meetings and guests from the European Commission (5 min)

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2.   Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

OPEN PART

1. Policy Objectives of European degree and legal statute / mid-term report (DG EAC and EACEA representatives)

European degree and legal statute

- **European degree**

Tine Delva - Deputy Head of Unit European Union (DG EAC):
Two initiatives were proposed in January: "European strategy for Universities" in order to support the University sector and Alliances. This was accompanied by a proposal for a council recommendation on building bridges for effective European Higher education cooperation: concrete recommendations from Member States are put forward in order to solve issues (legal status for Alliances and joint European degree). This concerns all types of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) including European Universities Alliances and beyond.
Some fully voluntary solutions (it will not be imposed) linked to the Joint European degree or the legal status are proposed. Subsidiarity, institutional autonomy and academic freedom are the key requirements for Institutional autonomy. It is about co-development and options will be explored with the Alliances. The study was launched for joint European Degree and legal status. Moreover, an Erasmus+ pilot will be launched in June/July and the aim is to have regular workshops and meetings.

Yann-Maël Bideau - Policy Officer at European Commission:
The goal of looking towards a joint European degree is a mean to facilitate transnational cooperation between HEIs when developing joint programmes. The first step towards this potential policy objective is to pilot a joint European Degree Label that aims all HEIs and all transnational cooperation formats. It means looking at European Universities and beyond on a voluntary basis.

Key features of a joint European degree label

- ❑ **specifically designed for joint degrees** delivered by transnational alliances of HEIs
- ❑ based on *common European criteria* to be developed with **Member States and HEIs**
- ❑ On a **voluntary basis, available for all types of HEIs alliances**

European Commission

EC²U · RI4C2 · Research & Innovation For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

A Joint European Degree Label can be a way to look at potential criteria, that could be at the basis of further developments and a way to recognise intensified transnational cooperation. It is seen with European University Alliances that transnational cooperation is increasingly complex with a lot of interconnected strands of work. Thus, it is made to facilitate work.

Added value of a joint European degree label for students, and employers

❏ Reinforce the **European identity, strong sense of European belonging**

❏ Valorise the transnational education and training experience in **different higher education institutions** in **different countries, with innovative, intersectoral and transdisciplinary study approaches**

❏ Signals **high quality** learning outcomes of degree holders and their relevance for employers

European Commission

For employers it will be a way to make these learning outcomes more visible and identifiable.

Added value of a joint European degree label

➡ **for HEIs and Member States**

❏ Increase **visibility & reputation** of the HEIs in Europe and beyond
❏ Increase **trust in European HEIs**
❏ **Attract more EU and international students**, balanced brain circulation
❏ Offer **attractive international study** tracks to **local students**
❏ Facilitates transnational cooperation and support the **removal of red tape for joint programmes**

➡ **at EU level**

❏ Increase the **competitiveness** and **reputation** of the European higher education
❏ **Deepen the European Education Area**
❏ Boost implementation of the **Bologna tools** while preserving national specificities of education system
❏Enhance **deeper cooperation** among higher education institutions

European Commission

It is important to mention that it will be about boosting the implementation of the Bologna tools that are already existing and not about duplicating all the efforts in the context of the Bologna process and High Education Area. Nevertheless, it may be not fully available to everyone yet.

When co-developing a joint European Degree Label, it is necessary to keep in mind the respect of subsidiarity and competences of Member States. The European Commission does not have any competence to issue joint Degrees. This is the beginning of the process and it will start with the piloting phase. During and after this phase it is important to communicate with Member States and with the Higher Education sector to be able to implement further decisions. The work on the study and on the visibility of joint European Degree continues. All this work will help to take important decisions afterwards.

The objectives of this label are to recognise the European dimension, to promote the removal of barriers for transnational cooperation and to support and boost the implementation of the Bologna tools.

During the piloting phase there will be a set of criteria that will be considered as a test. Afterwards, based on lessons learned, it will be possible to propose further improvements or alternative pathways.

Some building blocks for a joint European Degree Label were clarified:

Some of the EHEA/Bologna tools:
- European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF)
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESGs)
- European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes
- European credit and Transfer System (ECTS)
- Diploma Supplement

The Label needs to be built on all these tools.

During the workshops, some potential areas that would be relevant for the development of the label were identified:

EC²U | RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Potential areas for development of criteria:

- Transnational dimension of the cooperation
- Flexibility and innovative dimension of the curricula
- Inclusiveness and sustainability

Criteria should be operational, easy to check and to monitor, imposing the least burden as possible on the HEIs to prove compliance with.

They also should be flexible enough to respect academic freedom and the way of organising the curricula.

- **Legal statute**

Tine Delva - Deputy Head of Unit European Union (DG EAC):
The commitment to explore the feasibility of coming with a legal status for Alliances of HEIs was taken up in the European Strategy for Universities and it is a step-by-step process. All types of HEIs and Alliances are targeted on a voluntary basis and to be co-developed together. The first step is to pilot implementation of existing European legal instrument on the Erasmus+.

The needs for legal status have been extensively discussed among FOREU1&2 and there are the needs for assessment as many alliances are already working on legal status at National or European level. Alliances demand to have an easier way to mutualise resources whether it is financial, human or operational. It is also demanded to have easier ways to organise joint Degree and research activities. There is the ambition to explore this legal status and to work on enabling flexible and voluntary instruments. The fact of putting in place the legal status is voluntary (but it is important to have an agreement of all the universities of the Alliances and it will not be a pre-condition to receive EU funding). If the choice is to go for legal status, there will still be a choice either to go for national legal instruments or with European level instruments.

Categories will not be created because some of the national tools are being tested, showing an approach towards a sustainable legal way for Alliances. There is not any judgement between using national or European instruments. The reason of exploring these European instruments is because national level instruments were indicated as not fulfilling all necessary needs. National level instruments can be used if the analysis of purposes and needs shows that it would be sufficient.

The aim is to base the work on a study that has already been done by DG-RTD and on the study that has been launched to explore what the national level tools can offer and why they may not be sufficient. It is also important to see if the European level tools can help in this case or if there is a need to think of other ways to make it work and to think about alternatives.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

The study with an external contractor was launched in order to help with the consultation process in the study work. The aim is to map available instruments and analyse whether they are suitable for current needs both at national and EU level and to propose other possible ways. In case it is demanded to necessarily apply EU legislation or a completely new legislation, there will be a need to find an idea of better regulation rules of the Commission and the need to contact an impact assessment. It implies conducting a full problem analysis and to explore all options.

In parallel, as it was indicated for EU Degree, the pilot Erasmus+ will be launched and the projects are expected to start this year with a duration of one year. From 3 to 5 projects would be selected, which means that it is not a large call in the sense that not all Alliances could be selected (currently there are 41). The policy objective is to be open to the wide Higher Education community and not only to EU universities. Thus, the aim is to test possible solutions at EU level. The Alliances ready to test those tools are welcome to apply. In parallel, consultations will be conducted. In addition, more general consultation events will be held later with other stakeholders and with Member States.

Tools at EU Level are already available:
- EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation): voluntary instrument that is, in theory, applicable.

The objective is to promote transnational cooperation. Around 5 institutions from one alliance have already implemented this legal tool to facilitate their cooperation. It can be used for joint applications for funding, the employment of staff and the buying of goods. However, some improvements can be made and some extra national requirements on top of the regulation may make it difficult to set up an EGTC. It depends on the countries within Alliances.
- EEIG (European Economic Interest Grouping) can possibly be used, some Alliances are analysing this tool.

The initiatives were discussed with Member States and there is some concern with regards to subsidiarity and linking with national rules. Member States demand a co-creation process and to be involved in each step of the process. One of the concerns is that for some universities in EU countries it can be prohibited by law to be part of another legal entity. Issues can already be seen by putting together joint programmes in which some changes will be needed to make sure that the ambitions can be achieved.

If, after the consultations, there is indeed a need for legal proposals, one more year will be necessary to work on possible scenarios and on the impact assessments.

Q&A:

Ludovic Thilly - FOREU2 Chair & EC2U Alliance: the workshop from last week was mentioned, but the targeted audience was not clear. When the colleagues wanted to connect, they could not because it was restricted to 100 participants. Do you plan to hold it again or has it been recorded so that it could be shared to those who couldn't access it?

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Dana Samson – CIRCLE U: The flexibility is welcome regarding legal status. The pilot initiatives are great but the time framework is really short. What can be the scope of what can be achieved in one year? It would be welcome to continue the discussion regarding legal framework because it is something difficult to grasp.

Lukas Redemann – Transform4Europe: The European Degree Label should include the participation of students from all alliances. It shouldn't only be dealt with among EU institutions and Member-States. It is important to get the opinions of students on the matter.

Regarding the legal status it may be important to take into consideration financial support of Alliances that have already a legal status instead of supporting only 3 or 5 chosen ones. It is possible not to have a best practice example in this case.

Yann-Maël Bideau - Policy Officer at European Commission: The workshop was indeed only limited to 100 participants that was set by the Contractor. Based on previous workshops organised in June last year, where there were 70 participants, such a big number of people was not expected. Members of the sub-groups from FOREU1&2 were invited there were more university representatives present than anticipated. The limit of participants could not be changed during the meeting. Some rules regarding the participation of alliances will be specified for future workshops (one representative per alliance). Representatives of the EU Students' Union, Erasmus Students network and representatives of students were in attendance. The workshop was not recorded but a summary is being finalised that will be shared among participants and people who were invited but couldn't participate. Any additional discussions are welcomed in the future.

Tine Delva - Deputy Head of Unit European Union (DG EAC): All the Alliances will be legible and legibility will not be restricted to the EU universities only. Part from EU universities initiative have the funding possibilities on Erasmus+ cooperation agreements.

Further questions can be sent afterwards.

Mid-term progress report

Maria Luisa Garcia Minguez – Deputy Head of Unit (EACEA): It is important to consider a few contextual things. This is the second generation of the Alliances which means that it is possible to look back to take some lessons from the initial Grant Agreement. Thus, 80% of the EU grand have been receiving with a flexibility which it is not the case for the previous generation who received 40% in the beginning. The idea is to give a possibility to organise the resources from the beginning and to avoid thinking about administration aspects. The context is that tools now are provided, thus in this context there is a possibility to report a mid-term state of the progress. The important thing to take into account is that corporate templates are used. The idea was to have a continuity with the first generation of alliances. Thus, the online survey was introduced to collect statistics in order to see a progression on the activities.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

The progress report serves to see the progress on activities. It is important to note that these progress reports are not linked to the periodic reports and are not linked to payments. Progress reports cover operational aspects and costs from the Reporting Period 1 (M1 to M18). It was expended from M18 to M20 to give time to complete the report. The due date depends on the starting date outlined in the Grant Agreement.

Components

The report must be prepared (by all beneficiaries together) in WORD format and uploaded as a PDF document on the Funding & Tenders Portal Grant Management System (PGMS) Continuous Reporting Deliverables screen.

The PDF document to be uploaded as a deliverable must include:

- Corporate template for the progress report (available on F&TP)
- Annex

To be filled in online:

- Survey for additional statistical data and indicators

How to download the template on F&TP

1. Portal Reference Documents
2. Select the programming period: **2014–2020**
3. Filter by programme: **Erasmus+ Programme (EPLUS)**
4. In the search bar that appears, please insert: **"Progress report (EPLUS and CREA)"**
5. Click the title of the document to download the template

Q&A:

Q: Is there a specific word limit for the template and for the progress report?
A: No specific limit of pages. Nevertheless, the general recommendation is around 50 pages including the corporate template and for the annexes.

Q: How should the Alliances proceed with the submission of drafts or final versions of the deliverables in the participant portal?
A: Some alliances have been encouraged to request a delay of the due dates if encounter delays. What is recommended is to submit the deliverables that are finalised. If there are delays in the submission of deliverables, need to ask a change of the due date to the PO. The deliverables put on

the portal should reflect the current of the implementation of the project. Changes need to be justified. In case the deliverables are already uploaded, it is possible to contact the PO to request to reopen a deliverable that needs to be updated (but this is an exception).

Questions on the corporate template of the progress report:

Q: Some alliances have reported that they have difficulties applying the timetable to their specific context. Some alliances report that they have no specific timeline for the tasks define. Which activities should in fact be indicated in the table and what is time period that should be covered?
A: The recommendation is list only activities that are deviations from the timetable. All the activities from M1 to 18. If there are activities that have continuity during the second reporting period, it will be reflected at the end.

Q: How can activities in the timetable be linked to objectives and/or deliverables which are on time?
A: The complexity linked to a big number of deliverables is understandable so only those who have deviations should be included.

Q: Is there any flexibility to adapt the timetable to the specific context of a project? If there are a large number of WPs, different tasks, teams with specific millstones and deliverables to work on. Is it possible to adapt the structure per reporting task team instead of per WP in order to keep everything connected? Is it possible to merge or to combine this progress table with a simplifies version of the timetable?
A: Templates are closed and it is not possible to modify them, but it is possible for Alliances to include comments if necessary.

Q.: Reporting on the portal in some case has been organised in clusters of deliverables in consultation with the Project Officer which would leave some deliverables because they belong to a cluster that is due to be submitted on M24 which means that some tasks, milestones and deliverables will be commented upon in this progress report but the actual deliverables will not have been uploaded yet. Alliances ask how could those who are organized in this way can deal with this discrepancy?
A: The recommendation is to include the explanation, clarifying those deliverables that are not uploaded in order to understand the situation. They should explain the points that were already discussed with the Project Officer and the benefits of doing that. Every situation should be explained.

Questions about the annexes:

Q: Section 1.1 of the annex is titled "work performed and main achievements". What is the difference between this section and the justification column in section 2 which is overview of the progress and main activities of the corporate template?
A: Justification columns are linked to the individual tasks; thus, they are concrete and specific. In the section 1.1, it is a short summary of the Alliance's progress toward the project objectives. Therefore, strategic objectives, significant achievements of the Alliance should be explained. It gives a more global overview.

Q.: in section 1.2 "result and impacts", one of the aspects that should be covered is the transformation of the Alliance towards the emergence of a fully developed EU University. What is the definition of a fully developed EU University?
A: The recommendation is to refer to programme guide, in particular the section "what are EU universities" where the key elements that should be implemented by 2025 are explained and to refer to annex of the Grant Agreement description of the action.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U Alliance: Can the mission statement be part of the reference to which the progress is compared? Could an Alliance that says that they are in their progress towards a fully developed EU University should also be in line with their mission statement?
A: There is part about EU universities and it should be linked to long-term vision of each of the Alliances. The goal is to achieve the objectives set at the beginning.

Q: Section 2.2 "project management" and on follow up EU recommendations; What is considered EU recommendation in this context?
A: This section is not mandatory. Only the Alliances who received specific recommendations should complete this section. If it is the case, Alliances should explain the main measures taken based on recommendations provided so far. Set of recommendation should be received during the monitoring visit. The recommendation is to list each recommendation and comment and explain how they have been followed up.

Q.: section 2.3. "Dissemination, communication and visibility of EU Funding". Does this refer to the logo of the European Commission or there is a need for additional explanation?
A: This section is linked to the article 22 of the Grant Agreement which refers to promoting the action and visibility of EU Funding. This section should provide information in relation to activities and it refers to the EU logo. The logo needs to be displayed.

Questions on the budget:

Q: In the Grant Agreement it is stated that reporting about finance will only happen at the end of the project term. On page 9 of the template there is reference to the budget implementation. Is it possible to have more information and what is the level of expectations regarding this section?
A: There is only one reporting period for 3 years (M36), the final report will give all the details on the costs split by cost categories. In this progress report, the reporting on the budget implementation should be short and simple without many details.

Q.: What does major deviation mean?
A: It means big changes in the project (whether they are linked to WPs or activities) should be explained. It is better to see this case by case.

Questions on the annex of the template:

Q.: Section 2.3 "Dissemination, communication, and visibility of EU funding". Is it possible to clarify how these human resources should be reported and what are the main indicators?
A: It is important to show that the dissemination and communication of the activities have been taken into account. Details are not needed at the progress report stage.

	RI4C2
EC²U	Research & Innovation For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Q: Is it possible for one partner to take over travel costs from another partner?
A: Yes, but it is necessary to make sure that the normal policy is used, as written in the Grant Agreement.

Q: Is it possible to give any advice if/or a person monitoring will be important for the financial reporting?
A: All the staff should be indicated in the final report and it should be detailed (indicate days, month, years etc).

Q: As announced in the mail from the 25th January 2022 there will be an online survey which will ask for quantitative indicators. When will this survey be published and how is it linked to the progress report?
A: It will be published after the meeting.

The survey will help collect statistics and indicators. It is divided in multiple sections but three types of data are the most important: mobilities, common indicators and specific indicators.
Mobilities (funded by the Alliances' budget): it is important to keep in mind that the 18-month reporting period for the progress report also applies here, but it just should be divided between academic years.
Mobilities (other funding): information about the mobilities not financed by the budget of the Alliances but by other mobility schemes.
Common indicators: need to provide three types of information
- Number/Percentage of faculties participating in Alliances' activities.
- Automatic recognition of learning periods with the Alliances (yes/no questions)
- Use of the European student card (yes/no questions)
Specific indicators: need to provide information from section 3.2 of the project description ("Quality and financial assessment").
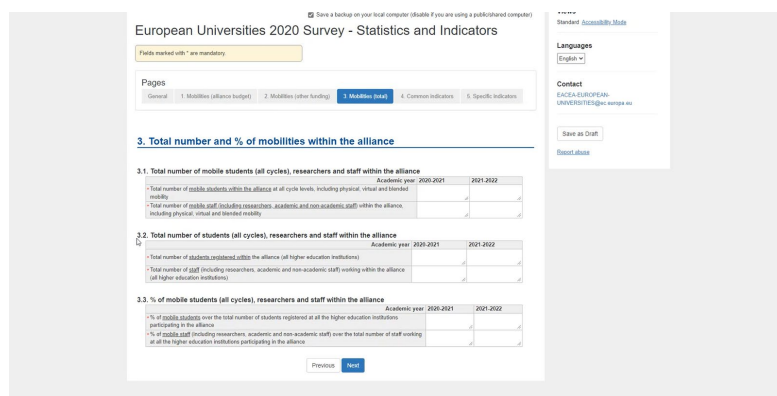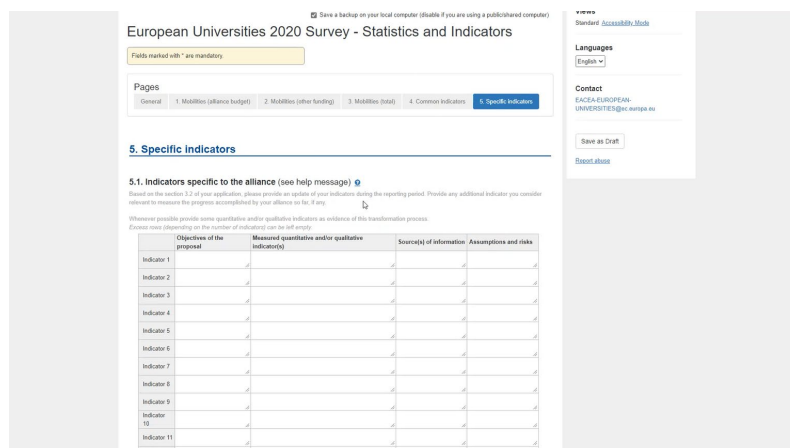
There is the possibility to use the button "save as draft" in order to save the answers and add other answers later. It is also possible to revise and make some corrections of the answers after submitting them. The due date is the same as for the progress report.

A PDF of the survey will be sent to the Alliances so they can prepare the survey in advance.

Another round of questions will be collected in the next two weeks after alliances will have taken a look at the templates to come up with very specific questions and avoid overlap. Then, another online meeting can be organised or they can be answered to by email.

A written document with answers to all the questions that were already dealt with will be sent after the meeting.

CLOSED PART

2. General affairs of FOREU2

The General Affairs meeting was held with the FOREU2 Bureau, Gijs Couke (Chair of the General Affairs) and Maria Luisa from the Commission. The meeting was about the communication issues with project officers. The discussion was very fruitful. The European Commission will implement new ways to accompany and monitor through Q&A. The FOREU2 alliances will hopefully see the effects soon.

The Bureau would like to thank alliances for the joint statement between FOREU1 & FOREU2 and the swift cooperation on Ukraine.

The Global Forum has a pending join statement on the necessary continuing support to R&I activities. The document will be supported by the FOREU1 and FOREU2 SwafS project sub-groups. The message was sent to Commissioner Mariel Gabriel, and alliances are waiting for feedback. The alliances should feel free to disseminate the document to their Member States and relevant stakeholders since it is crucial to lobby.

Statements:
The Bureau has received some expression of interest to disseminate and help prepare joint statements, for instance one from the Subgroup on Digital Platforms. The Bureau will discuss the matter, and for the next meeting, those statements will be shared with the coordinators. Then the Global Forum will decide if we publish and how we will publish those statements.

Creation of sub-groups:
The Bureau has received the expression of interest to create two new sub-groups. To have an open consultation, coordinators will receive a survey to decide if two new sub-groups can be created:
- Impact sub-group
- Diversity and gender equality sub-group

Structure of FOREU2:
Once the mid-term reports are submitted, it will possible to go back to the FOREU2 structure and see if some sub-groups could/should be merged because there shouldn't be too many sub-groups otherwise it would become difficult to manage.

3. Updates from FOREU2 sub-groups

Not discussed.

4. Next FOREU2 Global meetings and guests from European Commission

It would be possible to combine the next GF meeting with EAC if the call for Joint Degrees and Legal Statute have already been published by the next meeting.
A new Global Forum meeting could be planned around mid-April, after having received more questions on the mid-term report and any other new events.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

E.   FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 14 April 2022

1.   Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
Global Forum Meeting
Online meeting
Teams link

Thursday 14th April 2022
10.00 am – 12.00 CET

Agenda

1. Second lists of questions on the mid-term reports (45 min)

2. General affairs of FOREU2 (15 min)

3. Updates from FOREU2 sub-groups (30 min)

4. Next FOREU2 Global meetings and guests from the European Commission (15 min)

5. AOB

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Second round of questions on the mid-term report

The first round of questions was mainly on the templates and on technical issues.
The second round of questions was about virtual mobility.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U Alliance
- FOREU2 Alliances should coordinate the third round of questions in early May.
- First answers clarify some issues. The second wave of answers is not very satisfying.

Sabine Sainte-Rose – AURORA
The AURORA alliance has decided not to report them in the Mobility Section in the Collaboration Section since they have demonstrated that the alliance have put in place relevant collaborations.

Gjis Couke – ENLIGHT
The European Commission should define a specific type of mobility related to project meeting. These meetings do mobilise staff and academics, and one should not neglect their implication. Alliances should consider this feedback for our future application to renew the funding. Questions will be collected until the middle of May, and it will give enough time to EACEA to respond.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U
These types of meetings were the only one possible during the pandemic so that the numbers were close to zero. FOREU1 Alliances received general feedback after the reporting and individual feedback. FOREU2 Alliances should receive the same feedback a few weeks after submitting their reports. There were at least virtual mobilities.

Hannes Raffaseder – E3UDRES2
E3UDRES2 Alliance supports adding project meetings into the mobilities since the alliances all face the same intercultural differences.

Antoine Cazé – CIRCLE U.
All the alliances should be careful since the very nature of the projects could change the definition of a project meeting.

Sabine Sainte-Rose – AURORA

Alliances must go as a group even if they are not encountering the same issues. Example: Alliances need more clarity about clustering deliverables. It is incomprehensible to justify in detail why the deliverables are clustered, knowing that the PO requested it and not the alliances. An additional problem is that some alliances have to deliver these clustered deliverables at an inconvenient moment, just after or before mid-term reports, so how can they explain that tasks are implemented.

Gjis Couke – ENLIGHT
The European Commission allows the alliances to have the possibility to increase the 'Other Costs' to face the COVID specific cases. Could FOREU2 propose to the European Commission to have more flexibility with 'Indirect Costs' since they are all facing the increase of indirect costs?

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U Alliance
The best interlocutor should be the EAC since this is a political decision. After complaining about the unspent mobilities by several FOREU1 alliances directly to Vanessa Debiais-Sainton and Tine Delva, they both worked inside the European Commission to provide the alliances with a quick response. Thanks to that, alliances had the right to move the unspent mobilities to other costs associated to the need to strengthen the infrastructures.

Draft for EAC on the mid-term report
Everyone agreed that Ludovic Thilly will write a draft for the EAC.

2. General affairs of FOREU2

Funding for the R&I:
The Unit on Academic research at DG RTD does not know yet if there will be funding for the R&I side in the future (after SwafS projects). Alliances need more details soon to know what they should add to the next Erasmus+ proposal since alliances can only add research mobilities but not research activities.

On 22/04/2022, a meeting with the FOREU1 & FOREU2 SwafS sub-groups was organised with Stijn DELAURE. It was the opportunity to clarify some points such as:
Under the Erasmus+ project, alliances can finance research mobilities, not research activities similarly to the first pilot phase. DG RTD has identified two short-term and long-term tracks but they still need to be elaborated.
- First short-term funding: A call in 2023 under the widening part of the Horizon Europe but not specific to the alliances, where alliances will have to compete with other consortia. Currently, those calls are not as flexible as the SwafS projects call, and the budget will not allow 21 alliances to be selected.
- Second short-term funding: a call named "Acceleration services" in 2024. This call could be more dedicated to alliances but not restricted to them. Alliances must include in the mid-term report the importance of the R&I agenda/activities to include the alliances in the Horizon Europe programme. The European Commission is asking alliances to be present on different fronts, so they should give the means to respond to the R&I challenges.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

- Long-term funding: The European Commission is working on long-term funding similar to ERA-NET. The co-funding aspect will be essential. They will launch a pilot call co-funded by the Member States and targeted to the alliances. They are building this new initiative to present it to the Member States next year and launch the call in 2025. There will be a short gap between the projects. These co-funded partnerships will bring funding for 4 to 7 years to start working on research activities.

Pim De Boer - AURORA Alliance
He has launched an initiative to ask the European Commission to present a third programme similar to the SwafS projects only dedicated to the alliances.

Gjis Coucke – ENLIGHT
ENLIGHT was wondering how the alliances of the first generation (FOREU1) were dealing with this uncertainty?
Ludovic Thilly – EC2U Alliance: FOREU1 Alliances initiated exchanges on that matter with the European Commission since there is this strong ambiguity that in the second phase of funding there will be a higher budget but still alliances do not know to what degree the research could be included in the Erasmus+ project proposal. Under the current MFF, alliances need to still push for funding. The FOREU1 Alliances are lobbying for long-term funding.

Anne-May Janssen – AURORA
We need to continue lobbying with the Member States and Rectors Conferences in each country. How do they feel about this short/long term? Since short term funding has long term implications and now to have more funding, we need to have two widening countries, so two new members. Is this expansion a better solution?
Ludovic Thilly – EC2U Alliance
With these types of widening projects, it is a way for the European Commission to propose the project's coordination not to the same countries. The idea is that all the partners take responsibility and are not always the same persons.

Jorgen Sjoberg – ENHANCE
What will be the future for a more integrated approach for all European Universities Initiative?
Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: Next year will be the midterm review of the programmes, but still, the legal basis will not change. However, in the second phase (after 2023), the European Commission will start preparing the next MFF. The European Commission wants to create a new programme that will be co-funded by Erasmus+ and the successor of Horizon Europe. It will be a single front door to respond to what the alliances are doing regarding the Knowledge Square. With the current MFF, the European Commission is stocked regarding the legal basis because they cannot create the instrument needed.

Joint statement – Support of Ukrainian Universities
The alliances can use the unspent budget for mobility for the Ukrainian communities. Tine Delva from DG EAG contacted the FOREU1 and FOREU2 Chairs regarding the Ukrainian situation, and she is asking if:
- It may be possible to provide unspent mobilities funds due to the pandemic, to support Ukrainian staff and students partly.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

- Complete an online table explaining what each alliance is doing to implement initiatives or welcome Ukrainians to have a global approach.

New partners
Alliances can only add Ukrainian partners as strategic partners and not associated partners. The only exception is the AURORA Alliance, which had a Ukrainian partner from the beginning. Ukrainian universities can become associated partners for the next call because they will be eligible as Bologna Countries.

Marcela Costa – UNITA
UNITA Alliance is welcoming a Ukrainian university to become a partner of the alliance.

Lukas Redermann and Maxime Geerts – Chairs of Student Communities
- Kind reminder regarding the Message on Sciences of Ukrainian Projects. The Student Communities Sub-group thinks that there are not enough items about concrete information for students who want to come to Europe.
- How to help our partners that have partners in Poland, Lithuania and Estonia. Those countries are the first one to welcome Ukrainians refugees.

Anne-May Janssen – AURORA
The AURORA Alliance has had a Ukrainian partner since the beginning. They are wondering what are the limitations of the use of this funding? So far, they have organised fundraising to pay a wide type of spending like some months of rent for students, laptops, etc.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U
Tine Delva explained that the funds could be used to pay for accommodation but it needs to be verified if it is also possible for equipment.
Ukrainian authorities are very afraid of brain drain.

Express of interest to create two new sub-groups:
- Gender Equality sub-group which comes from the ENHANCE Alliance: everyone agreed.
- Impact sub-group on behalf of ENLIGHT Alliance: everyone agreed.

Joint Position paper on digital tools
The paper was pre-validated by the Bureau. The text will be sent to the Global Forum to get the alliances' feedback and, after validation of the Global Forum, it will be sent to FOREU1 to write a joint statement.

It is important to have a common approach to several digital tools like the EU student card, mobility tool, Dashboard of Erasmus Without Paper, etc. The idea is to avoid developing parallel tools because it will be a waste of resources and time.

3. Updates from FOREU2 sub-groups
No time

4. Next FOREU2 Global meetings and guests from European Commission
No time

5. AOB
No time

	RI4C2
	Research & Innovation
	For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

F. FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 21 June 2022

1. Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
Global Forum Meeting
Online meeting
Teams

Tuesday 21th June 2022
15.00 pm – 17.00 pm CET

Agenda

1. Discussion on mid-term report (after 3rd round of exchanges with EACEA)

2. News, events and initiatives at European Level

    - Release of pilot calls for European degree label and Alliances' legal statute

    - Education and Innovation summit, Brussels (hybrid), 23 June 2022

    - Campus of European Universities, Paris-Versailles (in presence), 30 June 2022

    - Joint FOREU1&2 meeting with DG EAC on Digital Europe programme, online, 4 July 2022

    - Support to Ukrainian universities

    - …

3. General affairs of FOREU2

4. Updates from FOREU2 sub-groups

5. Next FOREU2 Global meetings and guests from European Commission

6. AOB

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Discussion on the mid-term report (after 3rd round of exchanges with EACEA)

Discussions about section 3.1 in the survey: Some Alliances will work with the estimation, but most of the alliances calculate the actual mobility figures. It is always important to show the possibilities. The clear definition of faculties does not exist, because it depends on Alliances (whether they work with schools, colleges or have different campuses etc).

The clustered deliverables were briefly discussed: achievements are visible on the portal, but Alliances see the tools, testimonial, etc. Narratives are important to highlight the observations. Thus, annexes become an extremely important part of the mid-term reports. The progress report in as exercise in order to see the full range of activities.

The risks in project applications of 2020 were described generically. In this indicator survey any risks linked to indicators are supposed to be mentioned. Most alliances prefer to use the global description on the portal.

The Q&As were very helpful for the alliances.

Open discussion among coordinators

Alberto Garrido – EELISA: The length of the annexes was discussed with the PO and 40 pages may be a reasonable length. Question concerning the promotion of EU identity/values: in what way can it be shown?

Gjis Couke – ENLIGHT: In this section specific activities should be related to EU values and to the idea standing behind the EU universities initiative. There should be a link between the universities: aggregating capacity and bridging the existing differences and the fact of appealing to Bologna instruments.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: In this section, EC2U specific activities are included: EC2U Forum (the fact of creating a single community) and EC2U Think Tanks where meetings with students, citizens and researchers are organised in order to create one united community. It is important to mention more activities in order to show the expansion of the Work Plan. EC2U has uploaded 87 deliverables.

Gjis Couke – ENLIGHT: The idea of general mobility figures is not clear and this question can be interpreted in many ways (whether it is about the mobility between the Alliances' partners or about existing mobility rates). It also might be better to take into account the percentage of graduate

students who experienced the mobility during their curriculum instead of calculating mobility percentage based on a total amount of students.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: It is impossible to reach the 50% of mobilities. Once there is feedback on the mid-term report from the EU Commission, it will be possible to require a joint meeting on this subject.

Naveed Syed – ENHANCE: Given the low numbers, it would be practical to count working group or governance body meetings as mobilities.

Collegial approach: If any Alliance has an additional clarification before submitting, they will share the information with the Global Forum.

2. News, events and initiatives at European level

- Release of pilot calls for European degree label and Alliances' legal statute

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: The survey shows the diverse answers concerning the Alliances' participation in those calls. It is indeed important to remember that the application to calls on EU degree label and Alliances' legal statute are voluntary.

Bjorn Stensaker – CIRCLE U.: It has been decided not to apply for these calls in order to concentrate on deliverables.

Marcella Costa – UNITA: It has been decided to apply for Legal Statute, because of the work with specific sub-groups on this subject.

Carola Hodyas – Transform4Europe: The discussion about applying to EU degree label has been proceeded. Nevertheless, it has been decided not to apply for Legal Statute.

Bjorn Stensaker – CIRCLE-U: An AISBL has been already implemented.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: Another financial point: 1 million euro was allocated for each call where there will be 5 projects, which means that it might not be enough. Concerning EC2U the Legal Statute is not taken into consideration. Application to the EU degree label is possible.

Pawel Sniatala – EUNICE: Concerning the situation in EUNICE, 7 universities offer one programme at Bachelor, Master and PhD levels which represents 21 programmes in total. The curriculum is prepared, but the biggest issue is synchronisation. Thus, the application in these calls is not taken into consideration in order to concentrate on these new programmes.

Nuno Morais – RUN-EU: RUN-EU is in a similar position as EC2U and Transform4Europe.

- Education and Innovation summit, Brussels (hybrid), 23 June 2022

Do not hesitate to actively participate in this event. It is possible to register on this website.

The Commission has chosen the speakers. It is also important to be connected to the conferences and workshops in order to be able to answer the questions or to add some comments. Indeed, it can help to make the activities visible.

Important: Alliances' members can use their mobility budget for this event, since the Alliances were specifically invited.

- Campus of European Universities, Paris-Versailles (in person), 30 June 2022

Alliances do not have any information on this topic. This time the event was hold completely by French team at Higher Education Ministry. Ludovic Thilly can only help by forwarding the emails with questions in order to receive a quick response from the French team.

It is possible to invite colleagues from individual universities. They have to register on the website. Information about the workshops is not available yet. Morning sessions will be probably duplicated in the afternoon (only one session can be selected because of the capacity of the rooms). TV screen are not provided anymore.

Careful:

"*Coordinators of each Alliance can be accompanied by 2 other representatives, including, if possible, a student representative. These representatives would be those present at the alliance's booth, provided the alliance chooses to ask for a booth.*" From the original email from the French Presidency.

There is no possibility to send the materials via post due to technical issues.

Alliances' members can use their mobility budget for this event, since the alliances were specifically invited.

Alliances and sub-groups would be interested to meet in Paris.

- Joint FOREU1 & FOREU2 meeting with DG EA on Digital Europe programme, online, 4 July 2022

The details of the upcoming call under Digital EU programme will be presented. There will be possibilities to fund educational activities including hard infrastructures. The draft of the call will be presented and the Alliances are welcome to propose any ideas. It could be a way to be aware of this call and to know about the further instruments, in particular regarding budget (the budget allocated to this call is about 10 million euros). It was difficult to organise this meeting with FOREU1 because of the summer break, that is why it was decided to hold this meeting on the 4th of July, from 3 to 4pm CET. The meeting will be recorded.

- Support to Ukrainian universities

The meeting in this matter with FOREU1&2 and Ukrainian universities took place. Initiatives of collaboration with alliances to provide support for Ukrainian universities were launched. There is a proposal to have a joint statement where the Alliances who officially support the statement will appear as potential participants in this twinning mechanism. The deadline was yesterday (20/06/2022). To endorse the statement the email had to be sent to Sabine Menu from EPICUR.

Next step is to concretely define how it can be organised. EC2U has now, as a strategic partner, the Ukrainian University Ivan Franko University of Lviv. Alliances have started consulting their PO to allocate part of the budget to support students and staff from Ukrainian universities. Local funding was used for the moment. The discussion about the use of Alliances' budget in order to support Ukrainian students and staff is still being processed.

3. General affairs of FOREU2

- The Bureau

Cynthia Olivera from Transform4Europe is about to leave her position. All the alliances agreed that Carola Hodyas from Transform4Europe will replace her former colleague. A meeting in September will be organised.

The EUC (European University Community) is organising itself for the long-term. The EUC wants to organise a committee where FOREU1 & FOREU2 would be represented. Marcella Costa from UNITA, and member of the Bureau, will represent FOREU2.

- Joint position paper on Digitalisation

Once the document is validated, it will be clear whether FOREU1 joins or not, which indeed would create a more significant impact. They were contacted and they will give all further information and comments.

Olga Wessels, FOREU1 Chair recommends to revitalise the end of the statement.

Vlad Petcu – UNITA: The statement will possibly be finished before the Forum.

Some of the Alliances have more experience on digitalisation and it is better if they deal with the topic among their group. Thus, the idea is to have a good communication channel between the Alliances and the Commission.

The recommendation will be added by Ludovic Thilly and it can be updated according to FOREU1's comments.

FOREU1&2 – Opinion Peace

Opinion Peace prepared during the summer time will be published on digital platforms in Europe. It will be the document presenting the key results of all Alliances (only one key result related to different fields from each Alliance). It is important and useful in order to make Alliances more visible. The deadline is the 7th of August. The recommendations on how to fill the table are suggested, it is important to take some time to read them. It is not an obligation.

4. Updates from FOREU2 sub-groups

Newest sub-groups:
Two sub-groups on **Impact & Diversity** and **Gender Equality** were created. It is necessary to nominate representatives for these new sub-groups.

Magdalena Sikorska - EUNICE on the sub group on Cooperation with non-EU partners:
The sub-group was spread into 4 other sub-groups: financial possibilities, geopolitical strategy, global engagement and Joint Degrees related to non-EU partners.

A survey will be sent to the members of the Global Forum on Geopolitical strategy concerning non-EU partners. A joint meeting is planned at the beginning of July.

It is indeed an important point that Alliances have started to target non-EU countries for cooperation.

5. Next FOREU2 Global meetings and guests from European Commission (15min)

A doodle will be sent mid-September.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

G.　FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 04 October 2022

1.　Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
Global Forum Meeting
Online meeting
Teams

Tuesday 4th October 2022
14.00 pm – 16.00 pm CET

Agenda

Open part: 14h-15h (maximum)

1. Discussion on the assessment of mid-term reports with EACEA Representative(s)

2. AOB to be discussed with EACEA Representative(s)

Closed part: 15h-16h

3. 2023 Call for Proposal

4. Composition of FOREU2 Bureau (1 vacant seat)

5. Proposal for a procedure for joint FOREU1-2 statement

6. Budget of the pilot phase: discussion on the management of "Other Costs" and support to Ukraine

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

7. Update on FOREU2 topical sub-groups, incl. FOREU2 paper on "Towards an integrated European Higher Education Area digital space"

   NB: because of limited time, sub-group Chairs will NOT be asked to make update except for urgent matter

8. Erasmus Without Paper and European Student Card

9. Update on EUC initiative (Sabine Menu)

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

4

2.   Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

Open Part

1. Discussion on the assessment of mid-term reports with EACEA representative(s) (Annalisa Colosimo, Iwona Jablonska & Daniel Hubner)

There will be an online info session for all potential candidates on the 15th of November, 2022 in the afternoon (more info here).

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U Alliance: Why is the info session so late compared to the start of the call?

R-Annalisa Colosimo - EACEA: It was a question of organisation and availability of the team. This call is similar to the last call with the exception of two elements: the extension to the Balkans and the Seal of Excellence.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: Is It possible to have more information on the assessment of the mid-term reports, on the type of feedback and the timeline?

R-Iwona Jablonska - EACEA: 24 mid-term reports from Alliances were received with some delay (between the end of May & mid-July). The EACEA has been working with the experts the whole summer in order to get feedback from them. The deadlines were not always respected due to organisational issues. The EACEA is receiving the feedback from experts and the timeline depends on the complexity of the mid-term report. The EACEA is currently reviewing all the assessments in order to have brief feedbacks. The goal is to send practical recommendations. This will be a tool for the alliances to optimize the achievements of the project. The EACEA called it a "Draft review" because it is a dialogue to make sure that the recommendations are relevant and clear. This week it will be sent to the first consortia.

Process for this draft review:
1. Careful reading of the content of the draft review (2/3 pages). The Alliances will have 2 weeks to read it. The Alliances can accept the content and no further steps will needed.
2. If clarifications are needed, a meeting will be organised with the Policy Officer and Project Officer.

The Alliances' coordinators interlinked the feedback with the upcoming call. It is important to remember that it is still the time of implementation of the current Grant Agreement and there is a need to focus on the current description of actions. The goal is to help the Alliances to succeed.

R-Annalisa Colosimo - EACEA: Be aware that this exercise is something separate from the evaluation of the next proposals. This exercise will not have any prejudges for the evaluations of the next call.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Ludovic Thilly - EC2U: All the Coordinators are aware of this fact but it is always good to have an external view if some activities do not seem to be relevant. In this case it will be helpful for the next call.

Anne May Jansse - AURORA: Do you have a deadline for when the last draft review will be released?

R-Iwona Jablonska - EACEA: There is no precise date, it should come probably between October and November.

2. AOB to be discussed with EACEA Representatives

Paul Verschure - Neurotech: It may not be ideal to duplicate efforts across consortia. Is it possible to capitalise on the complementarity between Alliances?

R-Ioana Dewandeler EAC: It is a very important point. The commissioner is very interested in this kind of exchanges between the Alliances. DG EAC would not look at it from the perspective of duplication since the Alliances are very diverse. DG EAC proposes to look at this situation from another angle, it means that these Alliances have the possibility to exchange on their best practices. The goal is to create synergies and learn from each other.

Paul Verschure - Neurotech: It will be important to have a document from the Commission that shows the common themes and common goals just to have a complete idea of the current situation.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: Will the EACEA be available to do this cross-analysis of the mid-term reports?

R-Iwona Jablonska - EACEA: Some indicators were provided in the survey. Alliances are asking for something general and EACEA focuses more on being tailormade for Alliances. The review will give specific recommendations and reminders. The demand will be kept in mind and the EACEA will see internally if it is possible.

R-Ioana Dewandeler - EAC: It should be seen from a different perspective; the upcoming feedback will help to see what has been accomplished among the objectives set in the begging. The starting point of your next proposal should be at the very top of your objectives. Alliances first need to deliver on that and then think of the next steps. If there is a need to have this broader view that was suggested by Paul Verschure, it will come in later stage. The Commission has commissioned a report that analyses the initiatives overall. The mid-term report and the demand about the general view are two different things.

Bjorn Stensaker – CIRCLE U.: This report may show potential outcomes that could be useful for Alliances for the final report. Have some interactions been planned before the final report? When should this final report be completed?

R-Iona Dewandeler - EAC: The due date for the final report is 2024, Alliances will have time to read the report. Note also that the colleagues from DG RTD are working on a report that is analysing the same thing but, in the R&I dimension of the Alliances. It will provide a picture of the current situation but from a scientific perspective.

R-Annalisa Colosimo - EACEA: Of course, there is a need to think on how to capitalise on the achievements of both FOREU networks. There will be a reflection on what more can be done and how these interactions can be fostered.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: There are concerns about the late reply from the POs, even more now with the new call deadline. Could it be possible to verify the communication with the POs?

R-Annalisa Colosimo- EACEA: Mitigated measures to avoid delays have been currently in stage of applying. EACEA reminds that there are some replies that could take longer because of the need to do the internal check, counter-checking and harmonize the replies between POs. The 2019 and 2020 were pilot calls which had a lot of complexity. The EACEA is discovering all these norms along with Alliances. The EACEA asks the Alliances to be patient. Also, the EACEA reminds that there is not only work with the Alliances. First, it is possible to solve the problem bilaterally by resending the request and otherwise contact the alternative email address: EACEA-EUROPEAN-UNIVERSITIES@ec.europa.eu .

R-Iwona Jablonska - EACEA: This issue is trying to be stabilised. In the first instance, it is possible to try to use the tools and documentations available (Annoted Grand Agreement, Grant Agreement, etc).

Paul Verschure - Neurotech: There are no doubts that there has been a lot of work to do, but is it feasible to have some redundancy in the communication channels with the Commission, especially because of the short timelines? For example, if there is not any answer from the PO, is it possible to get a response directly from the Commission?

R-Ioana Dewandeler - EAC: There is a functional email address to contact the Commission. However, it might be more complicated to have an answer especially during the summer period.

Pedro Antonio Amado – RUN-EU: In the case of RUN-EU it is about months of delay. It will be appreciated to have at least an alternative solution. If the Commission needs time to check, could it be mentioned that the question will be treated?

R-Ioana Dewandeler - EAC: The colleagues from EACEA are doing their best to solve these problems. It is an exception and hopefully it will not overshadow the good work that has been done.

Bjorn Stensaker – CIRCLE U.: Is it possible to have some more information about the two new elements in the new proposal compared to the previous call?

R-Ioana Dewandeler - EAC: It is difficult to dedicate information within this context. All the information needed will be provided on the 15th Session. The Seal of Excellence is an instrument used in other programmes. It will be in a form of a certificate signed by the Commissioner. In the next 2023 call, it will be the actual seal. It is a learning process for now, but it is not completely new.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: It has been a surprise to see this significant advancement of the call. There are a lot of concerns about that and it is a real change.

R-Iona Dewandeler - EAC: It indeed can be a little bit challenging for some Alliances. Firstly, there is the same amount of time as for previous years. Secondly, some of the issues that have been discussed it that it is not fully appropriate if the results are falling in the middle of the summer when universities are closed. Thirdly, this is part of a complex process. It is the best solution considering all the points mentioned. It means that the Grant will be signed earlier and the budget will arrive earlier. It is important to highlight that it is the biggest budget for Erasmus activities. Thus, it requires the change of the paradigm.

Anne May Jansse – AURORA: There are some concerns about the deadline and all the alliances might be affected. There is a lot of stress about the new deadline.

Marcella Costa – UNITA: The team work is overlapping with the current project and the new one because of the deadline changes. The is nothing to do about this, but it is important to look at the situation from the perspectives of the Alliances.

Naveed Syed – ENHANCE: The duration of the call is less of an issue, rather about the beginning of the call and the time to submit the application considering all the holidays when the university is closed.

R-Ioana Dewandeler - EAC: As it was mentioned before it is a very complex puzzle and there is nothing to add. The budget will come earlier and it will be more important.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Ursula Schlickter – ENGAGE-EU: In the case of ENGAGE-EU the end of the current project is in October and different timing is not expected.

R-Ioana Dewandeler - EAC: For some Alliances there will not be any funding gap. The results might come in June, but this information needs to be verified.

Kevin Guillaume - Circle-U: The Alliances would have appreciated the notification about the change of deadline before summer break.

R-Ioana Dewandeler - EAC: There was no bilateral discussions linked to the advancement of the deadline. It was a kind of feedback received at that time. This is considered to be the best solution for today. The recording of the call from last year is accessible online.

CLOSED PART

3. 2023 Call for Proposals

A meeting will be organised after the info session.

4. Composition of the FOREU2 Bureau (1 vacant seat)

There is an open call for the new seat: please send the expressions of interest to Bureau by the end of the week.

5. Proposal for a procedure for joint FOREU1-2 statement

FOREU1 has proposed the Modus operandi that will be sent after this meeting as an online document with the possibility to comment (more than 2 weeks to comment).

6. Budget of the pilot phase: discussion on the management of "Other Costs" and support to Ukraine

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: The news from the Executive Agency about the possibility to raise the ceiling of "Other Costs" from 5 to 8 percent was received.

Was this possibility triggered by any of the Alliances and if so, was it an easy or difficult process? The other reason to ask this question is that it was asked to involve more strategic partners form Ukraine. In the case of EC2U, the University of Lviv is a strategic partner and the Alliance wanted to offer them the possibility to participate in some of the Alliance's activities based on the Grant and under the mobility cost. It was presented by Tine Delva in one meeting. After sending the request to the PO, the response was to use "Other Costs". It would only be possible only if EC2U upgraded its Other Cost budget from 5 to 8 percent.

Is there any similar experience in order to see if there was the same response from the POs?

Gils Coucke - ENLIGHT: It seems to be a general rule and the same case for the all Alliances. confirmation will be asked.

Sophia D'Aguiar – EELISA: It is a general rule and there is no need to request a Grant Agreement Amendment. Ukraine cannot be an associated partner in the call. It will be possible for the next one.

7. Update on FOREU2 topical sub-groups, incl. FOREU2 paper on "Towards an integrated European Higher Education Area digital space"

NB: because of limited time, sub-group Chairs will not be asked to make updates except for urgent matters.

The final paper will be shared.

8. Erasmus Without Paper and European Student Card

The first meeting of the new period of implementation of Erasmus without Paper and EU Student card will be held. Reports will be sent afterwards. The Chair of the sub-group on digital platform was invited and there is a need to find someone else from the Global Forum. Ludovic Thilly will contact the Bureau in order to see who is available.

9. Update on EUC Initiative (Sabine Menu)

Launch of the second edition of ESA:

	RI4C2
EC²U	Research & Innovation For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

SECOND EDITION

What we plan

- **240 participants from 44 European University Alliances**
  - 220 participants coselected by ESA and the alliances
  - 20 panel coordinators - also students - directly selected by ESA
  - An average number of 5 participants per alliance
- **A co-selection process** of students with the alliances
- **31 May - 2 June 2022**
  - 3 days event **at the European Parliament** in Strasbourg
  - Topic: the European strategic autonomy
  - Celebration of the Elysée Treaty
  - European Year of Skills
- Submission of an **Erasmus+ cooperation partnership** to sustain the initiative after 2023

#ESA23
2ⁿᵈ Edition

*June 2023

Topic: mental health, higher education, agriculture etc.

THE CO-SELECTION PROCESS

Timeline

3 oct. 22	**Applications open on the EUC website** https://eucinitiative.wordpress.com/european-student-assembly/esa23-how-to-apply/ ESA and the alliances promote the initiative among students
28 nov. 22	**Applications close**
2 dec. 22	**ESA sends each alliance a list of their eligible students** The list comes with a folder containing the CV and application form of each candidate. The alliances assess and rank their own students per university by order of preference.
13 jan. 23	**Alliances send ESA the student ranking per university** The ESA Selection Committee gathers all lists and makes ajustments when necessary to ensure a fair balance between gender, higher education institution, country, field and level of study. Alliances are informed of the results before the candidates.
3 feb. 23	**List of selected students finalised**

#ESA23
2ⁿᵈ Edition

SECOND EDITION

How you can help

- **Promote the initiative among your students**
  - Share the #ESA23 handbook widely
  - All the information about #ESA23 on the EUC website
- **Take part in the co-selection process**
  - More information about the selection guidelines and indicative assessment criteria
- **Join the ESA Steering Committee** and contribute in the design and implementation of the project.
  - The ESA Steering Committee is open to any staff member of student from EUAs willing to get involved.

#ESA23
2ⁿᵈ Edition

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

THE CO-SELECTION PROCESS

Indicative assessment grid

Assessment criteria	Explanation	Top grade
Strong interest in **European politics, culture and society**	The assessment focuses on the interest and motivation of the student to conduct an in-depth reflection on European issues rather than his/her knowledge or expertise in the field. The interest of the students is reflected in her/his argumentation and to a lesser extent in his/her past accomplishments. The participation in Erasmus+ mobilities and previous European projects are an advantage but not an obligation. Applications should not be discarded on the grounds of one student's personal opinions.	5
Motivation to **get involved in the community**	The assessment focuses on the student's motivation to play an active role in her/his community. Previous experiences at different levels (local, national or European) and in various contexts (school or university, unions, NGOs) are equally valued.	5
Ability to **listen, debate and defend an opinion** in English	The assessment focuses on the quality of the written argumentation in English. It takes into account language tests and past experiences involving public speaking, debating activities, and advocacy.	4
Motivation to conduct in-depth research and develop ideas on **the chosen 3 topics**	The assessment focuses on the ability of the students to justify her/his choice of panels in a convincing way. Each of the 3 choices must be justified.	3
Academic, personal and professional **excellence**	The assessment takes into account academic results and prizes, training, and other personal accomplishments in various contexts. The excellence criteria should not prevent the inclusion of students from different countries, genders, universities, fields of studies and social backgrounds. The inclusion of students in vocational training is encouraged.	3

#ESA23
2ⁿᵈ Edition

The deadline of the next call might impact the process. It would be good to extend the deadline.

H. FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 24 November 2022

1. Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
Global Forum Meeting
Online meeting
Teams

Thursday 24th November 2022
10.00 am – 12.00 am CET

Agenda

1. Response from Commission Gabriel to FOREU2 letter

2. Discussion on the feedback from the mid-term report

3. Feedback on Info Session (15/11)

4. Cooperation with FOREU1: process for joint statement, joint meeting in Brussels in early 2023

5. Forum of Alliances in Turin (30/03/23)

6. ESA 2023

7. Rapid feedback from Sub-group Chairs (if needed)

8. AOB

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Response from Commissioner Gabriel to the FOREU2 letter

The deadline was not changed.
The feedback was received by email and it mentioned that the publication on the first call was advanced. Nevertheless, it is important to make sure that interested Alliances are able to prepare a good application. The Commissioner mentioned the importance of sharing the encountered difficulties. All the Alliances agreed to ask the Commission to take part in one of the coming meetings.

2. Discussion on the feedback from the mid-term report

Anne-May Janssen – AURORA: Some of the Alliances have recently received their feedback on the mid-term report. Is there any possibility to share it on a voluntary basis in order to see if there are useful recommendations or comments?

Sophia D'Aguiar – EELISA: A good review was received including the comments on achieved results, WPs, teams, communication etc.

Guido Van Huylenbroeck – ENLIGHT: A good review has been received as well. There were some comments on financial sustainability in the future and on how to measure exchanges and virtual mobility. This issue will be discussed.

Ursula Schlichter – ENGAGE.EU: It was stated that the Alliance is on the path to reach the promised impact, but it is necessary to continue to work.

Carla Hengerer – EuroTeQ: The scalp of report, which is 2 pages seemed to be short. It was not possible to elaborate more in the progress report, thus, approach towards education, which is important for the Alliance, was not described.

Lisa Pichler – EURECA-PRO: There were some comments on tracking mobilities. Thus, it could be given to sub-groups in order to discuss and propose a global approach to this subject. That indeed will help the Alliances to take into consideration the same important points.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: Question about the recommendations: there are general comments for all the Alliances which progress should be shown in the final report.
The only negative comment that EC2U has received is "*given the negative impact of the COVID pandemic on student mobility and on students' mental and physical well-being the Alliance could consider whether these issues could be prioritised within the budget and time remaining*" and it will be discussed with the PO. Is it the case for other Alliances?

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Anne-May Janssen – AURORA: This comment should probably be added to general comments for all the Alliances: in case if the Alliances have the possibility to manoeuvre within the budget and the programme in order to pay some extra attention to COVID.

The only information demanded to the Alliance was to clarify some information about student representatives which is clear and to which the Alliance can respond, which is not the case for the comment on EC2U Alliance.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U:
Higher Education round tables have been organised every 6 months by EC2U. The theme of the next one will be students' mental health. An invitation to propose topics for speaking will be sent. The round table will be held in May in Jena and there will be an online broadcast. It might be a response to the comment on the progress report, but it is still complicated to directly respond to it.

Guido Van Huylenbroeck – ENLIGHT: It might not be necessary to respond to this negative comment, it just can show the direction for the Alliance and the work to concentrate on.

Marcella Costa (UNITA) proposes that the Alliances find a definition and the indicators for mobility at the next meeting after January.

The Commission has used the word "satisfactory" for all reports.

3. Feedback on info session (15/11)

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U
Info session is a quite difficult exercise because some Alliances have specific questions and some of them general ones.

The guideline was not clear regarding the funding modal (40% of additional payment). Is it related to the exercise of monitoring the completion of the WP at the mid-term? Is it correct that the payment of 40 % will be received without looking at the details of the progress and in the end, it will be asked if all the WPs have been finished which will trigger the final payment?

Ursula Schlichter – ENGAGE.EU: It was understood in the same way. Another question is that from reading the summary from governance sub-group where it was said that 40% of prefinancing will be received and another rate will be received later.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: 40% will be paid around mid-term. This could be triggered by the progress of the spending. This is lump sum 2 which is different from the lump sum 1 system.

Marcella Costa – UNITA: The presentation of the last meeting says that the payment is linked to the deliverables of the WPs which is confusing.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: It was also highlighted that it is possible to ask for a Grand Agreement revision to transfer the budget to another WP that is supposed to be finished on time in order not to lose money.

Clara Espirito-Santo – RUN-EU: Regarding the deliverables it is mentioned on the forum that it is necessary to have between 10 and 15 deliverables. However, on the info session it was mentioned that the Alliances could have more.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: Further clarification regarding deliverables has been asked. It was said that this is recommended number, but there is a possibility to do around 30-40 deliverables (the number depends on the Alliance and its objectives). EC2U has 2-3 deliverables per WP.
EC2U downsized 300 deliverables to 186 and it is still a lot. It was decided to revert the approach which means multiplying the tasks and a greater number of milestones. It can also be considered as an internal monitoring system of the activities. Thus, the deliverables are considered as a collection of results of different tasks.

Sabine Sainte-Rose – AURORA: How is it possible to distinguish what is a milestone and what is a task?

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: For example, the first milestone will be the creation of the curriculum, the second one is the accreditation in different countries and the third one is the involvement of the students. The deliverable will be the collection of these results.

Sophia D'Aguiar – EELISA: The milestones are attached to the tangible outcomes. The deliverables are sort of the formalisation of the process. It helps to find an equilibrium; the WP groups have actual work and then they can explain it on paper.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: One of the options is to continue a precise and strong monitoring and ask for internal deliverables that will be used for the real deliverables in the end.
The question regarding associated partners is: it was mentioned before that they will be defined as before and not included in the platform, but during the info session it was said that the associated partners should be declared with their PIC number. Is it mandatory?

Guido Van Huylenbroeck – ENLIGHT: It was understood that it would depend on the partner. If the partner is a university of the UK or Switzerland, which can only be an associated partner, in this case they should have a PIC number, but it is not the case for the partners/company from the same city.

Ursula Schlichter – ENGAGE.EU: Concerns about the associated partners who are very important for the EU Commission. Now the only way to show them is through the submission of associated partners in administrative forms. There is no list in the application form like in the first application. It needs to be discussed during the next meeting.

Marcella Costa – UNITA: It is possible to have a reviewable deliverable that moves through the project? The first year the deliverable could be on the progress on the implementation of the management, then in the second year it could evolve and be about the construction of the management for instance. However, it could be tied with the problem of the payment.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U: the payment method is not related. The mechanisms that will trigger the rest of the 40% around mid-term is not associated with assessment of progress or delivery. It gives more flexibility to keep the WPs over the 48 months and not propose any specific deliverable at a given timing and delays will not be problematic regarding the payment.

Magdalena Sikorska – EUNICE: There are some confusions and some parts are nor applicable for this call. For example, it is said on the forum that the tables about staff meetings are not necessary, but on slides it is explained that they should be filled. Regarding the associated partners, they now should be mentioned in the description and can be linked to each of the tasks.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U
Conclusion on some points:
Discrepancies between the guide and the slides were found. Thus, it is difficult to find an official information. There is also a need of clarification on the pic number to know if it is mandatory for all associated partners. A message will be sent to the EACEA to ask them to participate in a meeting to solve these issues.

4. Cooperation with FOREU1: process for joint agreement and joint meeting in Brussels in early 2023

FOREU1 requested to officialise a way to function when it is needed to create a joint statement. There were exchanges of comments on the matter. The new version is now considered to be validated. At the next meeting the process will be finalized. It will be used when joint statements will be prepared. The FOREU2 SwafS sub-group and the FOREU1 R&I subgroup would like to prepare a joint statement on the future of the support of R&I activities, therefore this new instrument could be used to prepare it. The Global Forums will have a say in it.

The Chair of FOREU1 has been discussing with DG-EAC on a potential future of FOREU1&2, taking into consideration that there are four new Alliances. The question was about the direction of these new Alliances, whether they should start to work with FOREU1 or whether FOREU3 should be created. Thus, a conversation between FOREU1&2 and the associated sub-groups would make sense. It could also make sense at some point to merge FOREU1 and FOREU2 as the differences between the two groups are less important than at the beginning of their creation. It was proposed that the Alliances could apply to E+ capacity building KA3 project to formalise the secretariat through Erasmus funds and it could be prepared for the call of 2024.

It could be interesting to have a joint physical meeting between the 44 Erasmus coordinators in Brussels. The end of February or March is taken into consideration (a survey will be sent).

5. Forum of Alliances in Turin (30/03/2023)

Marcella Costa – UNITA: The initiative comes from the French and Italian universities and from the French Embassy in Italy. A one-day meeting in Turin is organised in order to gather the Alliances and both French and Italian members on the 30th of March. The idea is to have a discussion forum with two ministers and all relevant actors. The focus will be on innovation and education in the Alliances, mobility programmes and students' engagements etc. More information will be sent before Christmas. The same concept as at the Paris Forum in person. Places are limited, 2-3 representative per Alliance.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

6. ESA 2023

Marcella Costa – UNITA:

Students can still apply until the 4th of December to the EU student's assembly 2023 that will take place in Strasbourg from the 31st of May to the 2dn of June. The drafts of the email have been already sent. After the deadline (04/12) the Committee will send applications to each Alliance in order to select their own students according to a specific set of criteria. Students should firstly read a handbook to see if their profile is suitable and what is expected. Only about 5 students can be chosen per Alliance. These students should be available to work remotely from March to May (there are two phases: remote and in person). The deadline for the Alliances' selection process is the 8th of February, 2023.

Timeline	
12 oct. 22	Opening of the application process
4 dec. 22	Closing of the application process
12 dec. 22	Alliances receive a list of their eligible students
8 feb. 23	Assessment completed by the alliances
27 feb. 23	List of participants finalised by ESA
March 23	Onboarding session

The possibility to accept that FOREU2 would provide feedback in mid-February will be asked.

The number of all applications will be asked.

7. Rapid feedback from sub-group Chairs

Not discussed.

8. AOB

No particular business.

The next meeting is on the 8th of December from 10 to 12. The linked has been sent.

EC²U — RI4C2 — Research & Innovation For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

I.   FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 08 December 2022

1.   Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
Global Forum Meeting
Online meeting
Teams

Thursday 8th December 2022
10.00 am – 12.00 pm CET

Agenda

Open Part (10h – 11h00)

1. Take stock of the situation related to the preparation for the 2023 call (discussion with Vanessa Debiais-Sainton)
2. Clarifications on specific aspects of the 2023 call (responses to our list of questions by EACEA and DG EAC)

Closed Part (11h – 12h)

3. Debriefing
4. AOB

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2.   Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

Open Part

1. Take stock of the situation related to preparation for the 2023 Call (discussion with Vanessa Debiais-Sainton)

Regular meetings with coordinators are crucial, as well as meetings with Directors General of HEIs. The European Commission (EC) had a meeting with them in Prague at the end of November. Many Ministries are engaging reforms concerning quality assurance, to provide alliances with more flexibility with regards to transnational cooperation. It is not progressing as fast as you want, but the EC can reassure you that it is progressing faster than expected since the Bologna Process started. European Universities are a catalyst for change.

A physical meeting will be organised early next year, between the EC, FOREU1 and FOREU2, to take stock of the situation and see if there is momentum for merging both groups as Alliances from two pilot phases are now reaching the same level of maturity. Moreover, the Alliances have to welcome new universities and the idea is to find a way to best support them all.

Q&A:

Kevin Guillaume - Circle U.:
Circle U. has many meetings to finalise the proposal by the 15th of January. It is very stressful for the teams. The teams want to go further in the proposal, in strategic aspects; however, more time would be needed to go more deeply into details. In particular, Circle U. wanted to provide further information on each Partner's contribution(s), given the fact that some membership fees will be introduced and that the Alliance is managing an additional budget of 20 million euros (on top of the EU Grant).

Anne-May Janssen – AURORA:
AURORA is in a similar position. The teams are already working extra hours. With this proposal, the teams are no longer counting to accommodate the timeline. Some aspects will not be as detailed as wished. The new governance structure will not be fully defined at the time of the proposal submission as the process is still ongoing, involving members at all levels including high-level members such as Vice-Rectors and Rectors. The Alliance wishes to not have to re-evaluate the governing structure in 4 to 6 years. AURORA hopes that the experts will take this into consideration and allow improvements that were not detailed in the proposal.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U:
The EC2U teams have been reflecting on the new proposal, throughout 2022. The idea was to have the most detailed proposal since this was reflected in the feedback received in the mid-term report. Given the new deadline, the process and consequent calendar changed, meaning that the brainstorming period had to be reduced. Up-to-date, the Alliance has 12 Working Groups (350

people) focused on the new proposal; these Working Groups are composed of both people already involved in the Alliance and new members. The EC2U Alliance will do its best to validate every detail with all people at all levels.

Vanessa Debiais-Sainton - Head of Higher Education Unit:
The EC fully understands the concerns. It is not a competition, but an examination since the EC foresaw the budget for all pilot II Alliances (selected in 2020) because we want you to succeed. Nevertheless, it is an examination because the EC will only invest in an alliance if independent experts are convinced that it is worth up to 14,4 million EUR. The EC understands your frustrations since you want to create a perfect proposal. At the same time, the experts expect only some of the solutions at the proposal stage. However, the experts want to see in the proposal a real commitment at all levels because that is the condition of success. The most pragmatic thing we have seen in some alliances is that you can create new programmes and adapt to the existing things, for example, by embedding mobility or modules. An important point is how you will manage to transform your programmes and meet this ambitious objective that at least 50 % of your student body can benefit from the activities of the Alliance.
Keys questions for your next Board meetings must be: Do we convince the experts that we are all working in the same direction at all levels? Can we convince ourselves that we can pioneer European Strategies for European Universities? This European Strategy for European Universities is not the bible but a guideline. We hope that Alliances can come up with better long-term strategies.

Ludovic Thilly – EC2U:
However, a major concern for the Alliances present today, is that all pilot Alliances (selected in 2019) were not renewed in the 2022 call. Is it a question of proposal quality, or rather achievements of an alliance?

Vanessa Debiais-Sainton- Head of Higher Education Unit:
The quality of the proposal reflects the maturity of the alliance. Both the proposal and alliance should match the level of ambition. It is important to understand that alliances are a very vast project. The Alliances are so much greater than any other project (i.e. Erasmus Mundus, Joint Programmes). It reviews how you organise your learning and teaching activities and links again with R&I missions to break down silos. Make sure your students are equipped with the skills needed for society to be future entrepreneurs and innovators. That is why Alliances need to reflect deeply on how the R&I is part of the proposal and how your students can be part of your R&I activities. Although, you are not coming from anything. You already have three years of experience. The EC expects that you drive all the way here with a level of maturity.

Pedro Assunção – RUN-EU:
The level of ambition is not measured by the quantity of activities but mostly by the alignment of the activities with the EU priorities. It is correct?

Vanessa Debiais-Sainton - Head of Higher Education Unit:
Yes, sometimes the level of ambition is correct, but the way of implementing activities needs to be improved. In this case, the experts will wonder about the capacity to match the level of ambition. This adequacy is essential.

2. Clarifications on specific aspects of the 2023 call (responses to our list of questions by EACEA and DG EAC) Speakers: Daniel Hübner (EACEA), Tine Delva (DG EAC)

A **FAQ** is available in the Funding & Tenders Portal (link). This a second channel of communication. Remember there also a third channel created Ad Hoc for the project: the functional mailbox.

1. Last minute questions in the final application phase: The EACEA team will be available until the very last minute. However, it is recommended Alliances anticipate the questions. During the holidays, EACEA will be closed from 22 December to the 3rd of January. In the case of IT issues, Alliances must contact the IT Help Desk directly, not the functional address. There are several options:
1- Contact form on the Call page
2- Send an email to the server desk.
3- A phone number is also available.

2. Are there any measures in place for mitigating the issues of double work on fulfilling bureaucratic tasks of different activities? (E.g. the mobilities that alliances are spearheading as part of their deliverables still have to fulfil regular Erasmus+ mobility paperwork too, which creates additional work to both staff and students and hinders mobility)
In this first case, the applicant must align the reporting required with the general Erasmus+ mobilities. In the second case, this is not needed. When using Alliance grants, traditional mobility paperwork is not needed.

3. Could you provide us with more details on the European University Hub? How many alliances should participate and what should the purpose of these hubs be? (Answered bilaterally via email)
This question refers to a specific paragraph of the call. A partial answer is provided in this document, though the call does not impose a strict definition of what this Hub could be. The European University Hub is an invitation to those who wish to further collaborate on topics of education and innovation and put forth their ideas with the goal of developing concrete activities.

4. Is it mandatory to provide PIC numbers of Associated Partners? (what if an Associated Partner has not yet a PIC at the moment of the submission? Can it be added at the time of preparation of Grant Agreement?) (Answered in Portal FAQ)
Yes, before submitting the application, all the Associated Partners must register in the participant's register to obtain the Participant Identification Code (PIC). It is mandatory to introduce each Associated Partner involved in the proposal, i.e. in Part A of the application form. Remember that the role in the alliance activities of each Associated Partner must be explained. In principle, Associated Partners should be added before signing the Grant Agreement, since it will delay all

process and the signature of the GA. The EACEA warmly recommends adding it before since it is a simple and quick process.

5. Is it necessary to provide a Letter of Intent for each Associated Partner?
It is not required to provide Letters of Intent.

6. In case of expansion: what if all new Full Partners are not known at the time of submission? Should "anonymous" Full Partner(s) be created under Part A and included in all activities in Part B?
If an Alliance expands, the applicant must describe the expansion strategy within the application. It is also mandatory to state the number of Full Partners that will be added during the implementation of the second funding phase; it is not compulsory to add the names of the new partners. Indeed, additional Full Partners can be identified later on. In this case, a roadmap of the expansion strategy explaining how new partners should be incorporated in the application. If partners are added during the implementation phase, they must be officially added in the Grant Agreement via amendments.
Adding an anonymous partner in Part A is impossible since a PIC number is required, however the applicant should explain in Part B the expansion strategy to a specific number of Full Partners.
In terms of the detailed budget table, there is no mandatory approach. Two options: 1) Introduce the unknown beneficiary with a dedicated budget. 2) Or allocate the dedicated budget of the future Full Partner to the Coordinator in the meantime. Applicants need to explain the approach in the space "Any comments".

7. We have identified some discrepancies between the call guidelines/templates and the slides presented at the Info Session and we would like to know which documents are considered as the reference? (One example: some sections of the template seem mandatory but Info Session slides mention that they are "not applicable") (Answered in Portal FAQ)
It is correct that certain sections and tables in Part B are not applicable to this call. The applicants do not need to fill: Table 4.2 on Estimated Budget Resources, Table on Staff Efforts, Table 5.1 on Ethics, and Table 5.2 on Security. Do not remove any tables. The tables should remain empty. In the case of extra WPs, when copy-pasting the tables, we do not need to copy-paste the non-applicable tables.

8. Is table "Events meetings and mobility" mandatory? (Very difficult to fill-in in advance for a very high number of meetings, events and mobilities) (Answered in Portal FAQ)
It is not compulsory to fill-in.

9. Is it mandatory to fill-in section 2.1.4 "Cost effectiveness and financial management"? (Answered bilaterally via email)
Yes, it is mandatory to fill-in section 2.1.4.

10. Mandatory WPs (Answered bilaterally via email)
In principle, the structure is up to the applicants. In the Part B template, there are some guidelines for presenting the WPs. WP1 is mandatory for Management, and last WP is for Impact and Dissemination.

11. Optimum number of WPs (Answered bilaterally via email)
The optimum number of deliverables is at the discretion of each applicant

12. WPs Description
In order to respect the equal treatment for all the applicants the application is limited to 120 pages. It is not possible to modify the Part B template (including table format) to have more pages since it will generate issue in the formatting.

13. Section 1.3 "explain how the activities are complementary to other activities carried out by other organisations": what are "other organisations" referring to? (AP? non-Alliance partners? Others?)
Make your case if you believe your proposal provides such complementarity. Consider how the proposal builds on past activities in the field of innovative aspects. There is no limitation in a specific activity. In addition, the EACEA recommends making the interlink between activities and how some activities are complementary with other activities carried out by other organisations, if applicable. The term 'other organisations' must be understood broadly, other than the beneficiaries and affiliated entities it could be Associated Partners, institutions within your regional ecosystems or even EU institutions.

14. Budget – Unit Costs (Answered bilaterally via email)
Applicants must include their costs in terms of Person/month units. Please check the Instruction Sheet that is included in the Detailed Budget Table template.

15. Is there a cost/duration ceiling for subcontracting? Where do we put travel/stay costs for externals? (Subcontracting or other costs-funding for third parties?)
Subcontracting should be a limited part of the action and must be performed by third parties, not by beneficiaries or affiliated entities. The subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible cost must be justified in the application. Travel/stay costs for externals: this information must be filled in the Budget Category C1 called "Travel & Subsistence" (See Detailed Budget table). These budget items are intended to cover the costs for staff and other people involved in the activities. Subcontracting cannot be used for these costs since subcontracting is made to cover subcontracting services (See Page 14 of the Call Document).

16. About the funding model (lump sum type II). It seems that we would receive 40% at the beginning, then another 40% around the mid-term report, and the remaining 20% at the end. To receive the second payment, it is compulsory to have (fully) completed a number of WPs, or just certain deliverables/milestones within every WP (as stated in the Gantt Chart)? (Answered bilaterally via email & in the Portal FAQ)
Applicants will receive a first prefinancing of 40 %, a second prefinancing of 40%, and at the end 20%. The second prefinancing is released based on the coordinator's self-declaration that the implementation is ongoing and they need further prefinancing. At the end of the project, you must justify the completion of WPs to calculate the final grant amount.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

17. If an employee of an affiliated entity works on an action in the project, is that person paid from the project budget and claimed under "direct personnel costs" or under "other costs/subcontracting"?

Alliances should be careful with the exact definition of affiliated entities (See in the Call document). The affiliated entities can charge lump sum contributions under the same conditions as the beneficiaries; therefore, the cost of the affiliated entities should be covered under the same categories as the beneficiaries.

18. Does each partner need to do an audit of its part of the grant at the end of the project? Is the audit certificate requested at the final report stage?

Under the Lump Sum II Approach, there will not be financial statements or audit certificates at the end of the funding period. Remember that beneficiaries must keep records and other supporting documents that prove that the work was properly implemented and the results achieved; even if you are not contractually obliged to keep specific records on actual cost (See Art 20 of the Lump Sum GA Model).

The Art 25 of this Model GA states that the Granting Authority might carry out an audit on the proper implementation of the actions. This can include accounts, individual salary statements or other personal data.

Last minute question

19. In the call is mentioned there is a funding rate of maximum of 80% of the total budget. In the Part B "Detailed Budget Table" applicants need to indicate the maximum co-financing rate in percentage which could be 80%. How do we reconcile the view of a Lump Sum format?

In the present case, the co-financing rate is indeed 80%. Implementing this rate into the table will automatically apply this rate to all the table.

<div align="center">

Closed Part

</div>

3. Debriefing

Universities, with the energy crisis, are more reluctant to promise budgets that they could eventually have difficulty to deliver. Therefore, it could be better to do less but provide more quality work rather than promising to accomplish too much. The budget could be reduced and, for example, concern only mobility or human resources. Alliances can remain ambitious but promise less.

It is difficult to attain 50% of mobilities for students. If all mobilities, and not only those of students and of each Alliance, are included, then it would be possible to reach 50%. It is also possible to start from the mobility number of each Alliance and attempt to multiply it by 10 to make progress, without necessary trying to reach 50%.

The Commission is aware that this number could be reached in the long-term, but not in the short-term. This number is also questionable regarding sustainable mobilities.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

The Commission will not take into account the mid-term report in their decision for the new call. However, it is possible to quote the mid-term report in the new proposal. It is also possible to use the recommendations from the mid-term report in the proposal and work on them.

4. AOB

Nothing to be discussed.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

III.   FOREU2 SwafS sub-group meetings

A.   List of meeting between M1 to M18

Joint meetings of FOREU1 and FOREU2 are also regularly organised but are not included in this deliverable.

Date	Main topics	Number of attendees
24/11/2021	Workshop with the French Minister/Events	42
31/01/2022	Open part: Overview of the nex ERA with Stijn Delaure; Closed part: General affairs	50
28/03/2022	Open part: Discussion with Doris Alexander (FOREU1); Closed part: General affairs	25
10/05/2022	Presentation of each FOREU2 alliances & their research field/ R&I funding/General affairs	32
18/10/2022	Open part: Mid-term report/lump sum approach/R&I instruments with Stijn Delaure & Marta Truco; Closed part: Erasmus+ 2023 Call/Joint deliverables	38
06/12/2022	Integration of the R&I activities into the Erasmus+ 2023/ Joint deliverable	28

B.   FOREU2 – SwafS sub-group meeting on 24 November 2021 (Kick-off meeting)

1.   Agenda

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

Erasmus+

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
1st SwafS Projects Meeting
(Online)
https://univ-poitiers.webex.com/univ-poitiers/j.php?MTID=m8a7c798db8dd5d39700eaaf3df5567e1

Wednesday 24th November 2021
9.30 am – 11.00 am CET

Agenda

9h30 – 9h40   Welcome by sub-group Chair (L. Thilly)

9h40 – 9h55   Tour de table

9h55 – 10h15   General information on European Universities initiative (incl. funding programmes, meetings with Commission or Policymakers)

10h15 – 10h35   General affairs of SwafS sub-group (incl. tools and joint deliverables)

10h35 – 11h55   Next SwafS sub-group meetings and guests from European Commission

10h55 – 11h   AOB

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2.   Minutes

<u>NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:</u>

1. Welcome by sub-group Chair (Ludovic Thilly-EC2U)

2. Tour de table: 42 persons present.

3. General information on European Universities initiative (incl. funding programmes, meetings with Commission or Policymakers)

Global Forum meeting: On November 19th, there was a Global Forum meeting between the 24 coordinators.

Workshop with the French Minister: On November 15th, a Workshop took place in Paris with the French Minister of Higher Education & Research Frédérique Vidal. This event gathered the 41 coordinators of the 1st and 2nd calls. The event was organised by Ludovic Thilly (Chair of FOREU2) and Olga Wessels (Chair of FOREU1). They organised the meeting in the context of the upcoming French Presidency of the EU. In the 1st semester of 2022, France wants to put on the table mainly 3 topics related to the alliances and obstacles that they are facing.

1) **Obstacles in setting up new Joint Programmes** (i.e. Joint accreditation): The European Approach (EA) is an agreement signed by the Member States and it has been developed with the aim of simplifying the accreditation and quality assessment of joint European training programmes. None of the countries wants to implement what they have agreed so in practice the EA does not work. The French Minister wants to know what are the concrete obstacles and find solutions with the coordinators.

2) **Capacity of the alliances to recruit joint personnel** (admin staff, teachers & researchers): Even if it is relevant and important for researchers, PhD students, Post-Doc fellows, we are facing obstacles related to differences in PhD thesis durations, permanent staff & researchers' profiles, statutes, salaries, etc. over the 27 Member States. The French Minister wants improvements on these issues.

3) **Deepening of the integration within the alliances** in all fields (education, research and innovation) by creating, when relevant, a legal entity that could centralise actions. Among the FOREU2 sub-groups there is one on the Legal Entity. This sub-group will have to work with them since they will propose a global analysis of interest to the SwafS projects. Next semester, the Commission will also probably work on this specific topic. On the very long term, maybe a European statute would be given to the alliances.

Thanks to this workshop it was the first time that the 41 alliance Coordinators could meet. This meeting showed that the French Minister is willing to put on the table the hot topics concerning our alliances. The major new point of interest for France is that the R&I aspects are fully integrated in the alliances' activities.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Other calls for R&I: The 17 alliances will receive the 1st call of the Erasmus projects for extension (additional 4+2 years). Next fall it will be the turn of the 24 Alliances. Potentially, there would be also two new calls for the R&I side in the Horizon Europe programme. But it is still unclear what will be the plan of the Commission because they do not know if they have the funds and the right instruments. There will probably be important developments during the French Presidency on this topic too.

Open discussion:
- It's important to make sure that our own Ministers are lobbied in order to support the French proposals when it comes to the Council decisions.

- The 41 Coordinators are finalizing a letter that will be sent to Minister Vidal where they propose further actions, like offer capacity to contact different ministers.
- In the European system, Member States work as a trio. The previous one (Germany, Portugal & Slovenia) worked on specific topics like research careers and reform of research assessment. The next trio (France, Czech Republic & Sweden) is facing elections in France and in the Czech Republic which may partly limit the impact of these Presidencies.

Regarding the visibility of Alliances, as new actors in the landscape: there is optimism since, in the past 6 months, there was a radical change in the European landscape about higher education. Alliances have been consulted for the reform of research assessment, the funding gaps in the whole funding instruments, the creation of the Gender Equality Plan, etc. Alliances can be instrumental in providing and testing new solutions and innovations.

4. General affairs of SwafS sub-group (incl. tools and joint deliverables)

The Virtual Info Session on the 25th of October 2021:
The Info Session on the implementation of Horizon 2020 European University Alliances (Pilot II), organised by the European Research Executive Agency (REA), focused on the lump sum approach, financial reporting and amendments.

Overview of the session:
Lump sum approach means a significant simplification since the Commission wants Alliances to focus on performance (i.e. production of relevant deliverables). They do not need anymore: time-sheets, pay-slips or contracts, depreciation policy, travel invoices. They need only technical documents, publications, prototypes, deliverables or any document proving that the work has been done.

Joint deliverables: Ludovic presented briefly FOREU2 and its SawfS sub-group, incl. the 2 joint deliverables among the 22 SwafS projects due at M24 and M36 (For further information see in the PPT attached to the email).
The other sub-groups will be helpful in studying different topics of interest to the SwafS subgroup (e.g. legal entity).

EC²U RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Open discussion:
- Another topic to discuss in our group will be "Research ecosystems" which could include industry but also public structures and organizations. We will see in a few months if it is need to create new sub-groups or close them.

Communication tools:
Mailing list: foreu2.swafsprojects@ml.univ-poitiers.fr

Online table with composition of all FOREU2 sub-groups: https://upoitiers86-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/emilie_lama_univ-poitiers_fr/EW6pEiUCR_lDrhYA3ZrtEklBHeLPkbd2bSJEBJ8fjdgnJw?rtime=F6RzEC6v2Ug

Teams SwafS Group:
https://teams.microsoft.com/dl/launcher/launcher.html?url=%2F_%23%2Fl%2Fteam%2F19%3AvzP5fTCEO-ZtcR64OabVZ8DATsvantFTfYZ4FKoikEY1%40thread.tacv2%2Fconversations%3FgroupId%3D647d4e7d-147d-430f-b485-1df00cd2de06%26tenantId%3Dd8865b48-d7bd-43bc-bfad-966e9d1ab017&type=team&deeplinkId=c49f2e75-28f1-411a-ab16-87311b8acec9&directDl=true&msLaunch=true&enableMobilePage=true&suppressPrompt=true

Remember that using the Teams Group communication channel is an opportunity to list some topics for the next meetings.

5. Next SwafS sub-group meetings and guests from the European Commission

Meetings: Meetings will be organised every 2 months. The next meeting will be organised at the end of January or beginning of February.

Guests: The sub-group will try to invite Commission representative(s) to the meetings. For the next meeting, DG Research representatives will be invited (e.g. Lia Karamali and Stijn Delaure). They will be asked to join for the first 30 minutes. However, the sub-group will wait to invite someone concerning the Lump Sum.

People invited: It is important to keep communication with people listed as official representatives in this group otherwise there will be too many people in the meetings. It is however possible to invite one colleague depending on the topic.

6. AOB

Topic to be discussed in the future: How each alliance has found a mechanism to make sure that there is a good communication between the Erasmus+ and SwafS projects.

C.   FOREU2 – SwafS sub-group meeting on 31 January 2022

1.   Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
SwafS Projects
(Online)
https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZWUwYzg1MzgtY2Y5YS00MTY5LTk1ZmMtZjZiYWZjYzY4Zjc3%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22d8865b48-d7bd-43bc-bfad-966e9d1ab017%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22514e403e-7805-4ef3-87a6-648204bd4990%22%7d

Monday 31th January 2022
14.00 pm – 15.30 pm CET

Agenda

Open meeting:

14h00   New ERA Policy Agenda, Horizon Europe and the R&I dimension of the European Universities: Lia Karamali & Stijn Delauré (RG RTD, European Commission)

Q&As

Closed meeting:

14h45   General affairs of SwafS sub-group

15h00   Next SwafS sub-group meetings and guests from European Commission

15h15   AOB

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

Open meeting
Lia Karamali & Stijn Delauré (DG RTD, European Commission)

1. The new European Research Area

The European Commission wants to converge "a European Strategy for universities" to a single strategy. They want to better understand the R&I dimension of the universities and all Alliances' projects. All those elements help the Commission to go deeper in the analysis and go further with their support.

The European Commission is strongly convinced that it is through synergies that they can find the best solutions for universities. They are confident because the strong competencies may offer some educational solutions.

Last November, during the Council, Ministers agreed on an important package for working in R&I. They agreed on revitalising the European Research Area (See the presentation of DG RTD). The package adopted is composed of two main items: Pact for R&I and REA Governance. The Pact for R&I is a succinct legislative document that translates the competencies in the Treaty in the R&I area. It is important because the Commission never made explicit reference to ethics and research integrity or openness to global cooperation. They want to give a specific meaning to research. One of the more significant achievements of this Council discussion session was the policy coordination and monitoring process. In the past, they used to work with parallel strands, first Members States adopted national plans for the broad area and broader objectives, and then the European Commission would do an annual report on the status of ERA. Today, it is no longer needed to have generic reporting, but rather it should be focused on achieving what is needed to be done. The second achievement was the involvement of stakeholders. The stakeholders are now formally part of the ERA governance.

Overview of the ERA Policy Agenda:

The European Commission adopted a work plan with 20 actions that concerns R&I. Many of these actions concern universities (see the presentation of DG RTD).

As stakeholders from the university sector, Alliances will also be solicited in order to develop these actions. It will be an opportunity to reflect on some transversal elements, thematic elements and targeted investments. Some recommendations will be shared to the Commission and to Members States.

Innovation policy

Commissioner Mariya Gabriel talked about Innovation areas a year ago. There is an ongoing discussion to further develop the innovation policy. The idea is to relaunch this innovation policy dimension and work closely with research policy and see how the Commission can have a similar approach for the labour market ranging from blue sky research up to applied research and, finally, up-take of research by the market. They are working in 5 areas:

- Access to finance
- Innovation divide
- Talent
- Framework conditions, including legislation
- Innovation ecosystem (how can it be made more prompt to innovation, what accelerated actions can be taken in addition to legislation).

Empowering European Higher Education

The European Strategy for Universities was adopted on the 18th of January 2022. This package contains a Commission communication and Council recommendations to facilitate transnational cooperation and is accompanied by staff working documents. Discussions took place under French Presidency on the 24th and 25th of January 2022. Council conclusions are in preparation and should be adopted in April 2022.

European Strategy for Universities

The idea is to help universities evolve in the actual context we are living in. Universities have a crucial role to play. The strategy is a shared vision to support all types of Higher Education institutions.

The four key objectives:
1. Strengthen the European dimension in higher education and research
2. Consolidate universities as lighthouses of our European way of life
3. Empower universities as key actors of change in the twin green and digital transitions
4. Reinforce universities as drivers of Europe's global role and leadership

Four flagship initiatives:
1. 60 European Universities with more than 500 universities by mid-2024
2. Legal statute for alliances
3. Joint European degree
4. European student card initiative by starting to deploy a unique European student identifier

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Q&A:

Successor to SwafS call:
The European Universities are explicitly supported by Horizon Europe. The first work program of Horizon Europe has funds for European Universities, but not similar to the first SwafS projects. Still, it has other forms like support activities (i.e. acceleration services), and the European Commission is experimenting with other activities, such as "Widening" or "Excellence Hubs". Financial ambition under Horizon Europe is not as explicit as in Erasmus+. In the coming months, the European Commission and European Alliances have to work together to understand where and how European Alliances will need further support to be truly complementary and meaningful.

Excellence initiatives:
It has been included in Horizon Europe on a legal basis, but it has been inserted under the "widening" part of Horizon Europe. The political vision is that it could be a good tool to raise excellence in the widening countries. It will take the form of two calls: Excellence Initiative and Excellences Hubs.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Excellence Initiative is very similar to the SwafS projects, but it targets universities established in widening countries. It aims at capacity building to participate in future calls for European Universities.

- The Excellences Hubs are about universities and their ecosystems. The call is currently open under the Horizon H2020, and the budget is quite significant. The European Commission will continue this support since Horizon Europe has an important budget. In the context of ERA, the Commission will discuss and debate different models for the next two years.

Thematic priority areas:
Part of the EU jargon is about the multidisciplinary dimension of research (health, green etc.). The Commission knows that National Research organisations tend to partner around specific challenges. They want to see what added values they can bring, not necessarily in the context of the project but a long-term approach support on the budget.

National funding:
Some universities have already received complementary funding, but some universities will not receive anything even if they lobby to their Ministries. This is a strong obstacle to fully engage, even if the spirit of engagement is there, but the capacity is heterogeneous because of the lack of additional support.
Response (R): There is no perfect answer. The Commission needs to develop an investment pathway to have a global approach. To have commitments from the Member States or at the European Level, European Alliances need a legal base.

Is the Commission anticipating similar calls (open and bottom-up support/call) or alliances will have more and more focus calls or thematic calls?
R: No direct answer

The model for such legal entity could be 'ERIC' or is it something too specific to research and not applicable to Alliances?
R: As you see in the European Strategy for Universities, it is too early to take a position for the Commission on what is the best option. It is the political position of the Commission for the moment. They will come up with a proposal in the future. In the Council recommendations, there is a more explicit reference to the EGTC model. Moreover, some universities are testing some models.

The DG EAC is keeping constant communication by e-mails with the E+ coordinators about the different calls. Is the DG RTD/REA planning to send to the SwafS coordinators a sort of newsletter helping them finding the more appropriate R&I calls? A sort of R&I roadmap for alliances?
R: The idea is to design together with the sector, to know when and how to support Alliances. The Commission will join forces to facilitate reading for possible beneficiaries.

What happens with the Alliances that did not receive funds under the SwafS?
R: The Alliances that did not receive funding at the second SwafS call will have to look for another type of call. Maybe the Commission can see what is feasible for the next work programme (2023-2024).

Closed meeting

General affairs of the SwafS sub-group

Mid-December, a joint FOREU1-FOREU2 initiative was launched in the context of the "reform of research assessment", promoted by the European Commission: two informal groups were created with representatives from the SwafS projects having activities on Open Science and Reform of Research Assessment. Two online tables were made available to identify relevant representatives.

- Informal group on Open Sciences Activities: most of the alliances gave names; it is still possible to nominate colleagues. This group will be chaired by Eva Mendez, from YUFE Alliance.
- Informal group on Reform of Research Assessment: no one proposed to chair. Ludovic Thilly (Chair of FOREU2 and Coordinator of EC2U Alliance) volunteers to take the lead temporarily. Indeed, in his capacity of Chair of Coimbra Group, the Commission asked him to be part of the Core Group in charge of monitoring the drafting of future reform of research assessment.

These two groups should start meeting soon.

Next SwafS sub-group meetings and guests from the European Commission

Next guests:

The SwafS sub-group members would like to invite relevant stakeholders related to the successor of the H2020 SwafS call in support of Alliances activities in R&I.

Option 1: invite national ministers from the current Presidency Trio (France, Czech Republic and Sweden) or someone from their cabinet.
Option 2: invite the Chair of an equivalent sub-group at FOREU1 to discuss joint lobby actions.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

D.   FOREU2 – SwafS sub-group meeting on 28 March 2022

1.   Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
SwafS Projects
Online meeting
TEAMS Link

Monday 28th March 2022
14.00 am – 15.30 CET

Agenda

Open Meeting

1.   Discussion with Doris Alexander
2.   Q&A

Closed Meeting

2. General affairs of SwafS sub-group

3. Next SwafS sub-group meetings and guests from the European Commission

4. AOB

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

	RI4C2
	Research & Innovation
	For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2.   Minutes

Open Meeting

1) Discussion with Doris Alexander

Doris Alexander is the Chair of the FOREU1 R&I activities sub-group. The goal is to discuss with her the future of the SwafS projects.

A meeting was organised both at FOREU1 and FOREU2 with the leaders of the unit on academic research. The aim is for Doris Alexander to update FOREU2 on the discussions FOREU1 had with those representatives.

Doris Alexander - presentation of the FOREU1 R&I subgroup update: lobbying and policy briefs

- Liaison with DG RTD on the European Research Area Agenda. 20 action areas (some divided into sub-action areas) which overlap; Alliances are already piloting some of them.

EC²U | RI4C2 — Research & Innovation For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

- **FOREU1 focused on action 13**: Empower higher education institutions to develop in line with the ERA, and in synergy with EEA
    - Importance of implementing the digital transition: focus on the DIGITAL
    - Implement a framework for research careers: focus on CAREERS
    - Raise excellence in science: focus on COOPERATION and COMPETITIVENESS

- The **European Strategy for Universities**; relevant communication used by FOREU1. Member States are now engaging with this proposal.
    - Proposed development of a legal status
    - Proposed development of a European degree
    - Member States view education as being a national competence and don't necessary advocate the creation of a European degree but rather the creation of a label.
    - Alliances are involved in the creation of European degrees and it is important for the future of the Alliances.
    - Regarding the legal status; it won't be mandatory but Alliances don't want a connectivity between obtaining a legal status and long-term funding.
    - Those two aspects are in their piloting phase for now.

- FOREU1 and FOREU2 came together to write a joint paper distributed to DG EAC, DG RTD, Commissioner Gabriel and representatives of Member States. The statement regarded future funding for European Universities.
    - FOREU1 Alliances just went through the deadline for the Erasmus+ continuity funding. Yet, there is no funding that guarantees the continuation of R&I activities.
        - This creates a disconnect because some Alliances have welcomed new members in the Erasmus+ but not in the R&I activities. Therefore, a more sustainable source of funding is needed.
    - No official response was received yet. Lobbying documents are welcomed and the message is trying to be sent across by DG RTD and DG EAC.
    - Some continuity funding for R&I is to be found with the WIDERA 2023-2024.
    - Expected outcome of a European Excellence Initiative:
    - Culture of excellence
    - Global competitiveness
    - Strengthened European R&I system
    - Sustainable support (in replacement of the term programmatic approach); mechanism that would support Alliances through the European Commission and Member States. It could occur during the next multi-annual financial framework but it would be piloted during the current mid-term assessment.
    - Potential actions under a European Excellence Initiative:
    - Policy support for national initiatives for excellence in HEI
    - Acceleration services to support institutional change in HEIs
    - Excellence funding for integrated and inclusive networks of HEIs
    - Platform towards sustainable support for European Universities

- FOREU1 is putting together a mid-term review on how progress is occurring in the Alliances. They will provide recommendations for future support.
    - Typical consortium is of 6-7 partners, with, on average, 30% HEI from widening countries. This is important to take into account for future fundings coming out of the widening part of Horizon Europe, as it will need to be led by a widening partner.
    - Feedback on progress/policy brief; describe the challenges encountered and how they were tackled, what are the good practices and tangible progress made. It also includes concrete policy recommendations.
        - A template/table was created by FOREU1 so that each Alliance can include their short- and long-term R&I needs in advance of the policy brief and how Horizon Europe could be used to meet those needs.

Q&A

What to do for the future funding of R&I:
There are two things to do:
- Continue to work with the European Commission to shape the future call so that it is aligned with the Alliances' needs.
- Need to lobby the European Commission and Member States to get them on board to get funding for the long-term.

A fully constructed R&I agenda cannot be created in 3 years. Therefore, the Alliances need more time and more funding to build it. It is needed to show that, even though progress has been made, more funding is necessary to build a full agenda.

When the joint paper was sent to Commissioner Gabriel, Ludovic Thilly sent it to Minister Vidal and the Alliances should also send the paper to Ministries and Ministers to show that Alliances need more funding for R&I.

FOREU2 will provide input on the FOREU1 table on R&I needs to show unity on the matter.

Regarding the WIDERA 2023-2024 Call:
The short-term needs and long-term needs should be emphasized in different categories on the policy brief. As the instruments exist, Alliances need to use them to define their needs for future funding.

Independent from the policy briefs, Alliances could identify one aspect to already prepare a joint response and reuse the document if needed. Both FOREU1 and FOREU2 could use those examples to show the difficulties of defining a single R&I strategy for one Alliance.

The first step is to encourage Member States to activate the potential that exists through the Bologna process instead of trying to come up with another solution.

There will be another paper produced in the following weeks to provide follow-on thoughts on where this is going.

FOREU2 should contact the European Commission to get more information on the policy briefs and the timeline in regards to the mid-term reports. The contact from REA should come to a meeting organised by FOREU2 to discuss this matter.

It might be interesting to provide concrete input through workshops between Alliances. It could be used to share what works and what doesn't, which could help to draft policy recommendations. WP leaders could share their experience on the subject and it could be organised by DG RTD or DG EAC through an in-person meeting. This could provide concrete input and not just policy advice.

It could be proposed in the context of the common R&I agenda to serve discussions regarding lobbying and show that three years are not enough to come up with a full agenda but enough to know what are the relevant practices.

The FOREU2 SwafS sub-group could first organise a meeting to list the R&I activities that were organised in each Alliance and then share it with FOREU1 to create a joint document. As the sub-group has two joint deliverables that are due at M24 and M34, those meetings could also serve for the drafting of those joint deliverables. It would also help on the assessment FOREU1 is doing in their policy brief.

The Alliances need to take ideas and adapt their tasks to the agenda of the European Commission so that it corresponds to their objectives and their action areas.

Closed Meeting

1. General affairs of the SwafS sub-group

It could be valuable to get a presentation from each project regarding their objectives. Short presentations of 3-5 minutes focusing on the R&I agenda or other central topics planned for the next meeting; there will be no external speaker, only internal presentations. Then a table could be created to summarize the topics and objectives of each Alliance. It would provide an overview of the activities in order to more efficiently lobby the European Commission and Member States.

➔ Everyone agreed. Exceptionally the meeting could last for 2 hours and half so that everyone can do a 3 minutes presentation (like for the 3 minutes thesis) that would leave some time for discussions.

2. Next SwafS sub-group meetings and guests from the European Commission

A survey will be sent to find the date of the next meeting. There will be no guest from the European Commission as each Alliance will present their project in 3 minutes. A representative from REA will then be invited at the following meeting.

3. AOB

Some sub-groups are less active than others, i.e. University-Industry Cooperation. This is due to the fact that the creation of the sub-group was more relevant to the SwafS projects and not to all the Erasmus+ projects. This could change if this sub-group was enriched with participants from the SwafS. This will be discussed at the next Global Forum in mid-April; the SwafS sub-group could propose to nominate representatives to participate in the University-Industry sub-group.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

E. FOREU2 – SwafS sub-group meeting on 10 May 2022

1. Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
SwafS Projects
(Online)
Teams link

Tuesday 10th May 2022
14.00 pm – 16.30 pm CET

Agenda

14h00	Welcome
14h15	Presentation of each Alliance
15h35	Discussion on current R&I funding
16h00	General affairs of SwafS sub-group
16h15	Next SwafS sub-group meetings and guests from European Commission
16h25	AOB

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Welcome by sub-group Chair (Ludovic Thilly – EC2U)

2. Presentation of each Alliance

Presentation of each SwafS project (one per Alliance) in 3 to 4 minutes. See all the presentations' slides on the Teams folder.

- Presentation of **EC2U** and **RI4C2** (Research & Innovation for Cities & Citizens)
- Presentation of **Circle U.** and **ERIA** (Empowering Research and Innovation Actions)
- Presentation of **Aurora** and **their R&I priorities**: video accessible through a link sent to each alliance by email.
- Presentation of **EELISA** and **InnoCORE** (Innovation and Common Research Strategy)
- Presentation of **ENHANCE** and **ENHANRIA** (European Universities of Technology Alliance Research and Innovation Action)
- Presentation of **EuroTeQ** and **BoostEuroTeQ**
- Presentation of **FILMEU** and **FILMEU-RIT**
- Presentation of **Ulysseus** and **Compass**
- Presentation of **UNITA** and **Re-UNITA** (Research in UNITA)
- Presentation of **UNIVERSEH** (European Space University for Earth and Humanity) and **Beyond UNIVERSEH**
- Presentation of **ENLIGHT** and **ENLIGHT RISE**
- Presentation of **EUNICE** and **REUNICE**
- Presentation of **Transform4Europe** and **T4ERI** (Transform4European Research and Innovation)
- Presentation of **NeurotechEU and NeurotechRI**

Missing presentations at the time of the meeting: ATHENA, E3UDRES2, ENGAGE.EU, ERUA, EUNIWELL, EURECA-PRO, EUT+, INVEST, RUN-EU and UNIC.

Issue raised: some Transformation Modules (TMs) are addressed by (almost) all alliances. Therefore, it could be interesting to share processes, data and resources with the others to avoid duplicating practices. These issues can be discussed in topical SwafS sub-groups. Joint deliverables are included in all SwafS projects (M24 and M36) thus the sub-groups will be useful to discuss those issues and prepare the deliverables. The alliances that are more advanced on one topic can lead a sub-group and share good practices with the other partners.

3. Discussion on current R&I funding

An important meeting was organized in April 2022 with FOREU1 and representatives of the European Commission. It was decided to continue advocacy efforts by producing a joint statement, not just to the Commissioner, but to the member-states and stakeholders to obtain more fundings.

There will be a call under WIDERA in 2023 to provide fundings for R&I activities. However, it is not targeted only to alliances so there is more competition.

The deadline to complete the joint statement draft is May 15th, 2022.
Alliances are still calling for the possibility to have another successor to the SwafS call. For now, it is not truly supported because it cannot be funded by the Commission. Yet, it is advised to continue calling for the SwafS projects because if Switzerland and the UK become associated to Horizon Europe, then more funding will become available.

In the mid/long-term, the idea offered by Stijn DELAURE is to have a co-funded partnership. There is a diversity of views whether or not this is the best tool (one issue is that if a member-state refuses to take part in the partnership, then who is going to fund the universities of that country that are members of alliances?), but for now there is no other alternative. It should be considered as a possibility among others but it's important to still attempt to find other possibilities so that the Commission doesn't consider that this is the only option available. There is also the possibility of obtaining institutional partnerships but it was previously dismissed by the Commission.

The joint statement is envisioned as being largely shared with European and national/local stakeholders once the final version is completed. It's necessary to make sure that everyone at the European level is reminded that it is important to inject money in the Alliances. It will probably be decided soon as the mid-term review will take place next year.

There was a meeting between the Rectors of the alliances and Commissioner Gabriel on May 10th 2022 (in the morning) on the HEIs package. The Rectors called for robust and long-term funding for education and R&I activities. Commissioner Gabriel said that she was aware of this and will continue to talk with Member States to make sure that this support can be rooted in recommendations and commitment from the Member States. The Commission supports the initiative, the problem is obtaining the continued support of Member States.

It could be possible to include regional and local stakeholders to obtain some extra funding. The problem is that not all regions support research at the same level.

4. General affairs of the SwafS sub-group

It's important to start working on the idea of creating topical sub-groups because they will be needed to work on the joint deliverables that will be due at M24 and M36. The WP leaders of each Alliance can be involved in those sub-groups depending on the topic. It's up to each alliance to decide which persons they want to involve in the topical sub-groups.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

There was a discussion promoted by FOREU1 to submit a cost-action to obtain funding but it was before the creation of the SwafS projects. It is now part of the shared activities so there is a better support for the SwafS projects.

5. Next SwafS sub-group meetings and guests from the European Commission

Taking into account the period of closing of all universities in the summer, the best period to set up of meeting would be either the end of June or beginning of September. The end of June is preferred, a survey with potential dates will be sent.

6. AOB

Possibility to include the coordinators of other projects in the SwafS projects. A new online table will be created to list all the granted projects and eventually plan meetings regrouping different projects. The table will also be shared with FOREU1 to create more collaborations with the other Forum.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

F.   FOREU2 – SwafS sub-group meeting on 18 October 2022

1.   Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
SwafS Projects
Online meeting
Teams link

Tuesday 18th October 2022
10.00 am – 12.00 CET

Agenda

Open Meeting – 10h-11h

1. Discussion with Marta TRUCO CALBET (REA) and Stijn DELAURE (DG RTD)
   - mid-term policy brief, as scheduled in all SwafS projects (Marta)
   - how to handle the Lump Sum approach in a context of reporting (Marta)
   - Follow-up instrument(s) to the Alliances' SwafS/R&I projects (Stijn)

2. AOB to be discussed with ERA and DG RTD Representatives

Closed Meeting – 11h-12h

3. Erasmus+ 2023 Call for Proposal (roll-out of Alliances)

4. Preparation of first joint deliverable (M24

5. AOB

![EC²U logo] RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2.   Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

Open Part

1. Discussion with Marta TRUCO CALBET (REA) and Stijn DELAURE (DG RTD)

- **Mid-term policy brief, as scheduled in all SwafS projects:**

Q: No template for now. Are the Alliances going to receive a template for the policy brief? (Ludovic Thilly – EC2U)

R- Marta TRUCO CALBET – Project Officer REA:

Link to the [Policy Brief Template Pilot 2]

In the Grant Agreement, the policy brief was included as one mandatory deliverable. It has to be submitted at the end of each reporting period. The aim of the policy brief is not only to monitor the achievements of the project but also to evaluate the policy objectives that were set when the instrument was designed. In brief, it serves to provide insights and policy recommendations now that the project is being/has been implemented. It can be used to address the challenges that were encountered by each project. It is another way for Alliances and the Commission to communicate.

The policy brief template was displayed so that what is expected is made clearly visible. The template is the same as the one that was shared with FOREU1. The alliances are given the opportunity to comment on the template and share opinions/questions. The template can evolve because not everyone is facing the same issues and it can change depending on the issues that need to be addressed in the policy brief. It is not necessary to fill out all of the parts; only the parts that are considered to provide added value to certain areas.

Structure of the policy brief: (1) Introduction with the policy background, (2) Feedback on progress (focuses on challenges and how they were tackled) and (3) Policy recommendations.

Presentation of the policy brief - Stijn DELAURE – Policiy Officer DG-RTD:
- Feedback on progress: describe the challenges faced, how they have been/will be tackled and what are the tangible progresses made. Feedback on successes and good practices is also important because it will help develop mechanisms to support alliances in the future.
- Policy recommendations: describe how things are envisaged for the future. Different policy topics need to be addressed (facilitating transnational cooperation, strengthening careers, digital transition, access to excellence, increasing global competitiveness and other recommendations).
  - **Facilitating transnational cooperation:** Member States have engaged into certain activities to promote cooperation and exchanges between European universities.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Need to describe the challenges faced when trying to share capacities within the alliances.

- o **Strengthening careers**: need to answer specific questions but possibility to go beyond them if alliances have more to say. Provide opinions on the idea of creating a European tenure track system and on career assessment. Alliances are advised to have a look at the coara.eu website about the Coalition of those who are interested in implementing the reform on research assessment within their alliance. The entities need to sign up before mid-November 2022 and the first meeting will be held in December 2022. Opinions and views on the matter will be appreciated in the policy brief.
- o **Digital transition:** detail the needs in terms of making the digital transition happen, what kind of infrastructures and digital skills are needed and any other recommendation to foster the digital transition. Almost all alliances have set up digital platforms to collaborate with the members of their alliance, but there is also a need to think about how alliances can join forces to do that. Need to provide recommendations on how to achieve that.
- o **Access to excellence:** In FOREU1, because of the inclusive structures of the alliance, they collaborate and integrate their activities. With the sharing of practices between the alliances, they seem to move faster, at least in terms of research careers. It appears that they can help each other grow. Need to provide insights on these questions.
- o **Increasing global competitiveness:** development of a European Excellence Initiative. Experimenting this initiative with the WIDERA projects. Alliance members are asked to share their input on what would be the key elements that should be part of this Initiative and how the alliances can collaborate with partners outside Europe and with other entities.
- o Possible to add other topics if they are seen as being crucial.

Presentation of the review of the policy brief by experts - Marta TRUCO CALBET:

Once all the policy briefs are received, REA will work with experts to look across all the policy briefs and come up with main trends, challenges, learnings and policy pointers to create a report handed to DG R&I that will complete the report made for FOREU1 and highlight good practices. The goal is to have a holistic view on the progress of the Alliances. The report will be shared with Member States; for instance, the FOREU1 report will be presented at the ERA Forum.

The template will be handed to the Alliances' coordinators after the meeting. The template that will be sent after the meeting is a draft, the final version will be sent once REA has received feedback from the Alliances.

Q: Is it possible to include in the policy brief lessons learned from the Erasmus+ side of the Alliances? (Ludovic Thilly – EC2U)
Yes, it is possible.

Q: What would be the deadline to fill in the final template? (Pim de Boer – AURORA)
The deadlines to submit the policy briefs depend on the Grant Agreement of each alliance, need to consult the portal to know the exact date.

Q: Is the policy brief the same as the mid-term report or is it another document? (Kevin Guillaume – Circle U.)
The two are different. The mid-report is here to explain what has been done and what will be done in the second period of the project and needs to be submitted up to 60 days after the end of the first reporting period. The policy brief is an additional report and it is not a deliverable, it is not only about the implementation of the project, it is possible to go further with policy recommendations. It needs to be submitted before the end of the first reporting period.

Q: What kind of policies should be put in place to help the alliances be more efficient? (Paul Verschure – NeurotechEU)
There should be a different meeting regarding research careers, research assessment for members/coordinators to know more about the gaps the alliances could fill in the policy brief regarding those topics. The alliances can provide advice on further activities and instruments. The Commission needs to provide some standardisation for Alliances to work better. Concrete recommendations are expected in the policy brief, and not only based on the questions asked in it; any recommendation that seems to provide added value can be added to the policy brief.

Q: A lot of reports need to be submitted during this period, so it would be helpful if the feedback on the previous reports was given quickly enough to help the alliances write the new ones. (Elizabeth Macintyre – Circle U.)
Marta TURCO CALBET – Project Officer: the report from the FOREU1 policy briefs will be available before the Alliances have to submit their own policy brief. It should be available in January 2023. The mid-term policy briefs should be concise and meaningful for the alliances and the project because the Commission knows the alliances have a lot of deliverables and other reports to submit. The draft of the report will be sent early through Ludovic Thilly so that the alliances can access it earlier. The final version will then be available on the portal. It is also possible to organize bi-lateral meetings to get more information.
Stijn DELAURE – Policy Officer: The Commission knows the alliances are stretched, but the Member States have asked for results before committing to future activities. They will also organise studies to assess the success of the model of Horizon Europe, so the work on the policy briefs is needed to convince the Member States to invest in those projects.

Q: The policy brief is a good opportunity for alliances to share recommendations and their experience, but the EELISA Alliance is facing a timing issue as their policy brief is due at the end of November 2022, therefore they will struggle to provide the policy brief in time. (Isabel Salgueiro – EELISA)
EELISA should use the template as a basis and they will be able to update the policy brief after it was submitted so that the deadline is easier to meet. They should reach out to their Project Officer to accommodate an easy deadline.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Q: The member-states should understand that it is difficult to come up with information about the impact when the alliances are in a pilot phase. After only a year and a half or less, it is difficult to provide results and some Member States know that it is difficult. Thus, the alliance will do its best but it takes time to provide those results. What Circle U proposes is to leave the project approach and adopt a programmatic approach so that there are less deliverables and reports and it would give more time to reach a long-term impact. (Kevin Guillaume – Circle U.)

Stijn DELAURE agrees with that, but it doesn't solve the short-term issues. They are thinking of adopting a programmatic approach, but what could be an alternative to the policy brief in the short-term?

Kevin GUILLAUME – Circle U: the policy brief comes too early and should be submitted at the end of the SwafS projects.

Stijn DELAURE: The problem is that if the policy brief is only handed in at the end of the project, as the evaluation takes a year, then it takes another year to design policies and another year to convince Member States, so there will be a gap of three years before new fundings are available. Thus, it is needed to provide at least partial evidence to convince Member States to continue investing.

Marta TURCO CALBET: It is also possible to write in the policy brief that some results cannot be submitted yet.

An alternative to attempt to solve the timing issue offered by Stijn DELAURE is for the FOREU2 members to join forces and define a set of FOREU2 policy recommendations. Ludovic Thilly answered that there probably isn't enough time to do so for the mid-term policy briefs but it will be possible for the joint deliverables that will be submitted at M24 and M36.

- *How to handle the Lump Sum approach in a context of reporting*
o *Are we going to have a mid-term report regarding the management aspect? (Ludovic Thilly – EC2U)*

[Presentation by Marta TRUCO CALBET (link to the presentation's slides):](#)

In a lump sum project, there are reviews planned at the end of the final reporting period. The assessment will be done by REA and external experts.

The review takes place 60 days after the reporting period ends. However, as this is a lump sum project, there will be no need to fill in the chapter on "use of resources". After the first reporting period and the second reporting period, there is a 60 days period left to submit the report (midterm + final).

If the project doesn't have WPs completed by the time each reporting period ends, it will not be paid. It is only possible to be paid once all the deliverables of a WP are completed. If a WP goes on until the end of the period (M36), the payment will not be done during the reporting period.

Reminder that the mid-term and final reports are not part of the deliverables.

Q: Could Marta TRUCO CALBET share the slides so that they can be transmitted to the coordinating institution? (Jo Hawley-Woodall – EUNIWELL)
Yes, the slides will be shared. If there are any questions, it is also possible to reach out to the Project Officer.

Q: Is the Lump Sum approach is going to be the same for the SwafS projects and the Erasmus+ scheme? (Inga Runarddottir – AURORA)
The principles are the same, but there are some differences in terms of budget and there can be some nuances in terms of implementations.

Q: When will the coordinators receive the official communication from the Commission on the mid-term report and the policy brief? (Patrick Murray – RUN-EU)
Once the first reporting period ends, the portal will automatically request that the mid-term report be submitted in a matter of 60 days. For the policy brief, the draft template will be shared through Ludovic Thilly after the meeting. Comments can be shared within two weeks' time, and then the final template should be ready 2 or 3 weeks later through the portal.

Q: Will the Alliances have an evaluation on the report that they will submit even if they don't have any WP completed? (Clément Loret – CIVICA - FOREU1 Alliance)
Yes, there will be an assessment with the help of an external expert whether it is linked or not to a WP payment.

Q: If we have no finished WPs at mid-term, should we complete the financial report anyway? (Sandra Rocha – FILMEU)
Yes, but it is needed to fill out "not completed" or "zero" only.

Q: The ULYSSEUS COMPASS project policy brief is also due in November, so should we contact the Project Officer (Sarah-Anne Comel - ULYSSEUS)
Yes, they should in order to start working on it.

- *Follow-up instrument(s) to the Alliances' SwafS/R&I projects*

Presentation of the ERA Policy Agenda by Stijn DELAURE (link to the presentation's slides):

- Pact for R&I: Definition of ten values and principles for R&I, 4 priority areas and 20 actions (the so-called policy agenda for 2022-2024).
- Some of the actions are being implemented by the alliances (ex: Open Science, research careers, knowledge valorisation, research infrastructures…)
- The Member States have decided to empower higher education institutions (HEIs) to help them develop, in line with ERA and in synergy with European Education areas (action 13); the purpose is to help universities implement important ERA priorities. The Member States have invested in those priorities in order to develop them.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

    ○ A subgroup composed of ERA universities members and some Member States will be created to decide what kind of evidence will be needed to display progress for all actions.

- They will analyse results of ongoing studies (this is why the policy briefs are needed); they will define what is an Excellence Initiative and Excellence Alliances.
- They will work together with experts from the HEI sector and from Alliances to analyse the studies and data they gathered; they will identify digital needs and develop new activities and support to create more digitally connected universities.
- They will provide recommendations on future support mechanism for alliances of HEIs by the end of summer 2023.
-

Possible outcome of the discussions:

- Creation of a new support mechanism by the end of 2023 for Member States who want to set up their own Excellence Initiative to support HEIs.
- Development of a proper European Excellence Initiative: providing funding to alliances in the R&I area for the long-term.
- Provide recommendations towards a Connected Universities initiative regarding digital needs; help alliances operate better in terms of the digital transition.

In the short-term, there are already on-going or soon to be launched activities:

- Creation of counselling activities to help universities implement certain strategies from the ERA priorities, three projects have already started or will soon start.
- Upcoming new call: "Excellence Funding" for further capacity buildings for Alliances. Funds can be used for small collaborative research projects or to hire new staff to work for the Alliances. Those funds are made to consolidate the Alliances. The call closes in April. The goal is to prepare the next phase of the SwafS projects, similar to what they are doing for the Erasmus+ projects.
- Between 2025-2027: pilot of a new mechanism which enables pooling of resources from various sources (Member States, the private sector and the Commission) to support Alliances of HEIs. This could take the form of a partnership between those various sources to fund actual research activities and not only capacity building.

Before reaching those goals, need the feedback from the Alliances through the policy briefs in order to build those future activities/mechanisms.

Q: Will there be a similar WIDERA call in 2024? In terms of timing, it is difficult to be ready to submit a proposal in 2023 when the SwafS projects only end in 2024 (Ludovic Thilly – EC2U)
There is only going to be a call in 2023 for WIDERA projects funding but no call in 2024. The goal is to open it and not limit it to alliances, which explains the timeline.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2. AOB to be discussed with REA and DG RTD representatives

Q: In the draft program, it reads that 70% of the budget should go to the widening countries but it could lead to an unbalanced budget distribution for those who don't include many widening countries so is it going to be kept like that in the final work program? (Isabel Salgueiro, EELISA)
This condition will be kept. The goal is to have a more cooperative construction between countries of the alliance because not all countries receive similar funding at the national level.

Q: Worries about the agenda; with the current funding available until mid-2024 and as there is no specific call in 2024, it seems to mean that the alliances are obliged to apply to the 2023 WIDERA call, but it means that two proposals need to be written (one for the Erasmus+ program and one for the SwafS projects), is it indeed the case? (Pascal Maussion – UNIVERSEH)
There will be no funding available for the SwafS again in 2024 because there is not enough funding and because the Member States don't wish to give the funding to the same alliances. It could change when they develop a programmatic approach. However, for now it is only possible to submit a new proposal for April 2023, but the Commission is aware that it clashes with the agenda to apply for fundings for the Erasmus+ program (due by the end of January 2023). Moreover, the WIDERA call due in April 2023 is not exactly similar to the SwafS projects, and not all Alliances need to apply for this funding, it depends on everyone's needs.

<div align="center">

Closed Part

</div>

3. Erasmus+ Call for Proposal (roll-out of Alliances)

It is important that the SwafS projects help in the construction of the new Erasmus+ 2023 call for proposals.

4. Preparation of the first joint deliverable (M24)

Two joint deliverables are due for all Alliances (at M24 and M36).

Link to the preparatory document for the joint deliverables:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dhay-sXfeNMRRwLlbbdLoa5ip5TU1MkU/edit#

The first joint report: Report on practices and measures taken/to be taken to ensure the mainstreaming of gender dimension in R&I long-term strategies (M24).
Second joint report: collection of 22 case studies (one per Alliance) on progress made in the implementation of R&I long-term strategies (M36).

In the shared document, each Alliance needs to fill out the table to provide the following info:
- Are the two joint deliverables included in your project? (YES/NO) + number of the deliverables
- Provide the due date for the first joint deliverable

- Provide the due date for the second deliverable

The aim is to be aware of the earliest due dates so that the preparation can be tuned to this date and that no one has to postpone the uploading of the deliverable on the platform.

Everyone should update the table by the end of November 2022 and then proceed to the different steps to prepare the joint deliverables.

Possibility to organise a workshop or conference to prepare the joint deliverable around M18, but there is a timing problem because the call for the WIDERA projects is due in April 2023. Another possibility is to organise a joint event at the end of the SwafS projects; it could serve as a platform to launch the second joint deliverable. Waiting until the second joint deliverable is due would also be better as not everyone has the same due dates for their deliverables. As a solution; a one-day closed online workshop could be organised in early February 2023 to prepare for the first joint deliverable and then a more public event could be organised to prepare for the second joint deliverable.

5. AOB

The next meeting should be organised at the beginning of December to prepare for the workshop event and for the WIDERA call. The policy briefs will be discussed during this meeting as well. A survey will be sent to everyone to choose the date of the next meeting.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

G. FOREU2 – SwafS sub-group meeting on 06 December 2022

1. Agenda

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
SwafS Projects
(Online)
Teams link

Tuesday 6th December 2022
14.00 am – 16:00 am CET

Agenda

1. Discussion on the integration of R&I activities in the Erasmus+ 2023 Call for Proposal (roll-out of Alliances)

2. Funding instruments to support R&I activities of Alliances and discussion with FOREU1 sub-group

3. Preparation of first joint deliverable (M24)

4. AOB

EC²U | RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

2.   Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. **Exchange on challenges and good practices to integrate R&I activities into the Erasmus+ 2023 Call for Proposal:**
   - An issue was raised on the complicated process to submit proposals, making it difficult for researchers to apply for European funding for research activities. Need to find processes internal to each Alliance to be ready to submit proposals in the R&I field.
     - EC2U for instance is planning to share all the practices and knowledge on how they prepare their researchers to apply for Horizon Europe fundings at the level of the Alliance. EC2U finds that the Erasmus Call is a way to create these internal practices and sharing tools to better support researchers. Yet, it's still needed to convince researchers that they have something to gain by applying for European funding.
     - Other example: Aurora has a task team on reforming research assessment and one on academic collaboration and community building. The goal is to encourage collaborations between the universities of the Alliance. There is also a task team focused on open science that benefits researchers and the academic community.
     - Film-EU has been doing some similar things and they are planning to make explicit links between what was started during the SwafS projects and what they might be able to continue doing with the Erasmus+ call. They are focusing on creating networks between researchers. They also seek to make links with additional European funding applications in order to find other funding instruments outside the Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ programmes. What they sought to do is make more explicit reference to their objectives in research and innovation in the long-term strategy. On another note, it was underlined that it's important to include innovation in the new proposal.

   This discussion will be reported in the meeting (Thursday 8th December, 2022) with the other Alliances' coordinators and members of the Commission that deal with the Erasmus+ call.

   - Circle U. and EC2U will fully integrate their SwafS/R&I activities to their new proposal because they consider it crucial to work both on research and education. UNITA will also integrate those activities in the Erasmus+ Call, especially on Research infrastructures and on the Graduate School to have a concrete link between training and research. They also plan to integrate innovation and thematic research hubs already existing in the UNITA alliance.
   - Reminder that research as such cannot be included in the Erasmus+ call, but that it can be integrated through the development of tools that aim at fostering research activities; i.e. mobility, joint activities or infrastructures that are supporting research projects. Research as such needs external funding.
   -

2. Funding instruments to support R&I activities of Alliances and discussion with FOREU1 sub-group

The discussions within the FOREU1 R&I sub-group have allowed the coordinators to identify a tool that can be used by Alliances. It corresponds to the WIDERA instrument, even if it is not only targeting alliances. The deadline is mid-April. DG RTD is trying to push to obtain partnerships with Member

States and the Commission to allow Alliances to be funded on the longer term. However, this option has not yet been confirmed. Discussions will take place at the ERA forum.

The FOREU1 sub-group also considers that this type of funding is not enough and that they should continue to push to obtain more targeted funding instruments. FOREU1 proposes that, when the discussions with the Commission and Member States start, the Alliances uses this opportunity to publish a joint statement on their needs as they will already have submitted their new proposal. Therefore, Alliances will know to what extent they have integrated R&I activities, meaning that it would be a good timing to publish a new joint statement.

As the new E+ proposals for the FOREU2 Alliances are due at the end of January 2023, it would be preferred to wait for the proposals to be submitted before starting to work on a new joint statement with the FOREU1 R&I sub-group.
➔ The alliances have agreed that first the Erasmus+ proposals need to be secured before working on a joint statement. They agree that a joint statement would be a good idea.

A joint meeting between the two sub-groups could be organised to discuss these issues. However, doubts were raised on the objectives of this potential meeting and its purpose. Yet, as funding is not to be taken for granted on the R&I side, it would be necessary to continue advocating more fundings at the Commission and member-states levels. A true commitment for long-term funding is still needed. Hence, a joint meeting could be useful to deal with these questions and to think about how to integrate R&I activities in the Erasmus+ projects. It would also be an appropriate time to decide if a second joint statement is needed.

3. Preparation of the first joint deliverable (M24)

Almost all the projects include the preparation of joint deliverables. Link to the online table (preparatory step for the deliverables):

The first joint deliverable is due at M24 but is not due at the exact same time for all alliances. 5 alliances have not filled out the online table and will be reminded to complete it after the meeting. Once the table is completed and that an overview is provided on which alliances are concerned by the joint deliverables, it will be possible to plan the drafting of the deliverable that is due at M24.

It is also important to take into account the different due dates so that those who need to submit the deliverable early are ready to do so. The earliest month that the joint deliverable is due seems to be the end of August 2023. As most universities are closed in August, the aim is to finalize the report by the end of June/early July 2023.

The Chair of RI4C2/EC2U proposes that the joint deliverables are co-drafted by a small group of Alliances (ideally, 3 to 4 alliances could participate in the drafting). In any case, all of the participating alliances need to provide data to prepare the joint deliverable.
A meeting would need to be organised with the alliances willing to co-draft the report to prepare a template for the other alliances in February 2023. It would be good to have a final template by the end of March 2023 so that each alliance has time to provide the data by the end of June 2023.

RI4C2
Research & Innovation
For Cities & Citizens

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101035803

Some alliances are only preparing the second joint report and are not concerned by the preparation of the first one.

4. AOB

Regarding the mid-term reports: not all of them are due at the same time but the majority of projects have started in September/October 2021. As it is not a deliverable, each coordinator will receive an official communication through the portal when the mid-term deadline approaches (around January-early February 2023 for most projects) that will request the alliances to state where they are in the advancement of the different WPs and in the expenses.

- If a WP is ending at mid-term, this could trigger a new payment (but there is almost no case in which this would happen).
- If no WP is finished, it needs to be declared and no payment will be made at that period.
- There will also be a succinct technical report (no more detailed info on the length at this time) due up to 60 days after the mid-term reporting period ends. Then, there will be a review of those reports and some feedback will be sent a few months later.

Reminder that the Alliances should keep in mind that they need to be careful with the quality of the deliverables. Indeed, when the mid-term report was due for the first wave of alliances, they had two months to change the deliverables that were judged to be too rushed. It is sometimes better to ask for a slight delay and to deliver a good-quality deliverable (as suggested by Marta TRUCO). It is also possible to re-open a deliverable and update it.

Ludovic Thilly will ask for the former template used by FOREU1 to be shared with the current SwafS projects' team.

The final template for the policy brief has been received. It is due at the same time as the mid-term report.