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

FOREU2 online meetings M21 to M36

Report

DELIVERABLE 8.6
MONTH 36

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D8.6 – FOREU2 online meetings M21 to M36

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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.

It is also important to note that FOREU1 was joined by Alliances funded in 2022 while FOREU2 was joined by the 7 Alliances newly funded in 2023. FOREU2 has thus formally become "FOREU2/4" with these Alliances funded via this "fourth" call.

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. The meetings organised during the first 18 months of the project are detailed in Deliverable 8.5. From Month 18 and until the end of the RI4C2 project (M36), 6 Global Forum online meetings were organised as well as 5 SwafS projects sub-group meetings. Additionally, 3 joint meetings were organised with FOREU1 on topics of common interest to foster collaborations between the groups.

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Most meetings are organised with an open part with one or more external guests invited 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 from M18 to M36

The FOREU2 Global Forum met six times between M18 and M36 (the meetings organised between M1 and M18 are presented in D8.5). Those meetings were organised with all FOREU2/4 Alliance coordinators. You will find below a table listing the dates of the meetings, as well as the main topics addressed and the number of attendees.

Joint meetings of FOREU1/3 and FOREU2/4 were also organised during this time period but are not included in this deliverable.

Date	Main topics	Number of attendees
05/04/2023	Meeting in Brussels with DG EAC, Coalition of the Willing, future events	**47**
19/06/2023	Preparation for future events, Innovation Hubs, ERA Action 13	**51**
03/10/2023	Investment pathway, Community of Practice – CoP, Monitoring framework and ESA	**42**
05/12/2023	Community of Practice – CoP, Monitoring framework, Investment Pathway, final reporting of the pilot phase	**31**
04/03/2024	Community of Practice proposal, meeting with EAC and EACEA in Brussels, Investment Pathway, conference on European University Alliances	**38**
30/05/2024	Debriefing of meetings in Brussels, Investment Pathway, EAIE satellite event, discussion on the new funding period	**32**

Table 1: List of Global Forum meetings, incl. the list of main topics discussed

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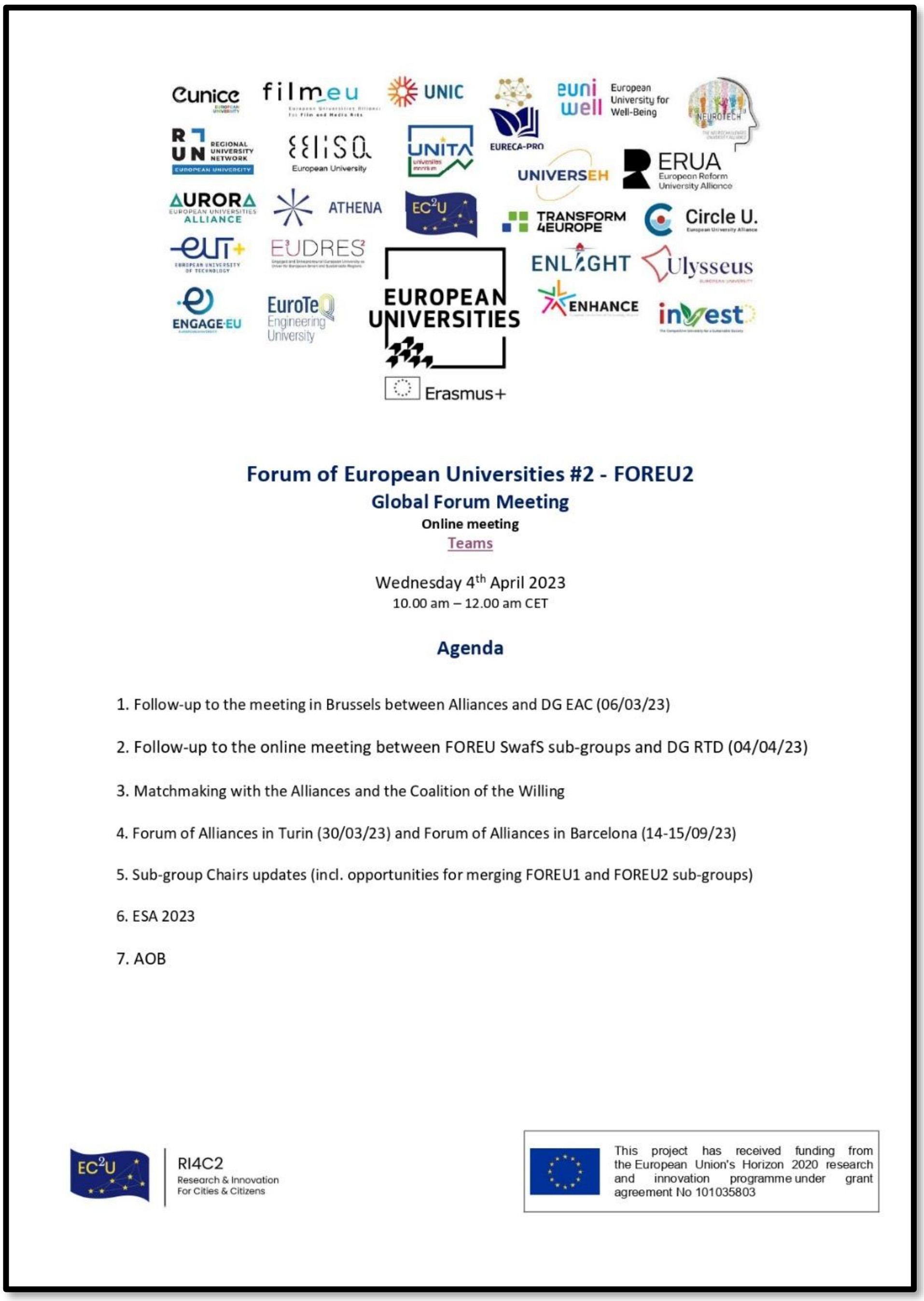
B. FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 5 April 2023

1. Agenda



EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

Erasmus+

Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2

Global Forum Meeting

Online meeting

Teams

Wednesday 4th April 2023
10.00 am – 12.00 am CET

Agenda

1. Follow-up to the meeting in Brussels between Alliances and DG EAC (06/03/23)
2. Follow-up to the online meeting between FOREU SwafS sub-groups and DG RTD (04/04/23)
3. Matchmaking with the Alliances and the Coalition of the Willing
4. Forum of Alliances in Turin (30/03/23) and Forum of Alliances in Barcelona (14-15/09/23)
5. Sub-group Chairs updates (incl. opportunities for merging FOREU1 and FOREU2 sub-groups)
6. ESA 2023
7. AOB

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2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Follow-up to the meeting in Brussels between Alliances and DG EAC (06/03/2023)

The Commission indicated at the meeting that they wanted to strengthen communication. Requests were sent to the Alliances to connect with the communication officers or coordinators.

Consultations will be launched with Alliances to gain evidence regarding communication and to get updates on fact sheets. There has yet to be a specific timeline for now. Ludovic Thilly will send a message to Tine Delva (DG EAC) for more information on the fact sheet updates.

The issue for Alliances is the lack of long-term funding. “Holistic view” may not be understood in the same way by Alliances and the Commission. For the Commission, Alliances should look for other funding sources. However, Alliances, when talking about a “holistic view”, mean that there should still be a minimum commitment from the Commission, in addition to other funding sources. The Commission now realises that there should be an instrument that offers a mix between education and R&I. There is not a single instrument for now. Still, there could be synergies between the different activities instead of what is currently in place. Furthermore, the Commission also considers that Member States should provide more support to the Alliances.

2. Follow-up to the online meeting between FOREU SwafS sub-groups and DG RTD (04/04/2023)

The meeting was an opportunity to get updates from Stijn DELAURE on Action 13. There are ongoing reflections on what type of instrument/support could be developed to support Excellence in Europe and to support Alliances. Ludovic Thilly forwarded an email regarding this subject to the FOREU2 members.

The Alliances need to push DG EAC and DG RTD to discuss the future support of Alliances together.

There could be an instrument where Alliances could apply to secure capacity-building funding and R&I funding. Such instrument would remain on a competitive-based approach but with the capacity to be supported in capacity-building for all the missions.

Alliances are not officially involved in Action 13. Only Associations representing networks of individual universities can be involved. The Alliances could be included by being invited as experts when there will be discussions on support instruments. FOREU1 and FOREU2 could send representatives in that context.

In any case, there is a need to continue pushing for DG EAC and Action 13 to work on the same path and have converging discussions.

3. Matchmaking with the Alliances and the Coalition of the Willing

The Alliances could be linked to the Coalition of the Willing (a group of start-ups, innovators, entrepreneurial competencies and skills entities). The goal is to share and possibly create Hubs and foster collaborations. Alliances and the Coalition of the Willing had to fill in a questionnaire to find

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common topics of interest. There was a meeting last Monday with all parties to organise some matchmaking sessions to see if there is enough material to launch some Hubs.

Two follow-up actions:

- A meeting to present the concepts of the tentative first Hubs to Commissioner Gabriel on **the 21st of April**.
- The first Hubs will be presented in Brussels at the Education and Innovation Summit on the **27th of June** (there is no draft programme for now).

Some issues were raised regarding the funding of this activity and the fact that mainly Alliances have participated in the meeting (and only very few members of the Coalition of the Willing), which makes it challenging to matchmake with innovation actors.

It is interesting to have an opportunity to work with non-academic actors. Still, time is needed to build these collaborations, and it is also necessary that there are more participants on the side of the Coalition of the Willing. It is also challenging to find time to manage this new activity on top of all the other Alliances activities.

All have agreed that Ludovic Thilly will write a message to the Commission to share the Alliances' concerns regarding this additional activity.

4. Forum of Alliances in Turin (30/03/2023) and Forum of Alliances in Barcelona (14-15/09/2023)

- Presentation by Marcella Costa (UNITA) on the Forum of Alliances in Turin

This Forum was based on an initiative from the Franco-Italian University. There were nearly 30 Alliances represented (mainly representatives from France and Italy) and about 130 participants (incl. Researchers, Vice-Rectors, administrative staffs from French and Italian universities involved in Alliances, the conference of Rectors, the Ministries, and the Ambassadors of France and Italy).

The Forum was a good opportunity for networking. It also showed the commitment of the French and Italian Ministries, even if there are different levels of commitment. It was a chance to attempt obtaining increased commitment as well.

4 workshops were organised to exchange on good practices; mobility, innovative pedagogies, student engagement, student voice, and research and innovation for territories.

A poster session was organised which allowed universities to communicate with each other and for those who were not yet in Alliances to network with the others.

It was a successful event and a bi-lateral document on good practices will be produced, but the goal is to foster more multilateral cooperation.

Many students have participated. However, there were not many contributions in the R&I workshop, even though they were significant ones. It will be necessary to increase communication on R&I sessions

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and to involve the SwafS sub-groups so that they can promote their work and contribute to those sessions. It could be more actively promoted for the Barcelona Forum.

- Forum of Alliances in Barcelona

The Forum is related to the Spanish EU Presidency starting this summer. It is the 2nd official occasion to have an in-person Forum. It will be similar to the events organised under the French Presidency in Versailles, in June 2022.

FOREU1&2 Chairs received a request from the Spanish team asking Alliances to participate in the creation of the programme and suggest possible topics of discussion (in addition to more classical topics outlined by the Spanish team).

The Alliances suggested organising two more sessions:

- A session on the future monitoring framework (may not be a session in itself but rather a topic discussed in the Plenary)
- A session on interdisciplinary R&I

Concept notes (i.e., a mix of rational and political content and information on how the session should be organised) on the more "classical" topics will be sent to the Alliances for review in May or June.

Alliances are asked to prepare concept notes for the two additional sessions. The first drafts will be shared with the Spanish team. It will be returned to Alliances in May or June to get their feedback and prepare the final version. The links to the two drafts (online documents) have been sent. SwafS coordinators, being well placed to enrich the concept notes (especially on R&I), were asked to contribute to their drafting too. The concept notes will be the guiding documents to prepare for the Forum.

The Commission also wants to organise a satellite event to gather the Alliances involved in the different pilot projects on Degree Labels and Legal Status to make some progress on different activities.

There is not yet a full view of the programme.

There will be a meeting with the Alliances (Spanish side) and the Spanish Ministry on the 28th of April in Madrid. There will probably be a discussion on the Barcelona Forum; Alberto Garrido will share relevant information with FOREU2.

On another note, if any of the Alliances' coordinators have contacts with their Ministers, it is important to maintain contact with them to do some intelligence work.

Only 3 participants per Alliance will be allowed (Spanish participants not included). But as it is expected that coordinators, as well as other members involved in the Alliances, will come (as the goal is to organise a practical event to share good practices and challenges), Ludovic Thilly and Olga Wessels (FOREU1) will ask if it is possible to include more participants.

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It could also be interesting to organise informal meetings, as in Versailles, and invite other actors outside of the Alliances (e.g., Associated Partners). Ludovic Thilly will share this request with Olga Wessels, and they will ask the Spanish team.

There will be two parallel sessions running simultaneously at the Forum.

It will also be asked if the programme can be shared in advance (ideally before summer, as universities will close during summer break) so that Alliances can prepare in advance and select the people that will attend the Forum according to the programme.

5. Sub-group Chairs updates (incl. opportunities for merging FOREU1 and FOREU2 sub-groups)

In Brussels, there was a discussion on the merging of FOREU1 and FOREU2. The general opinion is that, as the timelines of the two Fora are still not aligned for now, they should be kept separated (at least for a few months). It will be the same for most sub-groups, even though there will be increased collaborations.

- **Sub-group on University-Industry cooperation (Naveed Syed - ENHANCE):**
  One of the colleagues from ENHANCE, Jörgen Sjöberg, has passed away. He was the Chair of the sub-group. He was a very valued colleague and he was deeply involved in the project. The sub-group will thus sadly require a new Chair. A new sub-group chair will be appointed in due time.

- **Sub-group on Alliance coordination:**
  They will invite someone from the EACEA to their meeting on the 8th of May. When they have the final agenda, they should put the Global Forum in the loop as it could be interesting for some Coordinators to participate in the meeting to discuss the final reporting. They will send the final reporting at the end of May.

- **Sub-group on digital tools and platforms:**
  The FOREU1 sub-group is interested in merging with this FOREU2 sub-group to share good practices. They wish to do so because they would get greater representativity with relevant stakeholders and increase expertise. It could also be an example on challenges encountered for future merging. All agreed that the two groups could merge. There will be two co-Chairs (one for FOREU1 and one for FOREU2), so they will continue updating FOREU2.

- **Sub-group on cooperation with non-EU partners:**
  The co-Chair from EUNICE, Matxalen Llosa, has decided to withdraw from her position. The new co-Chair is Selma Porobic from AURORA.

- **Sub-group on education and innovation:**
  There is a request from FOREU1 to merge with their Joint Degree sub-group. To be discussed.

- **SwafS sub-group:**

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They will not yet merge with FOREU1 R&I sub-group but there will be a more intense collaboration between the two sub-groups, and they will organise more common meetings.

6. ESA 2023

Presentation by Marcella Costa (UNITA):

ESA will take place from the **31st of May to the 2nd of June in Strasbourg**. The ESA colleagues emailed Alliances' representatives or coordinators to sign up for the event. Need to register before the **31st of April**.

Alliances can send up to two representatives per Alliance (involved in student and engagement initiatives). It should be possible to fund the travel with the budget of the Alliances because it complies with the activities of the Alliances (this is not an official statement from the Commission, so Ludovic Thilly will reach out to Tine Delva so that an official message is sent to all to confirm this possibility).

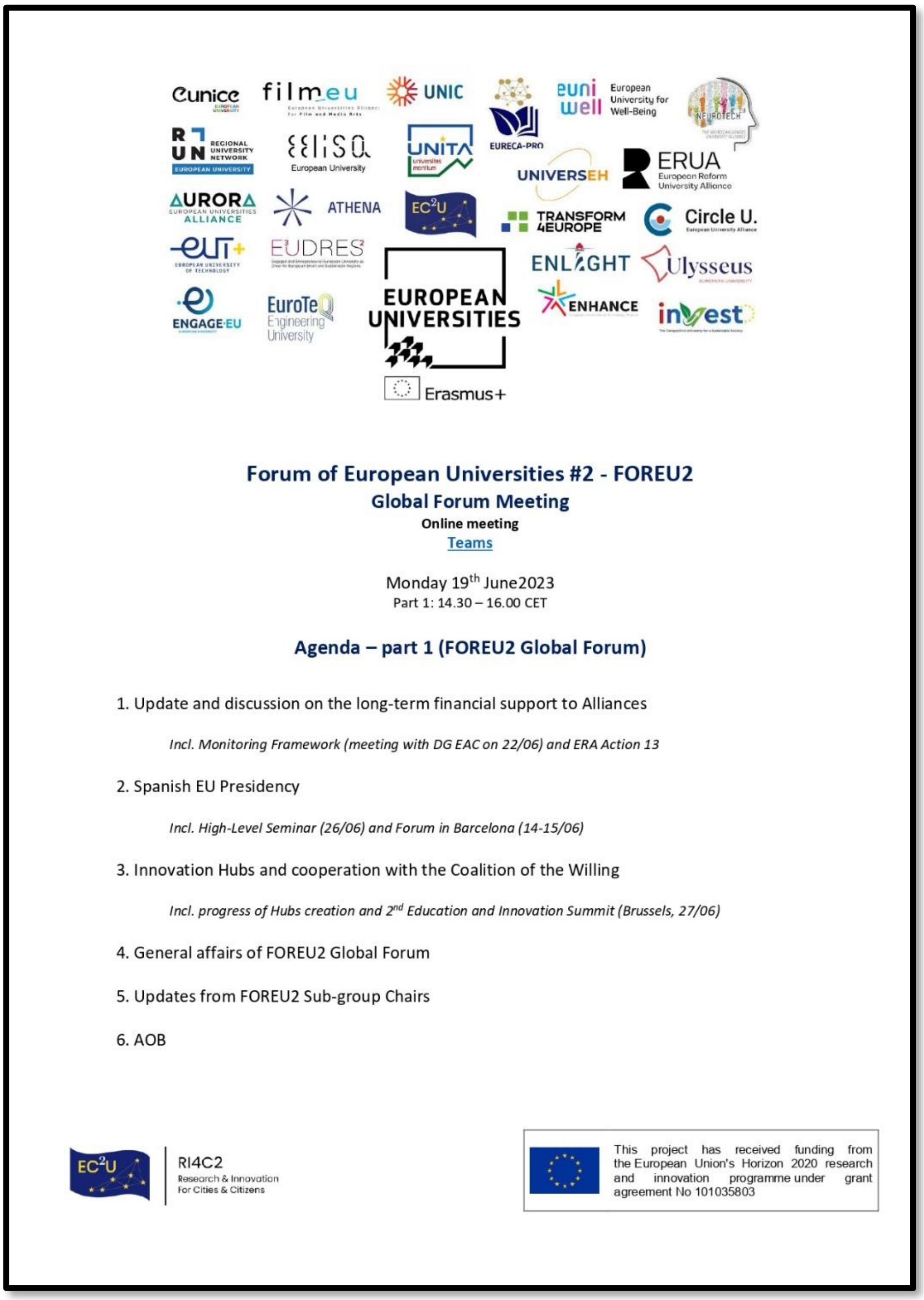
Students have already met online, so they are actively involved in the organisation of the panel. Alliances should contact their students to ensure they are aware of the event. Accommodation and meals are covered by the organisation in Strasbourg. Only need to plan for travel.

7. AOB

For the Rotterdam EAIE conference, there is no plan to have a FOREU2 stand or a stand for each Alliance. Members of Alliances are going (on national booths). There will be joint sessions with representatives of different Alliances. There could be informal meetings between members of Alliances, but nothing official (Ex: Circle U, Aurora, and Transform4Europe universities will attend according to this format). A strategy could be outlined for next year (maybe together with FOREU1), as the call for this year's event is closed.

C. FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 19 June 2023

1. Agenda



Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2

Global Forum Meeting

Online meeting

Teams

Monday 19th June2023

Part 1: 14.30 – 16.00 CET

Agenda – part 1 (FOREU2 Global Forum)

1. Update and discussion on the long-term financial support to Alliances

   Incl. Monitoring Framework (meeting with DG EAC on 22/06) and ERA Action 13

2. Spanish EU Presidency

   Incl. High-Level Seminar (26/06) and Forum in Barcelona (14-15/06)

3. Innovation Hubs and cooperation with the Coalition of the Willing

   Incl. progress of Hubs creation and 2nd Education and Innovation Summit (Brussels, 27/06)

4. General affairs of FOREU2 Global Forum

5. Updates from FOREU2 Sub-group Chairs

6. AOB

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2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Update and discussion on the long-term financial support to Alliances (incl. Monitoring Framework – meeting with DG EAC on 22/06 – and ERA Action 13)

Three important developments regarding the long-term financial support to Alliances:

The investment pathway & the monitoring framework are two important documents received rather late from DG EAC (last Friday), meaning that there is not sufficient time to provide in-depth feedback.

- Those documents are useful as they provide a lot of information on what is to be discussed on the long-term support to Alliances; however, they are similar to other documents concerning the strategies for universities. They also do not adequately take into account the diversity of Alliances.
- The investment pathway needs to be linked to ERA Action 13. In the future, there can be new ways to support R&I activities. The recommendations from ERA Action 13 offer ideas that are interesting to discuss such as top-ups or additional lump-sum.
- Yet, at the moment the monitoring framework is very different; it is a document requested by Member States which is delegated to contractors that have an insufficient view on what is happening at the level of universities.
- The proposed timeline of the data collection of the monitoring framework is almost impossible to follow because it will clash with the end of the pilot phase and the launching of the consolidation phase. Alliances agree that this timeline is not acceptable because it doesn't allow enough time to provide in-depth data. It is important to make sure that the data that is provided is actually useful and comprehensive, which means that more time is needed to provide valuable data.
- The aim of all the surveys that are launched needs to be clearer, and the Alliances need appropriate time to settle and consolidate, instead of being destabilised by all the data they have to provide in a short time. In that context, it is also important to make sure that the same data is not provided twice. The Commission could use the data they already have in the project reports before asking for similar data. It should not be used as a way to create a new form of reporting that would be based on data the Commission already has.
- Another issue is that research is mentioned at length in the investment pathway but not in the monitoring framework; there should be a holistic approach that includes research.

ERA Action 13

- The Action 13 document is much more detailed than the investment pathway, but it was not officially sent to Alliances. It seems that the documents coming from ERA Action 13 are much more informative and provide new information compared to the two others.

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- The first recommendations provided by ERA Action 13 are very informative because they are based on meetings with experts and Alliances that were invited to explain what it meant to pursue R&I progress.

Various interrogations on the meaning of certain sentences in the documents; each Alliance should read the documents carefully and, if something is not clear, they should ask the Commission to clarify so that all parties have the same understanding of their meaning.

Another issue is that the focus is too Eurocentric. As the Alliances have an international dimension, it should be more taken into account. Moreover, the goal of Alliances is also to increase the competitiveness of Europe, which can be made possible through global cooperation.

2. Spanish EU Presidency (incl. High-Level Seminar – 26/06 – and Forum in Barcelona – 14-15/06)

2 important upcoming developments;

Forum in Barcelona:

- No date for the release of the programme, although the Forum will soon take place. Hopefully it will be released soon to arrange travelling and prepare for the sessions.
- There will be no exhibition compared to the Versailles Forum.
- It was confirmed that only 3 persons per Alliance can attend (excluding the speakers); but it was not yet fully confirmed if Spanish colleagues are included, as it will depend on the host capacity. For now, Alliances should plan to include the Spanish colleagues in their delegation of 3 persons.

High-level Seminar:

- Each Alliance needs to send one slide. Having one slide per Alliance means that the participants can have access to examples from all Alliances.
- Only a small number of cases will be presented during the seminar but at least the participants will have access to all of them through the slides. It is a way to shed light on the activities of each Alliance.
- **The deadline to send the slides is 21/06.**

3. Innovation Hubs and cooperation with the Coalition of the Willing (incl. progress of Hubs creation and 2nd Education and Innovation Summit – Brussels, 27/06)

Creation of Innovation Hubs: a follow-up meeting was organised with Tine Delva. The message from DG EAC was very ambiguous; it suggested that Alliances have to monitor the Hubs, but there was no information on resources, management and monitoring. Therefore, for now there is no clear idea on how this could work at the Summit.

1. Hannes Raffaseder (E^3UDRES^2); coordinator of the **Entrepreneurship Hub**, in which two meetings were organised: A lot of colleagues joined the Hub. The Digital Hub is less popular among colleagues, it should maybe be more narrow-focused to engage more participants. However, in both Hubs, members come mostly from the Alliances and there are not many

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participants from the Coalition of the Willing. There are still many questions not answered (ex: who is the driver of these Hubs?). It is not clear in which way the Commission is involved to support the Hubs.

2. Beatrix Busse (EUniWell); involved in the **Hub for Diversity**: There were not a lot of information on what will happen for the development of this Hub.
3. Lisa Pichler (EURECA-PRO): they have been trying to create a **Hub on Responsible Consumption** and use the chance given by the Commission but has they have been getting very slow feedback, it has been difficult to build the Hub. An email was forwarded by Ludovic Thilly to get Alliances involved in the Hub.

The take from the Alliances on the Innovation Hub is the following: Alliances will move at their own pace, without the need to have an imposed timeline by the Commission. This could be a way to engage later for Alliances that are not ready to do it now.

2nd Education and Innovation Summit: the programme has been released. The Hubs have been invited to participate at the Summit, but it has not been planned yet.

4. General affairs of FOREU2 Global Forum

Anne-May Janssen departed from AURORA, therefore there is one vacant seat at the FOREU2 Bureau; with approval of all in presence, Kevin Guillaume (Circle-U) is now the new member of the FOREU2 Bureau.

5. Updates from FOREU2 Sub-group Chairs

Sub-group on cooperation with non-EU partners:

- This sub-group is important to clarify that Alliances have an interest in fostering global cooperation.
- There is a new member co-chairing the group with Magdalena Sikorska (EUNICE): Selma Porobic (Aurora).
- They were working in four sub-groups (financial possibilities / geopolitical strategies / global engagement and SDGs / joint degrees). Activities have resumed now that the new proposals have been submitted and they are currently working as one big group.
- One of their milestones is to prepare a draft questionnaire on the geopolitical strategy outside the EU in each Alliance. The questionnaire will be ready after the summer break and will be shared with all Alliances.

Sub-group on IT (now merged with FOREU1):

- The first joint meeting was organised, with the presence of Yann-Maël Bideau from DG-EAC who presented the ongoing development of Erasmus without paper, the Erasmus app, the European student card project and the European learning model.
- The next meeting of the sub-group will take place in October.
- Two surveys will be sent to the Alliances to map ongoing developments among Alliances to evaluate the interest and relevance of the European Student Card initiative and another to find out the expectations of Alliances toward this group.

SwafS sub-group:

- The next meeting will be on 29/06 from 11 to 12:30 CET, with two colleagues from DG RTD participating. Firstly, the Report on the 17 mid-term policy briefs of the 17 Pilot 1 SwafS projects will be presented, then Stjin Delaure will present updates on the Action 13 recommendations. A follow-up discussion on the draft recommendations that will be made at the meeting on 23/06 is very likely to take place.

Joint meetings between FOREU1&2 are really important because they are designed by the Alliances and made for them, depending on their needs. Internally mapping Alliances' activities can thus be very useful because it directly corresponds to their needs. Hence, Alliances should be careful not to necessarily accept all requests made by the Commission because there are already many joint activities going on.

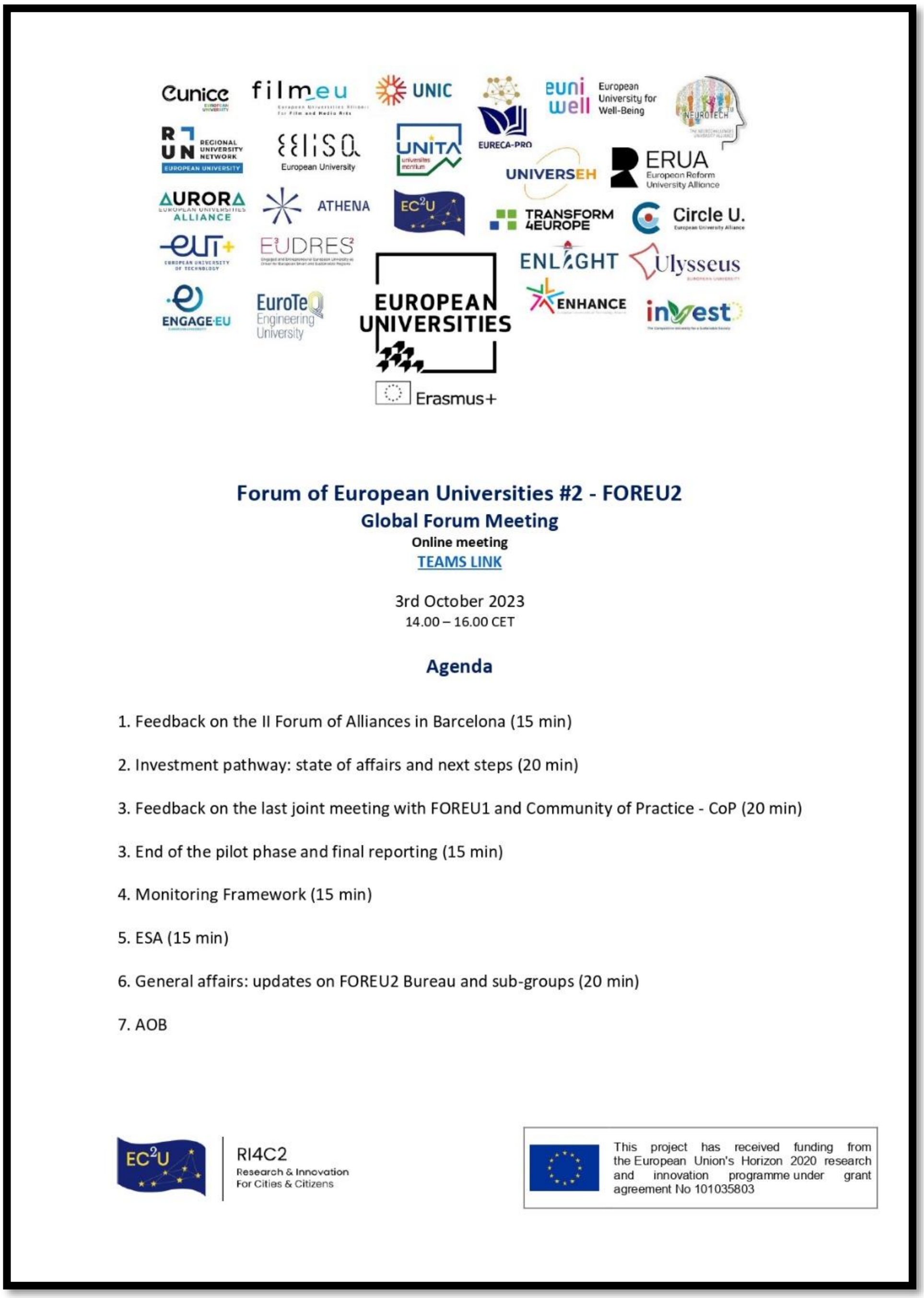
6. AOB

Questions were received regarding the release of the new call results; Vanessa Debiais-Santon said that the results are expected to be released at the end of June/early July. On the platform it is indicated that the results will be released on the 2nd of August, but this is the latest date at which the Commission must release the results; hopefully they should come earlier.

The Aurora Alliance has asked their PO for an extension of the deadline to submit the final report, especially regarding the financial part. The official response they got from their PO was that it was too early to ask for an extension. Even if it is too early for the POs, it might be good for Alliances to already ask for this extension if it is needed, so that the POs are aware of it.

D. FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 3 October 2023

1. Agenda



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

3rd October 2023
14.00 – 16.00 CET

Agenda

1. Feedback on the II Forum of Alliances in Barcelona (15 min)

2. Investment pathway: state of affairs and next steps (20 min)

3. Feedback on the last joint meeting with FOREU1 and Community of Practice - CoP (20 min)

3. End of the pilot phase and final reporting (15 min)

4. Monitoring Framework (15 min)

5. ESA (15 min)

6. General affairs: updates on FOREU2 Bureau and sub-groups (20 min)

7. AOB

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2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Feedback on the II Forum of Alliances in Barcelona (15 min)

Ludovic Thilly, EC2U Coordinator said that the II Forum of Alliances in Barcelona was very fruitful and interesting. Coordinators discussed on this topic and the main conclusions are:

1/ It was still not clear what to expect for future fundings (incl. on the R&I dimension), or what are the next steps with Member States and how to get further commitment from them.

2/ The legal entity workshop was found to be really interesting.

Overall, it was agreed that the Forum happening once a year can be very valuable to all Alliances. This could be included in the proposal for the **Community of Practice**. Thus, it would preserve that large-scale event and keep this topic high on agendas.

There will be no Forum of Alliances organised by Belgium next year, but an event organised by the Belgian universities themselves. However, this is not setup by the government this time. The dates would have to be confirmed for this event. The colleagues from Belgium will provide more information as soon as possible.

2. Investment pathway: state of affairs and next steps (20 min)

Regarding the joint statement from FOREU on the Investment pathway: in the case of ENLIGHT, it was acknowledged that the text was very good, however, the short procedure was not easy to manage for some partners as it took some time to get everybody on the same track. Due to this, there was a sudden raise of attention and interest for the Community of Practice, and on how FOREU1 and 2 work together.

There is a certain hardship of being in FOREU: on the one hand this is a great platform to exchange views, experiences, and speak with one voice to the funding authority. On the other hand, there are other associations participating, which are also positioning around the European funding and its future. Thus, that is a hard balance to make.

To sum up, it is really difficult to keep everybody satisfied, and convince them that it is needed to speak as one voice, without any reservations.

CIRCLE U. agrees that sometimes it is hard to maintain a balance with the different networks. CIRCLE U. also believes, as other Alliances, that it is hard to find ways to fund research and innovation through the Alliance. This is not something facilitated at the level of the Commission.

There should also be a work on the legal base first before working on instruments to create more synergies between the different programmes. If the legal base cannot be changed, at least Alliances would know that it is not possible to continue on this path. It is important to work from a long-term perspective for the success of Alliances.

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Alliances should remain independent and publish statements without the intervention of the Commission.

The next steps will depend on the response FOREU gets from the Commissioner on the statement released the previous week.

3. Feedback on the last joint meeting with FOREU1 and Community of Practice - CoP (20 min)

A call for expression of interest to set up a **Task Force** to work on preparing a proposal to respond to the call on the Community of Practice was previously launched. 18 people expressed interest from 18 Alliances. All interested Alliances will take part in the Task Force. A first meeting will take place soon (next week probably), an official email will be sent to FOREU1 and FOREU2 to inform them on progress and information on the work of the Task Force. The Task Force will regularly update FOREU1&2 on the progress made on the proposal and feedback can be provided to the Task Force by the other Alliances who are not part of it. All Alliances will be consulted.

Only one proposal will be selected, it is expected that the most relevant comes from the Alliances.

There is an official budget at the moment of 1.5 million.

As any proposal, it has to be developed with Work Packages, with the first work package on management and the last one on dissemination and communication.

A first initial draft was proposed with FOREU not appearing as it is now, but in the forms of work packages. However, all the groups will be kept into a single work package, as the objective is to have a limited amount of work packages.

Magdalena Sikorska (EUNICE) is co-chairing a sub-group on cooperation with non-EU partners and the CoP was discussed in the group; the group believes that the global strategies of Alliances and global outreach should be an important topic within the proposal.

4. End of the pilot phase and final reporting (15 min)

Gijs Coucke (ENLIGHT) gathered a first batch of questions for the meeting with **EACEA**. There might be a second round of questions as the template has not been shared yet. Some of the questions concern basic information, while others are about more developed information. Moreover, there is a need to centrally collect information about expenses to complete the report on financial aspects.

Some Alliances have been waiting for GA amendments for months, while others had to wait only a few weeks to get the amendments approved.

A possible solution for those who are still waiting for answers is to write to the new Head of Sector to get fast answers and to find quick solutions to the issues.

5. Monitoring Framework (15 min)

Alliances had different approaches to complete the monitoring framework: some Alliances have chosen to prepare the document centrally (at the coordination level) while others have collected input from most or all their partners to prepare the document.

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The results of the Monitoring Framework may potentially have an impact on the long-term support to the Alliances, therefore Alliances have worked to provide a comprehensive document.

6. ESA (European Student Assembly) (15 min)

Applications for the new ESA event are currently open, from the 28th of September until the 5th of November 2023. This event consists of two days in which students meet and debate on different topics at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

A handbook was sent by email by Marcella Costa. There are some eligibility conditions to apply.

There will be a selection process, based on specific criteria.

The meeting will take place from the 10th to the 12th of April 2024. All details are in the handbook.

Coordinators are encouraged to share the information within their Alliance so that the call for applications can be disseminated on Alliances' social media.

For now, it is not clear whether Alliances will have to fund the mobilities for their students again or if it will be funded by the organisers of ESA.

7. General affairs: updates on FOREU2 Bureau and sub-groups (20 min)

Carola Hodyas (Transform4Europe) will leave the FOREU2 Bureau, therefore a seat is available for a colleague to replace her. In the coming days, colleagues can share their interest via email if they want to join the Bureau.

FOREU2 will keep running until the potential creation of the Community of Practice, which means there is still at least a year of activity left.

1/ **Sub-group on cooperation with non-EU actors** (chaired by **Magdalena Sikorska from EUNICE** and **Selma Porobic from Aurora**): they are finalising a questionnaire on global strategies with all of the Alliances. The group is already open to FOREU1, some Alliances from FOREU1 joined as there was no equivalent within FOREU1. For information, they have non-EU member campuses in the US and in Vietnam, which is a major step toward such a strategy. At the national level, for instance in Poland, their national agency created a special call for all the Alliances that have Polish members there to support Ukrainian partners, nearly 5 million euros was dedicated to this initiative.

2/ Sub-group on Alliance coordination (**Gijs Coucke, ENLIGHT**): a member of the **FORTHEM Alliance** will come to exchange on their experience in the new project with financial reporting, on the 16th of October.

3/ Sub-group on digital platforms (**Vlad Petcu, UNITA**): There was one common meeting of the joint FOREU1 and 2 digital and IT sub-group before the summer. The next common meeting is going to focus on initiatives at the European level with a brief explanation of a study that was conducted at the European level, regarding the way we can make interoperability work in higher education. There is also going to be a presentation by the European Commission on the existing IT initiatives.

4/ Sub-group on the SwafS projects (**Ludovic Thilly, EC2U**): there will be a meeting next week with **Stijn Delaure** to update on the recent developments regarding the **European Excellence Initiative**

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and that could be one component of the **investment pathway** with respect to R&I support to the Alliances**.** The subject of **synergies between education and research** will also be discussed as well as the feedbacks from the R&I session in Barcelona and the joint deliverables.

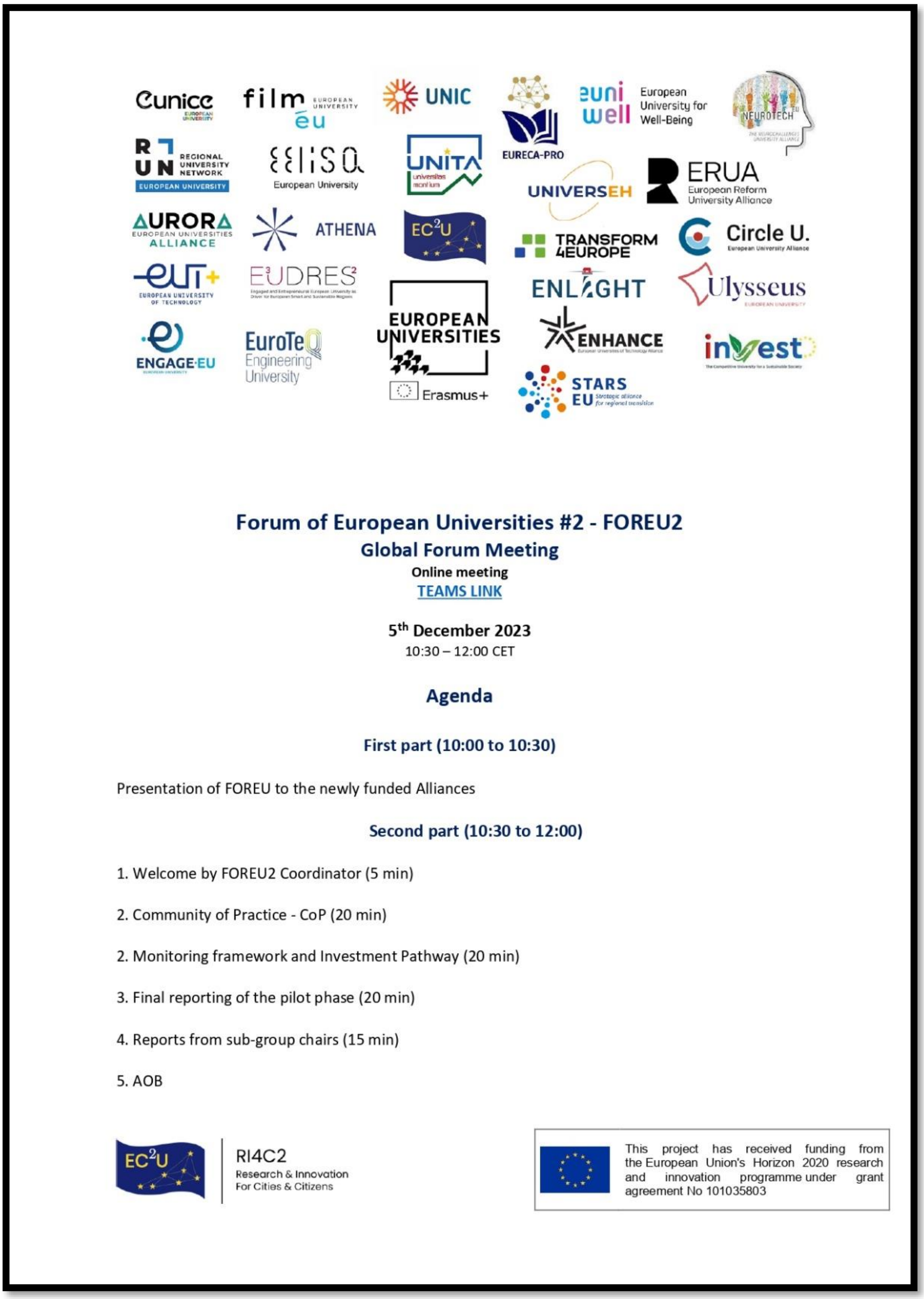
8. AOB

1/ Daria Ratsiborinskaya (UNIC): At the beginning of February, the Ruhr University Bochum (Germany) organises the Teaching and Learning event in the Framework of the European University Association, an event could be organised there at the same time.

2/ Jacotte FAURE (ENGAGE.EU) from the Toulouse Capitole University: The University of Toulouse will soon organise a short task team that will work to prepare specific workshops on the European Alliances in Toulouse.

E. FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 5 December 2023

1. Agenda



Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2

Global Forum Meeting

Online meeting

TEAMS LINK

5th December 2023

10:30 – 12:00 CET

Agenda

First part (10:00 to 10:30)

Presentation of FOREU to the newly funded Alliances

Second part (10:30 to 12:00)

1. Welcome by FOREU2 Coordinator (5 min)

2. Community of Practice - CoP (20 min)

2. Monitoring framework and Investment Pathway (20 min)

3. Final reporting of the pilot phase (20 min)

4. Reports from sub-group chairs (15 min)

5. AOB

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2. Minutes

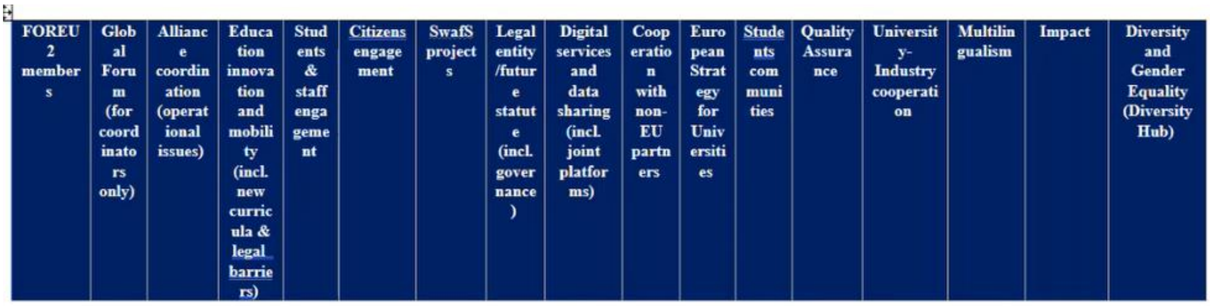
NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

First part

Ludovic Thilly introduced FOREU2 to the newly funded Alliances.

FOREU2 was created with the Pilot 2 Alliances. In 2022, the renewed Pilot 1 Alliances and new Alliances became FOREU1 and 3. In 2023, most Pilot 2 Alliances were renewed, and 7 new Alliances have been funded. The group will now officially be transformed into FOREU2/4.

The following online table containing contact information about all the Alliances and the working groups was presented:



FOREU2 members	Global Forum (for coordinators only)	Alliance coordination (operational issues)	Education innovation and mobility (incl. new curricula & legal barriers)	Students & staff engagement	Citizens engagement	SwafS projects	Legal entity /future statute (incl. governance)	Digital services and data sharing (incl. joint platforms)	Cooperation with non-EU partners	European Strategy for Universities	Students communities	Quality Assurance	University-Industry cooperation	Multilingualism	Impact	Diversity and Gender Equality (Diversity Hub)

In this table, there are 15 columns detailing all the sub-groups created over time.

The **Global Forum** is composed of the Alliance Coordinators, it is a group where all matters are discussed. Within this group, there is the FOREU2 Bureau, which will now become the FOREU2/4 Bureau, composed of 5 Alliance representatives. The Bureau is consulted when fast decisions need to be taken.

The “**Alliance coordination**” column lists Representatives from each Alliances handling daily management.

The “**European strategy for universities**” group no longer exists. New partners are encouraged to review the table to provide names. Each group Chair should be contacted to update the mailing lists. EC2U (University of Poitiers) manages the mailing lists for the Global Forum and SwafS projects sub-group.

In the 2024 Call, the last new Alliances will be selected under Topic 1. There is a Topic 2 which concerns the Community of Practice where the Commission is providing the possibility to formalise FOREU into a project that could be funded by the Commission, via the Erasmus programme, to run all these groups.

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The Pilot Alliances are preparing a proposal and only one project will be selected in this Topic 2. The goal is to transform the current informal FOREU1/2/3/4 into a funded formal group. The idea will be that the new Alliances are also part of this, involved as Associated Partners for now.

Formally speaking, the proposal will be made with the 4 WPs, WP1 will be the coordination, WP2 will be composed of the topical groups, WP3 will be a policy dialogue, and WP4 about communication and dissemination. Thus, through this new Community of Practice, new partners will also be supported in their dissemination.

In order to have a representative for each new Alliance, a PIC number of a member university will be required.

To summarise, FOREU1/2/3/4 will be merged into a single formal set-up co-funded by the Erasmus programme under this Topic 2 Community of Practice. All the sub-groups will merge as well and there will be a discussion to see if all of them will be kept, and if some new topical sub-groups could be created.

Second part

1. Welcome by FOREU2 Coordinator

Ludovic Thilly welcomed all the coordinators to the meeting and mentioned the half hour introduction to FOREU with the new Alliances selected in 2023.

2. Community of Practice – CoP

In a joint meeting involving also FOREU1/3, the project's main lines were presented. The project will consist of four Work Packages (WPs):

- **WP1:** Coordination of the Erasmus project.
- **WP2:** FOR-EU CoP, WP for the continuation of the topical sub-groups.
- **WP3:** Policy dialogue, engaging with the broader sector and stakeholders, aligning with the community of practice's objectives outlined in the proposal under Topic 2.
- **WP4:** Dissemination and communication.

The proposal writing will commence soon, with the submission deadline set for **February 6th, 2024**. The budget allocated is 1.5 million euros.

Discussion is ongoing on how to involve all the Alliances. The idea in the Task Force that is preparing the proposal is that this Community of Practice is for all the Alliances.

For the project, it is necessary to define which Alliances will receive funding for activities (full partners) and which will participate without receiving funding (associated partners), establishing in that way the roles within the project.

The representation of an Alliance by a legal entity or one of its members does not prevent colleagues from other universities within the Alliance from participating in groups or even chairing them. All

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colleagues nominated or willing to engage in the CoP's activities are welcome, with no distinction between universities within an Alliance or the Alliances themselves. FOREU will maintain its collegial and consensus-driven approach, which has proven successful over the past 3-4 years.

As it's an Erasmus project, efficient budget distribution is vital. Only 10-15 Alliances will receive EU grant funding, others will be Associated Partners. Alliances with a legal entity can distribute internally; those without can choose their representative institution. It is suggested to refer to the Coordinating university but the choice is up to each Alliance.

All the colleagues will be continuously informed about the development. A joint meeting is scheduled with all the FOREU (1/2/3/4) Alliance coordinators on the **15th of January at 4pm** to discuss the proposal writing status. A connection link will be sent to all partners shortly before the meeting.

3. Monitoring framework and Investment Pathway

The Monitoring Framework, a comprehensive document dispatched by the Commission to all Alliances over the summer, required completion by the end of October. All Alliances were tasked with responding to this questionnaire.

It is a sort of ongoing dialogue initiated by the Commission with the Alliances, the higher-education associations, and Member States on providing long-term support to the Alliances, given the confirmed support until 2029.

An online meeting with DG EAC is scheduled for the **morning of December 12th**. For the new Alliances who might not have received the invitation, the link will be forwarded.

Ludovic Thilly, as Chair of the Coimbra Group, recently participated in a meeting between DG EAC, Member States, and associations on the Monitoring Framework and Investment Pathway, which took place on the 22nd of November in Brussels. In this meeting, interesting data from the Monitoring Framework have been presented. The initial insights obtained offer a remarkably impactful view of the achievements over the past three years, with very positive numbers. Despite the challenge of analysing the text-based Excel sheet, the exercise proved beneficial. The process was initially difficult but valuable, particularly in the context of the final report, highlighting the dual usefulness of the exercise.

Regarding the Investment Pathway, there is also an inclination to explore solutions for incorporating capacity-building in research and innovation into the long-term framework. The SwafS Horizon 2020 projects have proven to be an added value therefore there might be ways to continue those projects as well. The upcoming meeting on December 12th with DG EAC should also provide additional insights on the monitoring framework.

4. Final reporting of the pilot phase

An additional info session with the Executive agency took place on November 23rd.

The meeting clarified that the final report's financial section has been simplified. No individual cost justifications are needed; partners should only input global numbers on the platform. Auditors will conduct eligibility and justification checks when preparing the Certificate of Financial Statement (CFS), categorised as Type 1 or 2 based on the grant requested.

Despite the complexity of audits, most universities are in the final stages, and overall, the situation is on track.

No additional group actions are required towards EAC and EACEA at this stage. Teams' exchanges are enough for all other issues.

5. Reports from sub-group chairs

***SwafS project* sub-group (chaired by Ludovic Thilly, EC2U):**

It is **scheduled to organise a new meeting at the beginning of 2024**. Noteworthy points include:

- Typically, efforts are made to involve representatives from the Commission, specifically DG RTD, to elucidate the potential for successors to the SwafS projects, a prospect that still appears unlikely.
- Joint deliverables have seen notable progress. The first deliverable, issued in September 2023, focused on good practices for integrating Gender Equality practices into research, a widely disseminated and well-received initiative.
- Another joint deliverable, due for the end of the SwafS projects, will encompass activities fostering collaborative R&I activities. This entails platforms for researcher matchmaking, strategies for R&I agenda, and tools developed within the SwafS projects. A task group has been established to draft the content of this joint paper, with each Alliance expected to contribute. This collaborative effort aims to showcase practices that may be further developed, potentially through the Investment Pathway.

The group on *legal entity and governance* has merged with the FOR-EU1/3 counterpart, chaired by Meritxell Chaves from CHARM-EU (Dana Samson, Circle U., has stepped down as co-chair). In order to continue their work, they prepared a questionnaire; all the partners are reminded to answer to that questionnaire. **A meeting to have an overview on all aspects will be organised soon**. A very interesting survey has been highlighted on the status of the different development links to the legal entities, the results and the analysis of the sub-group are highly anticipated. The link to this questionnaire/survey can be found in one of the reminder emails sent by Ludovic Thilly.

6. AOB

European Students Assembly and Ambassadors' Forum

The updated contact list for FOR-EU1/3 and FOR-EU2/4 has been transmitted to colleagues involved in the EUC Voices project, which includes the European Student Assembly. This contact information will serve for both the dissemination of information regarding the *European Students Assembly* process and the *Ambassadors initiative*, a secondary component of the ongoing project responsible for funding both the Strasbourg Assembly and this additional initiative.

The received list of student applications marks the commencement of the selection process. Alliances are expected to submit the list of selected students by **December 15th**. Additional sessions will be

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held for coordinators, student panel coordinators, and participants in Strasbourg. Results for the participants are scheduled to be published on **January 15th**.

The European Student Assembly will take place at the European Parliament in Strasbourg **from the 10th to the 12th of April 2024.**

Constance Chevallier Govers coordinates the EUC Voices (European Universities Community Voices), an Erasmus + Cooperation partnership with 3 main actions:

- European Student Assembly (taking place yearly in Spring at the European Parliament in Strasbourg)
- Ambassadors' Forum (taking place in the Fall at the Warsaw School of Economics)
- EUC Alumni Network

The Ambassador Forum is supposed to gather one student representative from each Alliance in order to discuss matters related to higher education.

The Warsaw School of Economics, a CIVICA partner institution, will organise a second student-related event for European University Alliances in Warsaw during the **first week of September 2024**. Each Alliance is invited to send one student representative, with all associated costs covered by the EUC Voices project—no expenses for the Alliances, in contrast to ESA.

There is no set pattern for selecting the Alliance representative, offering flexibility in the selection process. Post-event, it will be interesting to explore how students are represented within Alliances.

The aim of this Ambassadors' programme is to foster a culture of knowledge sharing and collaboration of the student ambassadors, fostering a community and identity among representatives in European Universities, creating a network.

To discuss this further, a meeting is scheduled for **December 13th at 2:00 pm**. Invitations will be sent out next week. The meeting will be organised by the Warsaw School of Economics from CIVICA in collaboration with ESN Erasmus Student's Network.

Other issues

- Ursula SCHLICHTER (ENGAGE.EU) mentioned the approach to fulfilling the Grant Agreement's obligations for beneficiaries concerning Associated Partners of the new funding phase. Specifically, she addressed an article requiring the beneficiary to ensure that contractual obligations align with proper implementation, conflict of interest, confidentiality, security, etc. The Legal Officer of ENGAGE.EU sought insights on how other Alliances handle this, particularly in Article 25 where granting authorities can exercise their rights toward Associated Partners.

  Most Alliances are not concerned with this issue as they did not sign a cooperation agreement with the Associated Partners that list all these articles.

  Some partners have expressed difficulties in establishing structural and systematic engagement with Associated Partners. While one potential solution could have been signing

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agreements with them, this approach allows for greater flexibility in determining the nature of engagement.

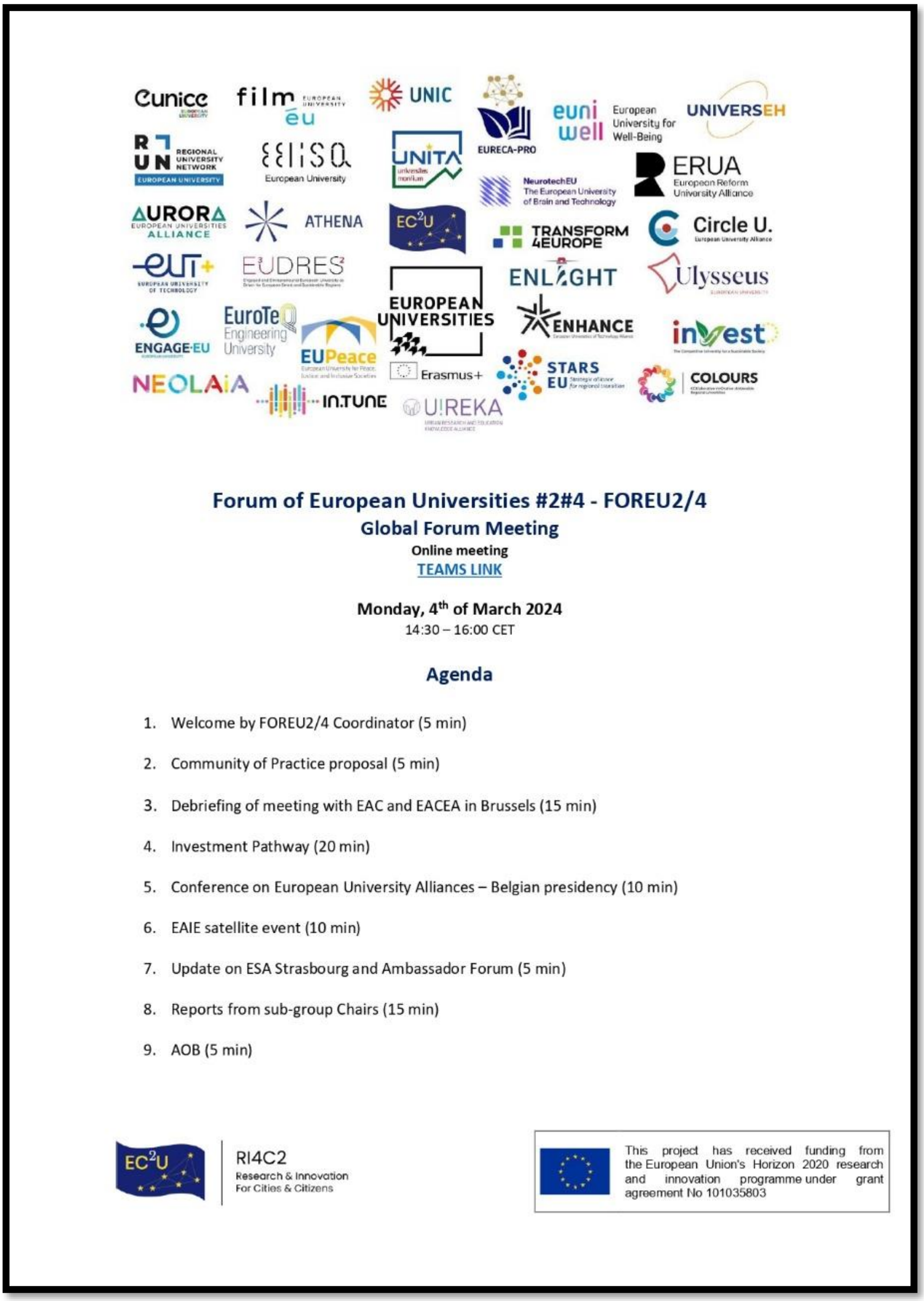
- It was clarified that there isn't a formal sub-group in FOR-EU2/4 on communication but there is a list of people to contact in FOR-EU1/3, including:

    - Jocelyne Gerard from Forthem
    - Marina Fern*ández-Pe*ña Mollá from Arqus
    - Alessia Manco from CIVICA

- For additional clarification on any aspect, partners may reach out to Ludovic Thilly or Pauline Bordiec. The scheduling of the next meeting is not confirmed at the moment but is anticipated in February. Further details will be provided soon.

F. FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 4 March 2024

1. Agenda



Forum of European Universities #2#4 - FOREU2/4

Global Forum Meeting

Online meeting

TEAMS LINK

Monday, 4th of March 2024

14:30 – 16:00 CET

Agenda

1. Welcome by FOREU2/4 Coordinator (5 min)
2. Community of Practice proposal (5 min)
3. Debriefing of meeting with EAC and EACEA in Brussels (15 min)
4. Investment Pathway (20 min)
5. Conference on European University Alliances – Belgian presidency (10 min)
6. EAIE satellite event (10 min)
7. Update on ESA Strasbourg and Ambassador Forum (5 min)
8. Reports from sub-group Chairs (15 min)
9. AOB (5 min)

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2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Welcome by FOREU2/4 Coordinator

2. Community of Practice proposal

The FOREU4All proposal to the topic 2 of the last European universities call this year has successfully been submitted. The **deadline was on the 6th of February**. All 50 Alliances are on board.

During the preparation of the Grant Agreement, additional Associated Partners will be welcomed, which are the last Alliances that will be selected under the parallel call topic 1.

In addition to these participants, there are five Associated Partners that are:

- **EUA**
- **ESU** (European Students')
- **ESN** (Erasmus Student Association)
- **ENQA** (Quality assurance)
- **EURASHE**

The project is structured in **4 Work Packages**:

- **WP1**: Management and coordination
- **WP2**: topical sub-groups (between 10 and 20)
- **WP3**: Policy dialogue (with groups that will be the interface between the community of practice and the external policy makers, through the policy living labs)
- **WP4**: Communication and dissemination (website, newsletter to disseminate the events, and one final event)

There will be only one big event/a forum of Alliances at the end, that won't be connected to any EU presidency.

The requested Grant is about 1.8 million euros.

3. Debriefing of meeting with EAC and EACEA in Brussels

In the programme: debriefing from EAC on the education package, feedback from EACA on how to run the projects, parallel sessions, debriefing on the monitoring framework and investment pathway, feedback from EACA on the lump sum.

Partners felt that it was valuable to get to meet the other Alliances and that there was more place for feedback. The constructive criticism on communication was also perceived as good input. However, the setting was not favourable for a true dialogue; large tables where people can see each other are better than being separated by a stage.

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The EU budget discussion highlights rigidity concerning non-eligible members or countries (example of the Swiss Partners). This poses a growing concern, especially for Alliances that already have activities with those partners approved.

An informal group will be created through the FOREU mailing list to run a discussion on that.

The question of the engagement with non-EU partners is a part of the current discussion in the subgroup on non-EU partnership so it could be combined and discussed in relation to this sub-group.

4. Investment Pathway

During the meeting, the need to prepare a solid narrative was noted to support DG EAC, with the objective to get the one-stop shop approved by the Commission but also by Member States.

It is necessary for Alliances to gather and talk about this topic all together once more to make sure everyone is on the same path. For now, there isn't a clear single approach in this Investment Pathway.

It is important to work at the national level, to lobby at all levels, and to have a strong narrative where there wouldn't be any dissonant voices as it is having a negative impact on the whole Alliance initiative.

Partners are invited to share with the group through the Global Forum mailing list, any feedback that they might get from one way or another.

5. Conference on European University Alliances – Belgian presidency

The "Save The Date" has been received for the event, **the main day will be on April, 30th**. Sessions are planned but no further information has yet been received. This is not a formal forum; it is back-to-back with the conference by DG EAC about the results of the pilot phase.

6. EAIE satellite event

Possibility to organise a small event in parallel to the EAIE in Toulouse where all the Alliances would be invited to participate. The **EAIE in Toulouse will be between the 17th and 20th of September**, and, the idea is that during the first morning (17/09), there would be this parallel event, organised by the Toulouse universities, on behalf of all the community of Alliances. The discussed topic for this event would be the international dimension of the Alliances, and how to foster cooperation with the rest of the world. The idea is that one of the Toulouse universities would host this event in one of their amphitheatres for about 200 people. Concept note will be drafted by the Toulouse universities and shared will the group.

In the Toulouse edition of EAIE, there is going to be a particular emphasis on the African partners/universities that are going to be invited.

7. Update on ESA Strasbourg and Ambassador Forum

For the third edition of ESA 2024, students will be there between **10-12 of April**, the organisation team has sent out all information. There will be more than 250 students on site, with 41 Alliances

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involved in this event. The Alliances have to pay the travel cost to Strasbourg and the arrival night on the 9th, the other nights are covered by the ESA. There will also be the **Annual Ambassador Forum in Warsaw in September**, interested Alliances should **designate one student to represent the Alliance by April 30th**.

8. Reports from sub-group Chairs

- **Cooperation with non-EU partners sub-group:** Some Alliances from FOREU2, FOREU1 and FOREU4 joined the group, not yet from FOREU3. Two questionnaires have been put together and would be distributed. The collected data will be analysed.
- **Alliance Coordination sub-group:** The recently-funded Alliances (fourth wave) have registered for the mailing list.
- **Impact sub-group:** the plan is to organise a FOREU2 impact workshop in **Bilbao on June 11th**.
- **Digital services and date sharing sub-group:** The upcoming meeting regarding the European Student Card Initiative is scheduled for **March 11th**. A meeting is also planned in Brussels to discuss about how they want to implement the European Interoperability Framework in the next years.
- **SwafS sub-group:** The group had a meeting with DG RTD and the Coimbra group that was the occasion to discuss the Investment Pathway. There will be an upcoming meeting with REA, to have their feedback on how to prepare the final report and the last policy brief of the SwafS project. A second joint deliverable is in preparation, on the topic of “progress made in the implementation of R&I long-term strategies”. It will be delivered **by the end of May 2024.**

9. AOB

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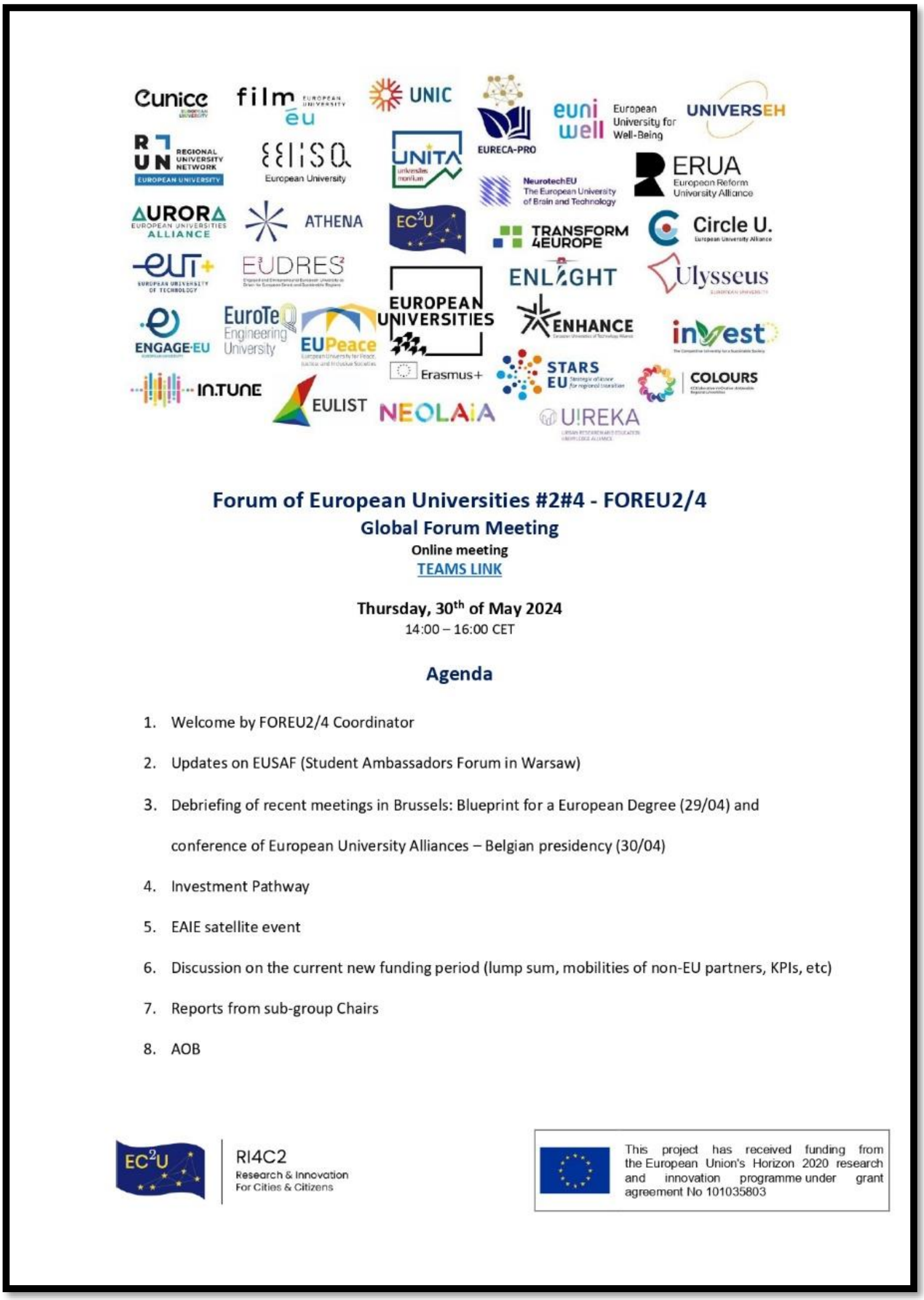
G. FOREU2 – Global Forum meeting on 30 May 2024

1. Agenda



Forum of European Universities #2#4 - FOREU2/4

Global Forum Meeting

Online meeting

TEAMS LINK

Thursday, 30th of May 2024

14:00 – 16:00 CET

Agenda

1. Welcome by FOREU2/4 Coordinator
2. Updates on EUSAF (Student Ambassadors Forum in Warsaw)
3. Debriefing of recent meetings in Brussels: Blueprint for a European Degree (29/04) and conference of European University Alliances – Belgian presidency (30/04)
4. Investment Pathway
5. EAIE satellite event
6. Discussion on the current new funding period (lump sum, mobilities of non-EU partners, KPIs, etc)
7. Reports from sub-group Chairs
8. AOB

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2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Welcome by FOREU2/4 Coordinator

2. Updates on EUSAF (Student Ambassadors Forum in Warsaw)

The European Student Assembly took place from April 10 to 12, 2024, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The next assembly will be held in May or June 2025.

The aim of the Student Ambassadors Forum is to gather student representatives from each Alliance in Warsaw, organised by CIVICA and the Warsaw School of Economics. This year's event will focus on student involvement in Alliances. There will be an online meeting about this in July, with the date to be defined.

3. Debriefing of recent meetings in Brussels: Blueprint for a European Degree (29/04) and conference of European University Alliances – Belgian presidency (30/04)

The feedback on the blueprint for a European degree was globally positive, indicating that most people are moving in the same direction on this topic. However, the status of the European degree is still pending. It is now up to the Member States to define the next steps.

On the work concerning legal status for Alliances, although there was no clear conclusion, the main outcome put forward that that none of the existing statuses fully meet the needs of Alliances.

4. Investment Pathway

The ambitious scenario for the Investment Pathway, presented to the Coordinators in Brussels in March, needs to remain a high priority on the Commission's agenda and should be strongly advocated for. The current focus on the European Degree is somewhat concerning for the state of the Investment Pathway. In the coming weeks, work will proceed on a public joint response to the Letta report.

5. EAIE satellite event

Regarding this satellite event, it will be a side event to the EAIE conference on the morning of 17 September, co-organised by the coordinators of FOREU1 and FOREU2 along with the University of Toulouse. The event will include 20-30 minutes of networking, with the afternoon left free. The topic will focus on the internationalisation of the Alliances, with the first session covering strategy and the political dimension, followed by two focus sessions on Ukraine and cooperation with Africa. More information will be provided in the coming weeks. Each Alliance will be able to send three representatives; speakers and moderators are not included in this total.

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6. Discussion on the current new funding period (lump sum, mobilities of non-EU partners, KPIs, etc)

Mobilities of non-EU partners: At the meeting of the sub-group on non-EU cooperation, not all Alliances with Swiss or British partners were present. For those Alliances, the work plan in the Grant Agreement clearly stated that all these partners were eligible. It is therefore difficult for Alliances to understand why they are not eligible anymore. The solution found for the Swiss and British partners can be helpful and useful for other institutions. Naveed Syed (ENHANCE) will work on compiling information from Alliances concerned and a follow-up email will be sent regarding this matter.

Regarding possible amendments to the Grant Agreement:

- There is a website listing all the aspects which should be concerned by amendments, and KPIs seem to be included.
- Some Alliances are preparing a list of amendments to be requested, including KPIs.
- Some Alliances are working on preparing a request for amendments regarding milestones.
- Amendments can be made throughout the entire duration of the project, but it can make sense to regroup several amendment requests in one to facilitate the procedure.

7. Reports from sub-group Chairs

Alliance coordination sub-group (Gijs Coucke, ENLIGHT): the topics discussed on the current new funding period during this meeting are also discussed in the group. The group is also currently discussing the topic of mobilities and its definition (what are the criteria, etc…). The Global Forum and Alliance coordination sub-group should stay in touch in the coming months to feed each other on those topics.

SwafS project sub-group (Ludovic Thilly, EC2U): the group had a meeting last week and has validated the idea of having a **joint SwafS event on the 4th of October in the morning in Brussels**. The relevance of the SwafS projects' work, particularly with regards to the Investment Pathway will be emphasised. More information will be shared about this event soon.

Digital services and data sharing sub-group (Vlad Petcu, UNITA): the most recent meeting was organised in March and was dedicated to the current status of the European Student Card project, and how it can ensure a better collaboration in the University Alliances and also contribute to the mobility of the students. The next meeting will be in the 11th of June dedicated to diplomas and certificates.

Legal entity/future statute (incl. governance) sub-group (Timothee Toury, EUT+): This sub-group organises one meeting per month, members are presenting their governance structure along with open discussions and informal sharing of information.

Diversity and inclusion sub-group (Melih Özkardes, ENHANCE): This group has been holding monthly meetings since March 2022, totalling 12 meetings to date. The next meeting is scheduled for the 2nd July at 2pm CET, with 28 Alliances participating in the exchanges. They actively share good

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practices and discuss current issues. Recently, they initiated a public Padlet where all Alliances can contribute ideas related to public resources. Currently, they await the results of the community of practice proposal and are keenly interested in participating in the project. **All colleagues interested are invited to attend the next meeting on 2nd of July.**

8. AOB

There most probably won't be any meetings before the summer break however communication will continue via email.

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III. FOREU2 SwafS sub-group meetings

A. List of meeting from M18 to M36

During the period M18-M36, five online meetings were organised within the SwafS projects sub-group (the meetings organised between M1-M18 are presented in D8.5). The table below details the date of the meetings, as well as the main topics addressed and the number of attendees.

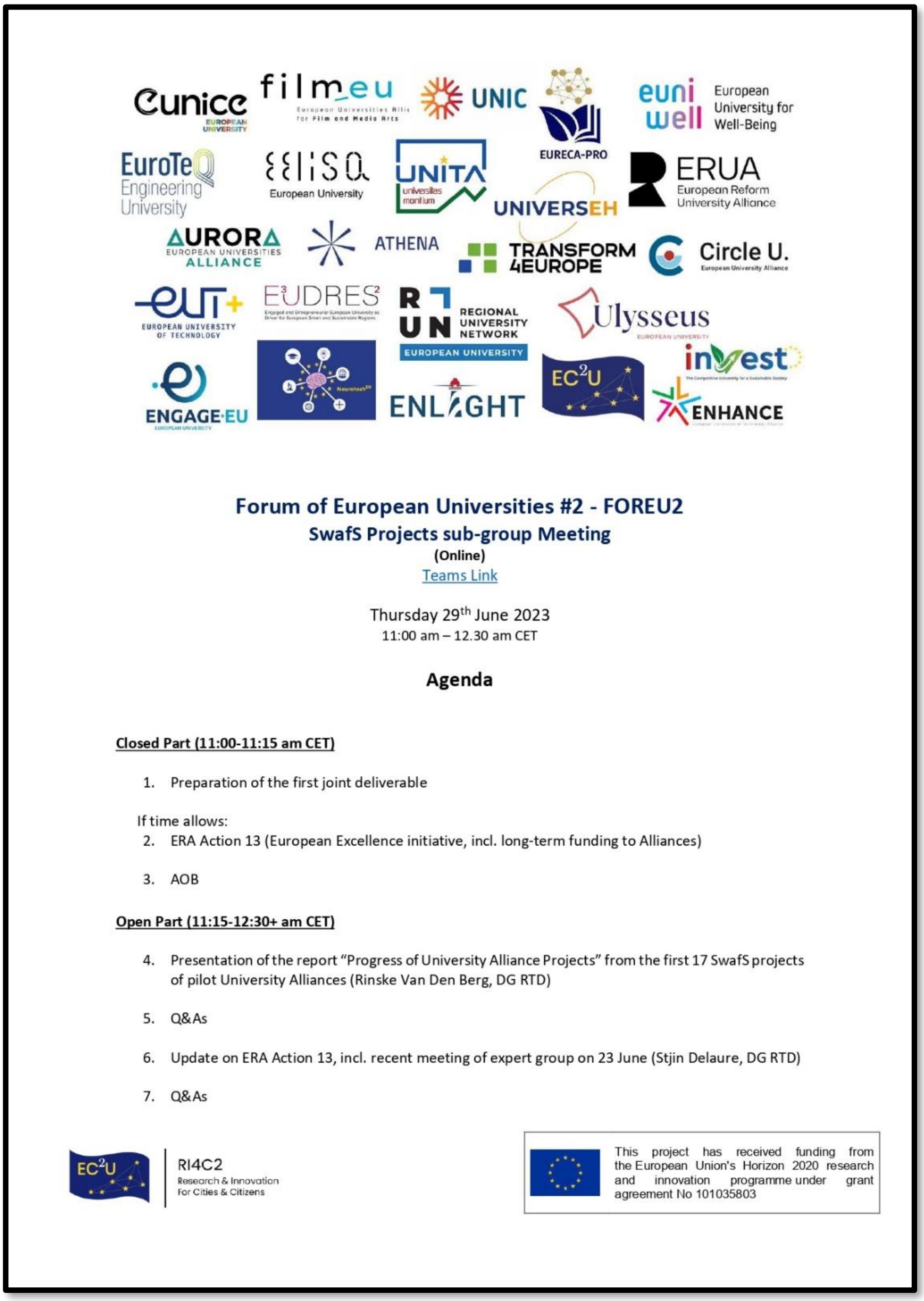
Joint meetings were also organised with the equivalent sub-group in FOREU1/3 but are not included in this deliverable.

Date	**Main topics**	**Number of attendees**
29/06/2023	Closed Part: first joint deliverable Open Part: Presentation of the report on the 17 first SwafS project and of ERA Action 13 by representatives of DG RTD	**63**
11/10/2023	Closed Part: Joint SwafS event in Brussels, Investment Pathway, second joint deliverable Open Part: Intervention from Stijn Delaure, DG RTD	**25**
21/02/2024	Community of Practice proposal, Investment Pathway, second joint deliverable, SwafS projects' final report and policy brief	**37**
10/04/2024	Closed Part: joint pilot II SwafS event in Brussels, second joint deliverable Open Part: Presentation of the report on good practices from Pilot II Alliances by REA representatives and follow-up to Q&As on the final report and policy brief	**29**
23/05/2024	Feedback from conference on Alliances (Brussels) and Investment Pathway, second joint deliverable, final report and policy brief, joint pilot II SwafS event	**30**

Table 2: List of SwafS projects sub-group meetings, incl. the list of main topics discussed

B. FOREU2 – SwafS sub-group meeting on 29 June 2023

1. Agenda



Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
SwafS Projects sub-group Meeting
(Online)
Teams Link

Thursday 29th June 2023
11:00 am – 12.30 am CET

Agenda

Closed Part (11:00-11:15 am CET)

1. Preparation of the first joint deliverable

If time allows:

2. ERA Action 13 (European Excellence initiative, incl. long-term funding to Alliances)
3. AOB

Open Part (11:15-12:30+ am CET)

4. Presentation of the report "Progress of University Alliance Projects" from the first 17 SwafS projects of pilot University Alliances (Rinske Van Den Berg, DG RTD)
5. Q&As
6. Update on ERA Action 13, incl. recent meeting of expert group on 23 June (Stjin Delaure, DG RTD)
7. Q&As

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2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

CLOSED PART

1. Preparation of the first joint deliverable

Only 3 case studies have been received so far. Reminder for the partners that the deadline is 03/07. The case study should not exceed 3 pages and concern an example at the level of the Alliance or at the level of a university within an Alliance. This deliverable will be a "Report on practices and measures taken/to be taken to ensure the mainstreaming of gender dimension in R&I long-term strategies".

This deliverable will not only be a collection of study cases but it will include an analysis of the study cases with potential recommendations and a way forward to mainstream these activities. The analysis will be prepared by the Drafting Team and then submitted to the SwafS sub-group for feedback and validation.

OPEN PART

1. Presentation of the report "Progress of University Alliance Projects" from the first 17 SwafS projects of pilot University Alliances (Rinske Van Den Berg, REA)

Presentation by Rinske Van Den Berg from REA, with the presence of Jorge Molina, working in C4 and Project Officer and Elizabeth Salace, colleague from REA in C3, where other projects under SwafS are managed, as well as the Excellence Initiative. She is now on a staff exchange in the unit of Stjin Delaure.

The goal of the presentation is to emphasise some outcomes of the Report, especially on good practices. An updated version of the report will be published after the final review period of the pilot 1 SwafS projects. It should be published by the end of the year.

The report was drafted by external experts that were also engaged in the review process; Gareth O'Neill, Sarika Wilson, Elena Acheson and Richard Owen.

The focus of the report is on the progress detected among Alliances. The presentation today is also on the recommendations made in the report. There are references to specific Alliances within the report to highlight good practices.

First transformation module:

- All Alliances have started mapping policies and practices across their Consortium during the first period of reporting.
- In order to work on the R&I dimension, it is needed to define what kind of digital platforms are used to be able to collaborate. This comes on top of what exists on the Erasmus side; therefore, it was needed to identify the right persons within the Alliance to jointly collaborate.

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- This is also the case for the governance and management structure; it is necessary to identify the management involved in WP1 and who will dedicate their time to define the needs for a future common R&I agenda.

Second transformation module:
- Mapping of the infrastructures used in each university to see how to find synergies and used them within the Alliance.
- Most Alliances have developed common principles to access and use research.
- There are agreements to access and use research infrastructures and resources.

Third transformation module:
- Within the Alliances, training courses and workshops are organised to get familiar with different types of research and identify further collaborations.
- Virtual training platforms are set up in order to develop research skills to jointly work together on R&I in the future.
- Issue of the career assessment of research; how to assess research career and to improve it jointly? There are diverse approaches to assessing researchers' careers and various attempts to join forces within the Alliances and with external stakeholders.

Fourth transformation module:
- This is the least developed aspect in the first reporting period. The Commission understands that it was needed to first work on the first three transformation modules to lay the ground for cooperation with the non-academic sector.
- Good practices were already identified on how to involve the non-academic sector through cross-boundary collaboration, involvement in plans on how knowledge transfer can be improved and integrated within Alliances, and in some cases, Knowledge creating teams were set up to further engage with the non-academic sector.

Fifth transformation module:
- Most Alliances had already developed Open Science practices and it was therefore developed further; calendars, platforms and dashboards are shared and there are discussions on how they can be used jointly.

Sixth transformation module:
- With the fourth transformation module, it was the least developed.
- Courses, workshops and webinars have been organised.
- A lot of plans and agendas have already been settled to engage further the local ecosystem.

Seventh transformation module:
- Advisory bodies were set up to actively engage and involve (early-career) researchers.
- Work on common grants and joint communication offices; involving communication teams within the university settings.
- Important aspect that needs to be further developed; the creation of legal structures and entities. More work is needed from a national and European perspective.

The external experts have detected some recommendations based on the findings:

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- All Alliances collaborate within the time frame of the project. The Experts see that Alliances are well on the way to develop transformation within their network, but they still urge them to continue this good collaboration in the future and to agree on joint commitments to be more successful in the future.
- The prioritisation areas vary; 5 transformation modules are well under way, but it will be important to further develop the work with external actors and with the larger ecosystem.
- In the first period, time was needed to identify the right staff to work on this project. This took some time, but now collaborations are well under way. Alliances should capitalise on this work performed and move on to further work on the transformation modules.
- Diverse systems continue to hamper transnational cooperation. Alliances need to continue to find new renewed efforts to solve those transnational cooperation issues.
- In some cases, the engagement of the management, leaders and research managers is still lacking in the process. More research managers and leaders should be involved in the implementation of the project.
- Alliances are not yet engaging sufficiently with key regional stakeholders. Need to step out of the Academic area into regional research and innovation ecosystems.
- If the goal is to set up a long-lasting engagement, the European Commission should continue to support Alliances (including developing their R&I dimensions) with a clear funding roadmap in the future.

2. Q&As

Q-Marco Aperti, UNIC: What was one of the things you were surprised to find?

A-Rinske Van Den Berg, REA: On a personal level, I was not surprised by any of the outcomes because in a very short time frame, the Consortium had to be set up under Erasmus+ and then less than a year later the R&I projects were launched. It was very good to launch those joint activities, but it is not surprising that it takes time to develop the projects in terms of research because it is not as centralised as the Erasmus programme. The efforts taken, especially in terms of mapping, took time because it was needed to identify the right staff to participate in the project. Hopefully, in the next 18 months, the Alliances will be able to use this mapping to reach university managers and foster joint collaborations in research.

Q-Daniela Zuluaga, EUniWell: Regarding the 7 recommendations, the Alliances do need a funding roadmap to support the development of the R&I dimension, but for now there isn't any new dedicated call. Is there any advancement in terms of developing this roadmap?

A-Rinske Van Der Berg, REA: Stjin Delaure will discuss this further in the following session. Funding is needed for research as such, and for the CSAs Alliances are doing. It is also important to be aware that, in the second phase of Erasmus, there is a work package dedicated to R&I, therefore the hope is that the work completed within H2020 will be integrated in this new work package.

Q-Isabel Salgueiro, EELISA: EELISA has been launching several joint calls and the Alliance believes that those kinds of programmes are key to make connections among researchers to push them to work together. However, it is difficult to get researchers on board; they already have their network, they can see the projects as an extra burden, and the calls are not so attractive to them.

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A-Rinske Van Der Berg, REA: Not all the Alliances have a set of calls within the context of this project because they might want to do it in other funded projects afterwards. Secondly, the issue with the engagement of researchers is not new either. At the beginning of the Erasmus+ projects, they were not really concerned by being engaged in the projects. It takes time for researchers as well to get involved because they already have their network of interest within their research field. It is also up to Alliances to make the transformation feasible for the researchers and to convince them of the potential interest for them. Alliances need to show researchers that it saves them time to engage with their Alliances instead of seeing it as taking more time. This is also part of the work on joint research infrastructures; it enables joint collaborations in research among the Consortium. Early-career researchers can be particularly interested, not only in conducting joint research, but also in doing research in different locations.

A-Isabel Salgueiro, EELISA: One challenge that Alliances will face is for researchers to keep a balance between collaborations with other researchers of the Alliance and with their own network.

A-Rinske Van Der Berg, REA: The same issue happens in the Erasmus+ project. All Alliances have institutional commitments with several universities around Europe, larger than the one they are connected to within the Alliances. Therefore, researchers can always go to another partner which is not part of the Alliance. The goal is thus to engage researchers who want to have an international reach from home, and to mobilise them through joint infrastructures so that they are more aware of what kind of other research output exists.

Q-Ludovic Thilly, EC2U: it was mentioned that the Pilot 2 Alliances have already been through their mid-term review meeting and have sent their first policy brief before that. From what you might have already seen in those policy briefs, do you expect to see differences between the Pilot 1 and Pilot 2 Alliances, for instance have we all committed to all transformation modules, do you see some trends? Secondly, it was surprising to me to read in the recommendations that it was needed to involve more research managers and research leaders. For instance, the teams involved in EC2U/RI4C2 SwafS project are mostly research managers and Vice-Rectors for research, so isn't this the case for all then?

A-Rinske Van Der Berg, REA: To answer the first question, I am only responsible for a third of Alliances and the trends and tendencies identified in this first report are quite similar with Pilot 2 Alliances. However, we do see that some Pilot 2 Alliances have used very innovative ways to collaborate together and to further develop tools. Those good practices are going to be analysed by experts (in Quarter 4, after the summer) and will be added to the Pilot 1 report to get a full picture of all 39 Alliances who have been funded under H2020. The goal is to identify the good practices developed and used among all Alliances. The experts involved will have some good practices to add to the new report. For now, it is too early to say if there are some very new or surprising aspects.
To answer the second question, it has been seen that in a lot of cases the Work Package leader or Coordinator reported that it took a long while to get the integration and the involvement of the right people within the network. The engagement with the leadership is not lacking, the Vice-Rectors for research are involved and informed of what is happening in the Alliances, but senior managers are not always involved (this is for example sometimes the case for researchers' career, where the highest HR manager is not informed of or integrated in the project).

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3. Update on ERA Action 13, incl. recent meeting of expert group on 23 June (Stjin Delaure, DG RTD)

Presentation of two actions of the ERA Policy Agenda: one directly linked to European universities, and another one on research management, which is indirectly very relevant for the work conducted by Alliances.

Action 13

The Council established a policy agenda for ERA which is now being implemented. There are 20 actions in this policy agenda, and Action 13 is specifically targeted to universities.

Action 13 has the goal of empowering higher education institutions to develop in line with the ERA and in synergy with the European Education Area, that is what the Council wanted the Commission to implement.
The objectives proposed to the Member States are two-folds:

- Achieve excellence and inclusion in science and value creation through integrated and institutional cooperation of higher education institutions.
- Coordinate Member States' efforts to improve global visibility, excellence and competitiveness of Europe's higher education institutions.

The policy approach called for by the Council is an expert group, a sub-group of the ERA Forum (body of Member States, government officials and stakeholders that oversee the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda). This sub-group is co-chaired by Member States and Universities. The Coimbra Group represents the university sector. The sub-group relies on studies released by the Commission, including the report on Pilot I Alliances SwafS projects, on an overall assessment of the impact of Alliances, as well as mapping and modelling of the Excellence Initiatives at the national level.

The tool developed by the sub-group is a European Excellence Initiative, which is a toolbox with policy measures and programme actions in support of the university sector.

The focus is on strategic institutional cooperation, including but not limited to the European University Alliances. The R&I dimension is dealt with in synergy with education.

The investment pathway that is being established by the Commission focuses exclusively on the Alliances.

For the moment, on the R&I side, there is support for about 50 Alliances, including 40 European University Alliances. In two weeks, the results of the Excellence Initiative call will be released, and there will be funding for 12 Alliances.

Alliances, through their SwafS projects, are strengthening capacities in all transformation areas. All Alliances address the human capital area (which is of the highest importance and is a political priority at the moment), and reinforcing knowledge valorisation capacity remains a priority as well.

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All HEI involved in the Pilot projects have made progress, especially widening countries and smaller institutions. The capacity-building exercise thus accelerates change in the direction of empowering universities to develop in line with ERA.

Action 13 is developing new measures, both at the policy level (to help Member States support their national sector and to help institutions reach the ERA goals), and it provides specific recommendations for coordination between Member States and the EU level to promote excellence in R&I and has concrete synergies recommended with education.

The sub-group is still finalising its recommendations, but there are some interesting measures to be mentioned:

- Related to the framework programme support; continue the capacity-building but with a more balanced approach to benefit every country and not only widening countries.
- Having a sustainable and holistic support mechanism for Alliances (in the long-term).

Because of the huge diversity of institutions and the scope of individual Alliances, the future instrument should be very flexible. Alliances should do what is fitting their goals. The added value for research is not entirely clear yet. There is clear value in the collaboration model of Alliances, in the sense that it accelerates institutional change in ERA priority. However, for actual research activities, the added value is not yet clear because it is too soon. This makes the discussions on investing in Alliances for actual research activities not easy. It is clear that there is a need to have further capacity-building funding in ERA priorities, as far as possible aligned with the funding given on the education side. It is important therefore that Alliances show the added value of research. Previous discussions had an interesting vision of what Alliances are creating; Alliances are a flexible tool to create solutions rapidly and in merging needs and scientific fields. This vision is interesting but it is necessary to show added value in research, for the long-term. On the short-term, the capacity-building exercise needs to continue.

Action 17 – Research Management Initiative

It aims to strengthen the capacity of research performing, organisations and research funding organisations from the public sector to help raise the capacity of the R&I system as a whole. Research project managers, policy officers, technology transfer officers, research infrastructure operators, knowledge brokers and business developers, among others, are concerned. They are all part of the research management; it's about the support given to researchers and research.

The Council wants ERA to create more capacity towards the territory.

4 objectives are being pursued:

- Improving recognition of the profession.
- Upskilling; make sure that there are enough tools available for research managers who need to acquire new skills. There are already many existing tools but they have to be made accessible.
- Networking; support best-practice exchange, especially for early-career researchers, as there are many new skills needed for researchers.
- Capacity building; focus on developing measures to support R&I intense regions and organisations.

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Various tools used; sponsors (two active countries; Germany and Hungary, as well as the Aurora university network and Alliance, are coordinating the activities with the Commission), two projects running (RM ROADMAP and CARDEA; they have appointed “ambassadors” in 40 European countries that are either part of an existing national community of researchers or are tasked to set up such a community and detect the needs and challenges national research managers; the aim is to create networks), workshops with ERA Forum delegates, and experts.
National, local and expertise from European Universities are concerned as well. Many of the colleagues from European Universities in FOREU are research managers or supported by research managers. Alliances are implementing Open Science, strengthening human capital strategies, implementing knowledge valorisation capacity; all this is being done by research managers, creating an important link between Action 17 and Alliances.

One of the instruments are workshops with experts and Member States, two already took place and there is one to come in November 2023 on capacity building. Testimonies from Alliances are needed for this workshop regarding research management. Some Alliances are considering creating or have already developed joint research management structures.

The core group and experts, with Member States and stakeholders, are preparing recommendations focused on research management (policy tools, funding instruments targeting the EU, Member States and stakeholders’ levels). The Commission is ready to support this development via the WIDERA and via other instruments.

4. Q&As

Rinske Van Der Berg, REA: Regarding HR managers, especially for researchers in Action 13 and research managers in Action 17, in order to pre-work on those actions and activities, it is a prerequisite that the HR managers are involved to work together with Alliance and decide together on career assessment, career awarding and on recruitment. This is all linked together, and it is important that HR managers are further involved. This can also be a way to engage more researchers.

Q-Ludovic Thilly, EC2U: For instance, in the EC2U SwafS project, work was developed on the HRS4R label. Four universities already had the label and the three others will apply to it thanks to the work conducted in this work package. Is it also a way to engage in the HR aspect?

A-Rinske Van Der Berg, REA: Throughout all the pilot Alliances, some universities already have obtained the label and some don’t have it yet. This is also a way to be reminded that it exists and that the reward system for researchers can be improved. Therefore, yes this is a way to engage. Moreover, Alliances are encouraged to look at the work undergone by CARDEA and RM ROADMAP and to engage with ambassadors and workshops organised by them because they will be helpful for the people working on that dedicated transformation module.

Stjin Delaure, DG-RTD: Action 4 is also important, because they should adopt next week a proposal for a Council Recommendation on the **European framework for research careers**. This is linked to the human capital area Alliances are working on. Action 4 proposes a set of standards for more

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attractive research careers. During the Spanish Presidency, the Council will take it further and adopt it, to push countries to adopt these standards. Complementing these standards, there is a **new Charter for researchers** included in the Council recommendation. It will be published by the Commission next week or the week after, therefore Alliances should look at it to be up to date on the human capital transformation area. Action 4 would like to support organisations to implement the new Charter for researchers. A pilot programme will be created to support organisations that have a rather large consortium to implement these standards. The structures to support researchers' career will be funded through this **call that will be published in March 24**. European Universities are an ideal vehicle to implement this Charter and the new standards. This needs to be done with local non-academic partners to create an international talent ecosystem.

Q-Daniela Zuluaga, EUniWell: Can you elaborate on the concept of cross fertilisation? This seems to be the main argument to not go for more dedicated calls to fund the R&I dimension. How to actually reach this common joint development without leaving partners behind?

Q-Ludovic Thilly, EC2U: There was a meeting last week on the investment pathway by DG EAC, capacity-building in R&I was included. For some intermediate period, there could be some possibility to continue support on the side of the WIDERA with flexibility on the widening criteria. How do you see a potential pipeline between the investment pathway & its R&I component and the Action 13 recommendations?

A-Stjin Delaure, DG-RTD: On the short term, there currently is an Excellence Initiative call on the WIDERA, which is targeted to strategic institution cooperation, including but not limited to European University Alliances. This call was strongly focused on widening countries, which needs to be better balanced according to Action 13 recommendations. The strong acceleration facilitation of the current SwafS can find a place in that call. There will be no call for this in 2024 but there will be in 2025, 2026 and 2027. All the Alliances will not be funded; therefore, Alliances must compete for it. It does not correspond to what was requested, i.e. holistic support. However, holistic support will be considered for post-2027, which is what the investment pathways deals with.
The Commission, with the Member States, need to come up with a flexible approach where the diversity of Alliances can be represented. Depending on the emphasis chosen by Alliances, a mechanism could be created where the expert selects what is appropriate on the basis of what is submitted. This is difficult to complete, but it would already help Alliances. The discussions are ongoing. Alliances need to be aware that education and research have been separated for 50 years, but thanks to Alliances the goal is to work towards synergies.

Ludovic Thilly, EC2U: With FOREU1, Alliances are going to collect concrete examples of how education and research are together making progress. The goal is to showcase some good examples of synergies between education and research. These examples will be sent to DG-RTD after the summer break. There is also a discussion under way to enrich this through the Barcelona Forum in September, in the session on R&I. The goal is to convince Member States that long-term support is really needed, and not only for Alliances. The colleagues will be informed on how to proceed to collect those examples.

Stjin Delaure, DG-RTD: This is very timely because the ERA Forum will discuss the Action 13 in September so it will be very helpful. On top of examples on synergies, it is also interesting to show added value on knowledge creation. Horizon Europe is the main programme to fund research, and

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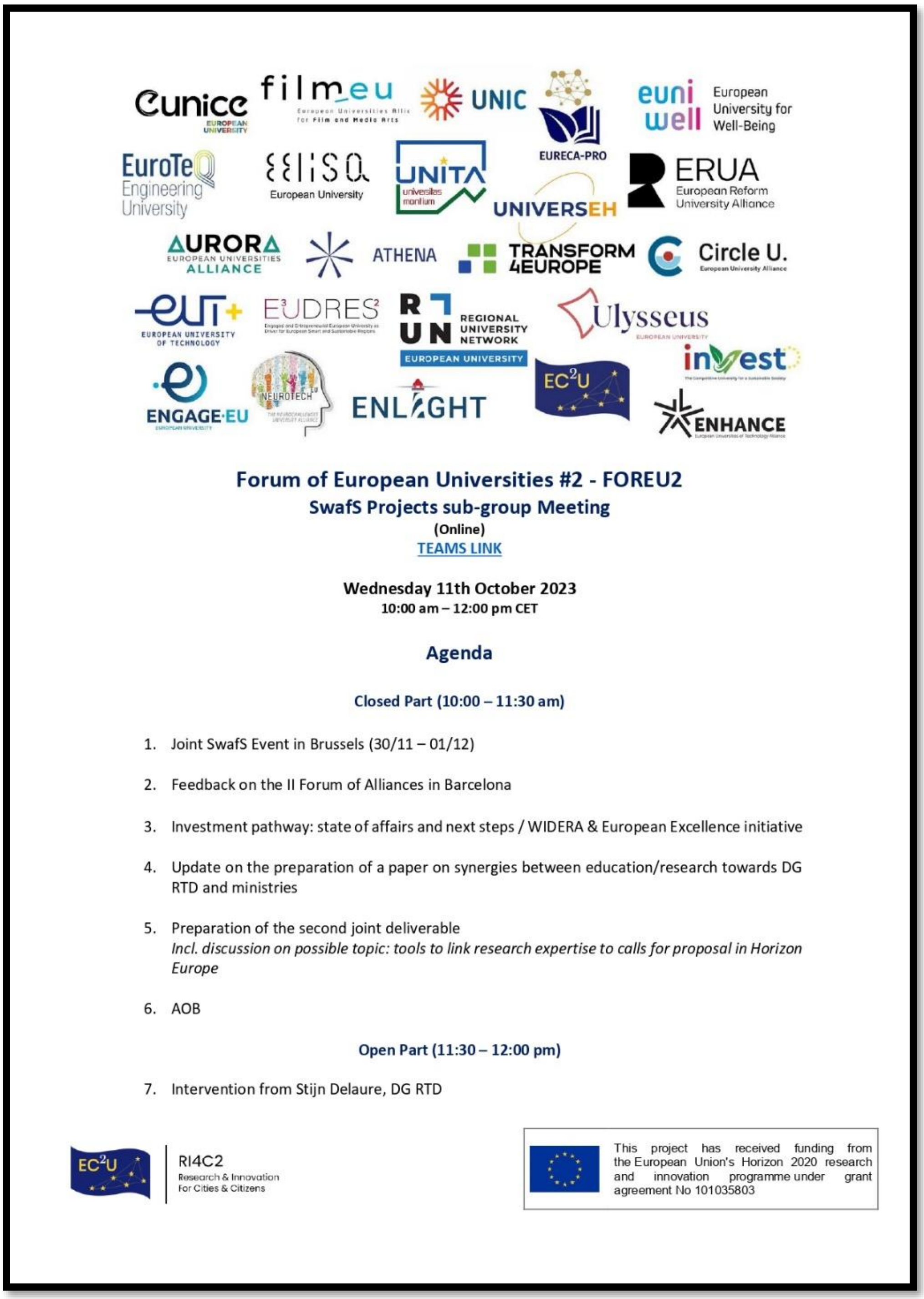
a lot of academic researchers compete successfully for this funding. The programme is here to stay, but Alliances also need to show that their model of integrated cooperation adds value to R&I. It is needed to show that, thanks to Alliances, universities are more successful in applying to Horizon Europe calls. This can show that it helps circulate knowledge.

C. FOREU2 – SwafS sub-group meeting on 11 October 2023

1. Agenda



Forum of European Universities #2 - FOREU2
SwafS Projects sub-group Meeting
(Online)
TEAMS LINK

Wednesday 11th October 2023
10:00 am – 12:00 pm CET

Agenda

Closed Part (10:00 – 11:30 am)

1. Joint SwafS Event in Brussels (30/11 – 01/12)
2. Feedback on the II Forum of Alliances in Barcelona
3. Investment pathway: state of affairs and next steps / WIDERA & European Excellence initiative
4. Update on the preparation of a paper on synergies between education/research towards DG RTD and ministries
5. Preparation of the second joint deliverable
   Incl. discussion on possible topic: tools to link research expertise to calls for proposal in Horizon Europe
6. AOB

Open Part (11:30 – 12:00 pm)

7. Intervention from Stijn Delaure, DG RTD

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2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

Closed Part (10:00 – 11:30 am)

1. Joint SwafS Event in Brussels (30/11 – 01/12)

The event will take place on November 30th and December 1st in Brussels at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (CIVIS Alliance). The idea is to have representatives of the Alliances from both rounds (1 and 2), European Commission officials and stakeholders.

Presentation of the programme (in the link below)
Event programme

- In practical terms, the venue capacity is limited to 290 persons.
- In the organising committee, FOREU1 can have 6 representatives onsite
- FOREU2 can have 4 representatives onsite.
- In the participant Alliances: 21 European Universities Alliances
- The number of representatives onsite are the same as the organising committee.
- The other representatives that said they will be there but that will not be presenting can have 2 representatives.
- There are external stakeholders such as Commission representatives, representatives of the Member States and other external stakeholders.

To cover for the expenses to organise this event, it was agreed with the organising committee that there would be a fee of 1543 euros per Alliance (expenses split between participating Alliances). Registration is open until October 20th.

For the other Alliances that will be present as an audience but won't be participating in the sessions or for the posters, the fee will be 500 euros.

2. Feedback on the II Forum of Alliances in Barcelona

There was a specific session in the Forum dedicated to the R&I dimension of the Alliances, that was moderated by Doris Alexander, Chair of the sub-group on SwafS related activities in FOREU1.

Ludovic Thilly talked about the session that he monitored on the **Monitoring Framework.** The Erasmus side of the Alliances has been asked to fill in a long questionnaire (52 questions), the so-called monitoring framework, that would be used as an evidence base for the potential development of the **Investment Pathway,** which is supposed to be developed with time to support the long-term sustainability of the Alliances, politically and financially. This monitoring framework is due by the end of October (for all Alliances). There is a whole set of questions which are on the R&I dimension, complementing the policy brief that had to be prepared during the SwafS project, at mid-term.

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At the end of the session, all participants concluded that this Monitoring Framework should be a good mix of qualitative and quantitative information, that it should also reflect the diversity of the Alliances, including their R&I dimension; therefore, these additional questions have been included in the monitoring framework. Overall, it was said that Alliances should use the Monitoring framework as an opportunity to really showcase the systemic impact that the Alliances are having in our individual universities.

During the session on the R&I dimension, everybody agreed that it was crucial that the Alliances could not only develop education-related activities, and that they were all striving for developing joint R&I activities. In that regard, the SwafS projects have been really instrumental to develop some joint tools and joint strategies.
Overall, everybody was deploring the fact that there is no direct successor to the SwafS, the only potential successor could be the 2025 call under WIDERA, but there is still a lot of unknown regarding this topic.

The Forum of Alliances was also discussed with all the Erasmus coordinators at the Global Forum meeting, and it was agreed that it is very important to have such Forums possibly every year, but it depends on the will of the EU Presidencies. However, it was emphasised that this type of events should continue because it is where Alliances can showcase and discuss directly with the stakeholders. Some Alliances regretted that not more information was learned during the Forum; they expected to gain more insights from it.

A suggestion was made about organising a European University Alliance summit once a year, a format that is more open to discussions, also avoiding to have too many different meetings organised.

On the Erasmus side, the call for the 2024 new Alliances has been released last week. Topic 1 concerns the new Alliances (it is planned to have 10 more new Alliances next year) while topic 2 is for the so-called **Community of Practice**:

- A task force was settled to prepare a proposal where all the Alliances would join forces to submit a single proposal, in order to get resources to make FOREU running, and not only via volunteering.
- The budget for that topic is 1.5 million.
- There would be a small group for the operational aspect but all the Alliances would be present in the governance somehow reflecting the way Alliances have been functioning in FOREU1 and 2; here both groups would merge.
- There would be a work package that would mimic what has been done for the past year (Global Forum + sub-groups), with a group with the coordinators, a group for the research and innovation, a group for the European degree and so on…
- Human resources would be included in the project, and there would be some money to organise events, including multiplier events.
- The idea (to be confirmed) included in the proposal would be to organise yearly a sort of Forum of Alliances, with a self-built programme.

If selected (there would be only one proposal accepted), this proposal can receive funding and resources to have personnel make FOREU functioning and having topical events, multiplier events and this yearly forum for a period of 4 years.

3. Investment pathway: state of affairs and next steps / WIDERA & European Excellence initiative

A short statement was launched to ask all the stakeholders, Commission and Member States, to commit to this long-term support to the Alliances. The idea is now to continue to push this discussion for the investment pathway.

Next week, on October 16th, there will be a meeting of Action 13 in Paris.
On the 17th and 18th of October, Member States have been invited by DG EAC and RTD to a peer learning activity, where they will share their practices on how they have co-funded the Alliances so far. It will allow Member States that have not yet co-funded to hear what the others have done and how.

The EC2U Alliance will hold its Forum in Poitiers on the week of the 16th of October, that will include a Higher Education Roundtable on the Investment Pathway. It is possible to join online and everyone is kindly invited to follow the discussions because it will deal with how to include R&I in this Investment Pathway.

For now, there is a discussion in Action 13 to possibly have a new WIDERA call, to which Alliances could apply, with nothing confirmed yet.
The previous WIDERA call (2023) has not been successful for the Alliances that submitted a proposal, with only a few of them being selected. For that reason, the discussion now focuses on removing some of the widening criteria (such as the 70% of the budget going the widening participant), which are not so relevant in the case of Alliances.

The Alliances are an opportunity to really learn from all their partners in a capacity building context. This capacity building really started with the SwafS project, which are also very good for the overall excellence, it's not just good for the widening countries. It has been seen that a lot can be learned from the widening partners. This means that this divide doesn't make sense at the end, at least not in the context of Alliances.

4. Update on the preparation of a paper on synergies between education/research towards DG RTD and ministries

Every Alliance was asked to give some examples on how they have concretely and pragmatically already developed some activities that are embedding both education and R&I.

A row table was sent to **DG RTD** via **Stijn Delaure** and the feedback was very positive; **DG RTD** was impressed and told the Alliances that it could really be an opportunity to transform this data into a more policy-oriented paper, showcasing the different types of activities that belong to this synergy between education and research. Olga Wessels spent time to revamp the different examples in categories that are more or less similar, in order to have 5 or 6 types of main activities for synergy, giving references to the full table that would be presented as an annex. It is still a work in progress and the idea would be that in the next days or weeks, all of this will be packaged with all the Alliances' logos to transform this into something to be shared with the Commission in a more

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official way as well as with the ministries, the Member States and so on. It will also be asked to the Alliances to disseminate it as well, to be able to show that this synergy that is being called for is already happening, but yet still very much constrained by the legal aspects.

5. Preparation of the second joint deliverable, incl. discussion on possible topic: tools to link research expertise to calls for proposal in Horizon Europe

The first joint FOREU2 deliverable showcased the diversity of activities that are promoting Gender Equality in R&I. The Alliances were able to disseminate this document through different channels. It was also sent to the Commission which will also disseminate it internally, in particular to the relevant units in charge of these aspects.

There is another joint deliverable due at the end of the projects (M36). This last deliverable is about the strategies that were developed to foster joint R&I activities. Some discussions already took place via email, where possible tools and strategies to foster joint R&I were identified. For instance, platforms to connect researchers were mentioned, but there are also possibly more formal policy-oriented strategies that would be interesting to showcase.

It is proposed to set up a small task group of 5 or 6 people that would be interested in starting reflections on what could be the different topics to address in this joint deliverable on strategies to foster R&I activities, the barriers that can be encountered, the solutions that could be found, with some recommendations.

Several meetings will be organised in the next months to draft a possible structure, then each Alliance will be asked to provide study cases for one or all of the identified topics. The idea is to have collected everything **by next spring**, to take the time to analyse and provide strong recommendations and avoid the last-minute exercise that had to be done last time.

There have already been some good email exchanges that provided topics of interest, everybody is welcome to provide some ideas on what could be included in this joint deliverable.

Colleagues can express interest to participate in the task group **by November, 15th, 2023**, by sending an email to Pauline Bordiec. A mailing list will then be setup, to start organising the first brainstorming sessions, possibly at the SwafS event in Brussels.

M36 does not correspond to the same month for all Alliances, which is also why the plan is to have the deliverable ready for May 2024, to make sure that every SwafS project can meet their deadline.

EELISA expressed their will to participate in this deliverable by providing case studies, even if the joint deliverable is not included in their work plan.

6. AOB

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Open Part (11:30 – 12:00 pm)

7. Intervention from Stijn Delaure, DG RTD

A call was organised a few months ago about the European excellence initiatives under the WIDERA programme. 12 grants were selected out of 59 applications. 10 out of the 12 are actually European University Alliances. All of them provide a plan to continue the work that was started with additionally providing site money to do research.

Around the same period as the call closed, the results of two studies were presented:

- The first one presented best practices from the SwafS projects of Pilot I Alliances. This study has already been published.
- The second one was a parallel and complementary study to look at the overall impact of the European University initiative as a whole. This paper was discussed in the ERA forum; the forum of Member States and stakeholders that decide on the implementation of the ERA policy agenda, including empowering universities. It will be **published in the coming weeks.** It was part of the European Excellence Initiative study.

The results are very positive; all the universities that are included in the analysis have been showing their progress in the ERA priorities areas. The benefits are most outspoken for smaller universities, smaller higher education institutions and for institutions located in widening countries. This is an interesting result for future policies.

The SwafS projects will not be continued as they are. However, there will be opportunities available.

There won't be something coming up this year anymore but in 2024 there will be a call, not specifically addressed to Alliances of universities like the European Universities. The call supports one of the most important policies that was launched this year and that is about to be launched by the Council in December. It will be supporting institutions, organisations, consortia, with implementation of the Council recommendation on research careers. This call will target large consortia of companies, universities and other entities to create what is called **talent ecosystems**. It can be seen as, for instance, a cluster of pharmaceutical companies and a cluster of universities in pharmaceutical sciences, deciding to go and stick together as a talent ecosystem. The companies are involved in the training of the researchers and there is a career service to help talents circulate, professors will reach out to the companies and so on.
It is addressed to organisations and not researchers. It will not pay researchers; it will pay the environment (the doctorate school, the graduate school, the networking, etc…). This is a call that is supporting the implementation of the Council recommendation for research careers that the Spanish presidency is currently negotiating. An adoption is expected in early December. The call will open in March and close in September. It is not directly addressed to European Universities Alliances, but because of their networks and Associated Partners, they can also apply with their Innovation Ecosystem partners.

This year and next year, there is the implementation of the current ERA policy agenda. In the summer, an expert group came up with the recommendation to the Member States and to the Commission on

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activities that needs to be conducted. This includes activities to help universities raise Excellence in Research innovation and help implement universities in ERA.

One of the recommendations was to continue the call for Excellence Initiative but to reduce the requirements on widening countries.

In 2025 or early 2026, there will be a new **call on the Excellence Initiatives** in a revised version.

There will be a meeting with the expert group in Paris. Member States were consulted on their interest to join some activities together. One of these activities is a **mutual learning exercise** of Member States to set up national excellence initiatives. Another one is a **programme-level cooperation**, an instrument that helps Member States and funding agencies to join forces.

In the meantime, the Investment Pathway discussions continue.

Concretely:

- There will be a call on careers **next year.**
- **In 2025 or early 2026,** there will be a **call on Excellence initiatives.**
- By then, there will be a **network** of funding agencies and Member States for development.

Q&As:

Isabel Salgueiro (EELISA Alliance): will the call on research careers be under WIDERA?
Stijn Delaure (DG RTD): It will indeed be under WIDERA, precisely on strengthening the ERA part, it is not under the widening part.

Elizabeth Macintyre (Circle U. Alliance): would it be possible to get some clarifications on the European Excellence Initiatives?
Stijn Delaure (DG RTD): The European Excellence Initiative is a call that has been made earlier this year, similar to the SwafS projects. Progress is expected in ERA priorities (each Alliance can choose to priorities to work on), with consolidation of the cooperation in that sense (shared infrastructure and capacities). In addition, research activities are also being funded. In the first call, up to 20% of the budget could be used for research activities. In the next call, a higher percentage up to 40% is expected.

Daniela Zuluaga (EUniWell Alliance): Regarding the call in 2024 about the research careers, is it the one that can be found in the work programme “strengthening research skills”? Is the budget going to be 0.5 million euros or will it be different?
Stjin Delaure (DG RTD): It is a different one; the ERA programme has been amended so this one is a new call. The amendment process is still ongoing. The final approval will be for December. There will be an info day on this call, Alliances will get some more information in time. This will be a pilot call so with not many projects funded. The universities with the HRS4R label will have an advantage in that call.

Elizabeth Macintyre (Circle U. Alliance): when will we see this new charter for researchers?

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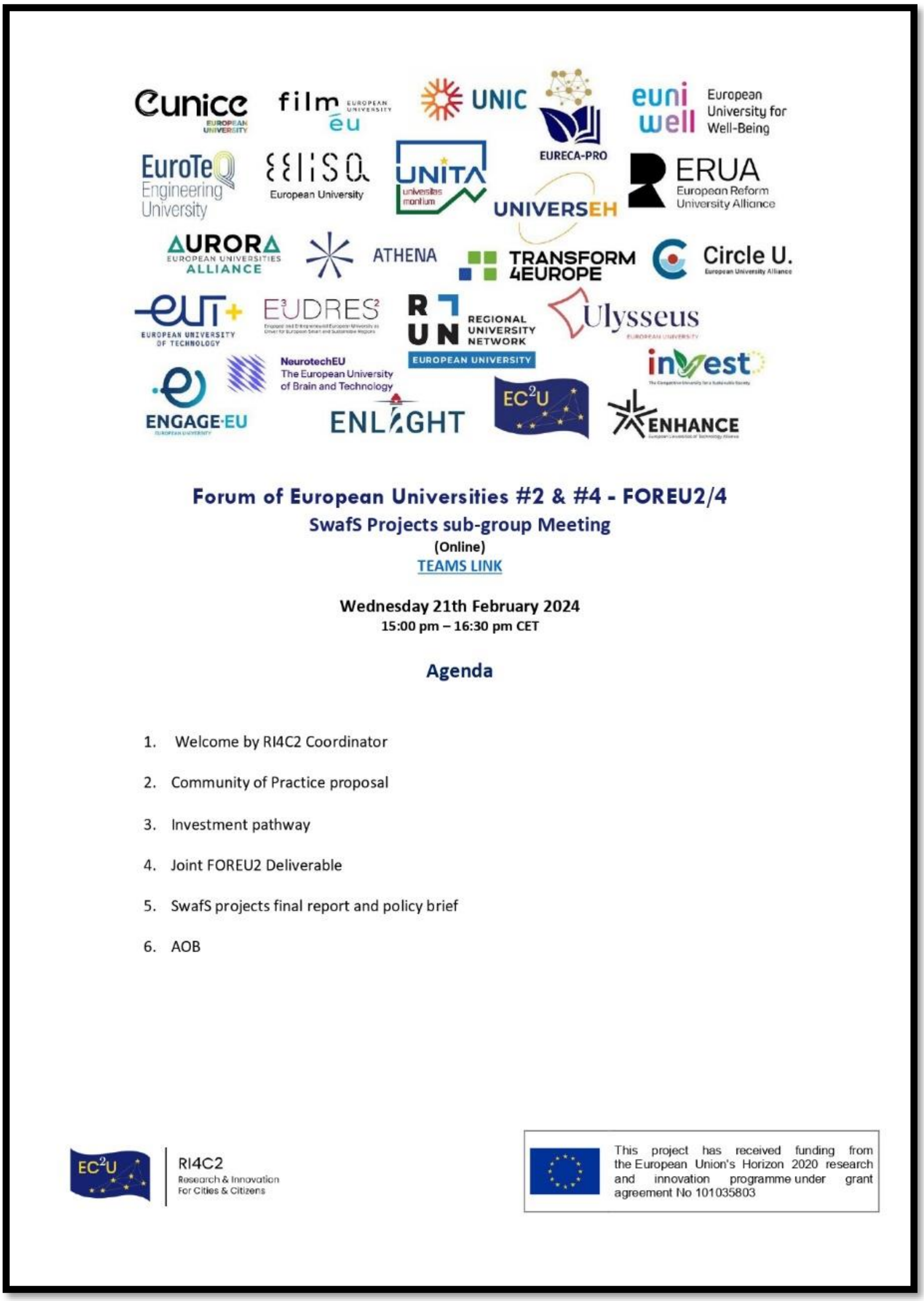
Stijn Delaure (DG RTD): You can already access the new charter for researchers; it was on the proposal of the Commission adopted in July. It will be slightly modified by the Council and published soon after the 8th of December.

D. FOREU2 – SwafS sub-group meeting on 21 February 2024

1. Agenda



Forum of European Universities #2 & #4 - FOREU2/4

SwafS Projects sub-group Meeting

(Online)

TEAMS LINK

Wednesday 21th February 2024

15:00 pm – 16:30 pm CET

Agenda

1. Welcome by RI4C2 Coordinator
2. Community of Practice proposal
3. Investment pathway
4. Joint FOREU2 Deliverable
5. SwafS projects final report and policy brief
6. AOB

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2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Welcome by RI4C2 Coordinator

2. Community of Practice proposal

The 2024 Erasmus call is the last call for new Alliances under topic 1. Topic 2 concerns the Community of Practice call.

This call is the opportunity to formalise FOREU and get financial support to transform the informal FOREU1/3 and FOREU2/4 into a real Community of Practice through that topic.

All fifty Alliances are on board, approximately **20** of them being **Full Partners** (receiving a grant as beneficiaries) and all the other Alliances as Associated Partners through one of their institutions or their legal entity.

There are an additional 5 Associated Partners which are:

- **EUA**
- **ESU** (Student Union Association),
- **ESN** (Erasmus Student Association)
- **ENQA** (Quality assurance)
- **EURASHE**

If selected, the **results will be announced by the end of June, early July** which coincide with the announcement of the last 10 new Alliances that will be incorporated into FOR-EU4All during the Grant Agreement stage.

The project is structured in **4 Work Packages**:

- **WP1**: Management and coordination
- **WP2**: topical sub-groups (between 10 and 20)
- **WP3**: Policy dialogue (with groups that will be the interface between the community of practice and the external policy makers etc. through the policy living labs)
- **WP4**: Communication and dissemination (website, newsletter to disseminate the events, and one final event)

3. Investment pathway

The Meeting in Brussels was divided in 3 parts, and took place with Erasmus Coordinators, DG EAC and EACEA.

The **first part** focused on recent educational developments, notably the higher education package that they want to put forward as a council recommendation under the Belgium Presidency,

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encompassing the European degree, the quality assurance system, and promoting attractive careers in education.

The **second part** concerned the Erasmus programme's transition to a lump sum funding approach from the previous real cost system.

The **last part** was about the monitoring framework and the investment pathway.

Two possible options were presented for the follow up funding period for the Alliances:

- The **Status quo**: it would involve continuing with the project-based approach, where there is an Erasmus call on one side, and other calls under FP10, Digital Europe or others.
- The **One stop shop**: there would be a single call located under Erasmus, but the funding would come from different sources, the majority would come from Erasmus, but significant portion could come from FP10, for instance dedicated to capacity-building in Research and Innovation.

Note: the term capacity-building is now officially replaced by the term "**Implementing the framework conditions for building excellence in R&I**".

There would be potential funding available for a duration of 7 years, with each selected Alliance anticipating €25 million from Erasmus+ and €5 million from FP10. Additionally, there would be the possibility of receiving funding from Digital Europe, regional funds, etc., as part of the concept of consolidating funding into a single system.

The Erasmus coordinators have unanimously decided to draft a narrative for collective lobbying efforts at both national and European levels. The aim is to advocate for the establishment of a unified "one-stop shop" model for the future, moving away from the current status quo.

4. Joint FOREU2 Deliverable

A template to collect the case studies has been sent out by email to all SwafS projects, covering two main topics: one focusing on political aspects in formulating shared R&I strategies and another addressing operational aspects. An "others" section has also been included so that additional topics can be included for partners to contribute relevant examples. Partners may submit case studies for one or multiple topics according to their preference, aiming to showcase areas of implemented change by the conclusion of the SwafS project.

The deadline for submitting case studies is March 29th, with the aim of having the deliverable prepared by May.

Each Alliance's contribution should not exceed 5 pages (all topics included).

All Alliances are encouraged to contribute, even if the joint report is not included in their work plan, in order to incorporate a wide range of perspectives.

5. SwafS projects final report and policy brief

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A meeting will be held before the end of March with REA representatives to determine whether the existing templates for the policy brief and the final report can be used as such or if the Alliances should be aware of additional guidelines or constraints.

6. AOB

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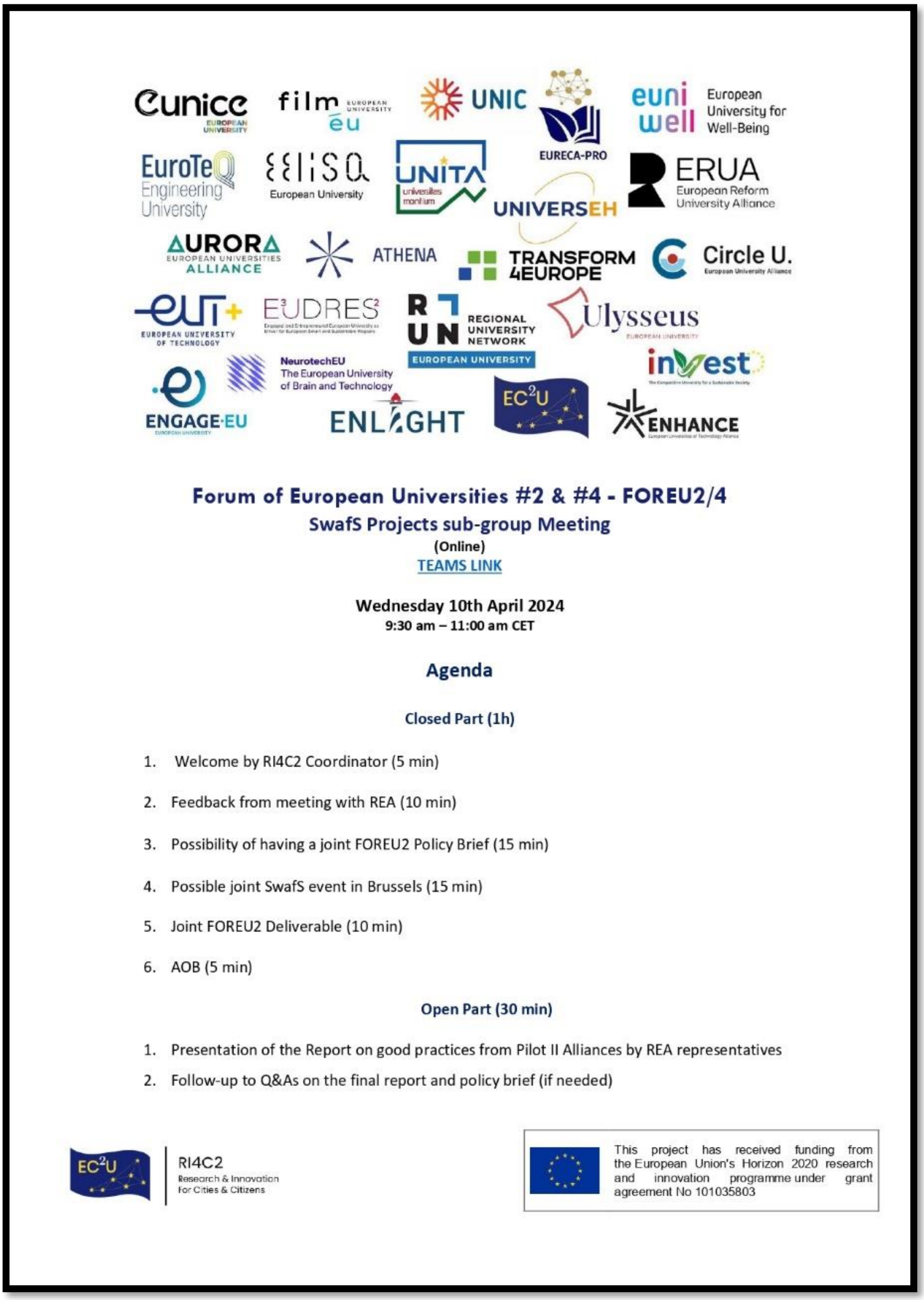
E. FOREU2 – SwafS sub-group meeting on 10 April 2024

1. Agenda



Forum of European Universities #2 & #4 - FOREU2/4
SwafS Projects sub-group Meeting
(Online)
TEAMS LINK

Wednesday 10th April 2024
9:30 am – 11:00 am CET

Agenda

Closed Part (1h)

1. Welcome by RI4C2 Coordinator (5 min)
2. Feedback from meeting with REA (10 min)
3. Possibility of having a joint FOREU2 Policy Brief (15 min)
4. Possible joint SwafS event in Brussels (15 min)
5. Joint FOREU2 Deliverable (10 min)
6. AOB (5 min)

Open Part (30 min)

1. Presentation of the Report on good practices from Pilot II Alliances by REA representatives
2. Follow-up to Q&As on the final report and policy brief (if needed)

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2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

Closed Part

1/ Welcome by RI4C2 Coordinator

2/ Feedback from meeting with REA

REA proposes Pilot II SwafS projects to organise a joint event similar to last year's pilot 1 joint SwafS event in Brussels. Rinske Van Den Berg mentioned that REA has internally explored the feasibility of extending the SwafS projects to participate in the meeting. They confirmed that extending the project for the meeting would be possible, requiring a simple amendment, and automatic approval if it's the sole reason for the extension.
If the extension is related to delays or adjustments in the work plan timeline, it requires a thorough analysis by REA to be considered. This analysis would necessitate a clear explanation of the reasons behind the extension to be accepted. It's crucial to detach these two extension scenarios. If your project is extended solely for the purpose of the joint event, it can be pre-validated by REA.

Ludovic Thilly also emphasised that Alliances can still hold their own final event if it has been already planned, alongside participating in the joint event.

3/ Possible joint SwafS event in Brussels

Survey results on the potential joint SwafS event: **19 responses**

- Are you interested in participating in a joint SwafS event? **Yes, 94.7%**
- Are you interested in extending your SwafS project in order to participate in this joint event? **Yes, 42.1%**
- Do you have sufficient budget to participate in this joint event (because you either plan to use the SwafS budget that needs to be available at that period, or have other resources to participate)? **Yes, 52.6%**
- Would you prefer this event to be on site or online**? 42.1 % on site**, most likely going to be **hybrid**.

All agreed that a possible event could be organised in Brussels, associated to one of the Pilot II Alliance's SwafS project final conference. This needs to be further discussed and agreed with the concerned Alliance. Ludovic Thilly, as sub-group Chair, will consult with them and a new SwafS sub-group meeting will then be organised soon to plan in more details the event, and set-up an organising team.

4/ Possibility of having a joint FOREU2 Policy Brief

During the meeting with REA on 25/03, they proposed that the SwafS projects write a joint second Policy Brief instead of individuals ones.

However, the whole group supports retaining individual Policy Briefs rather than a joint FOREU2 Policy Brief. REA representatives will receive this information during the second part of the meeting.

5/ Joint FOREU2 Deliverable

All case studies are being compiled, and the joint report is being prepared. A first round of review by the drafting team is scheduled in the next two weeks, followed by distribution to all sub-SwafS groups for general review in early May. The objective is to finalise the report by the end of May, so that the SwafS projects that conclude at the end of May have the report ready to be submitted.

6/ AOB

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Open Part

Ludovic Thilly started this second part by updating Rinske Van Den Berg and Jorge Molina from REA on what was discussed and validated in the first part of the meeting.

It has been validated that there will be an additional Joint SwafS event. The details on the organisation of the event will be confirmed later. Therefore, in the coming weeks, there will be requests sent for project extensions related to this topic. To clarify, not all projects will ask for extension but that does not mean that they will not participate. The final events already planned and written in the individual Grant Agreements will still be kept. Partners are expecting to welcome colleagues from REA and DG-RTD during the individual final events even if there is the joint event in Brussels.

Another point to note is that partners did not validate the idea of a joint policy brief as an additional or replacement option for our individual policy brief, especially in light of the additional SwafS event.

Jorge Molina clarified that auditor reports need to be provided when a certificate on the financial statement (CFS) is requested, however, **CFS are not used in lump sum grants**. Therefore, **it is not something that will be requested when writing the final report**. There is an interesting guidance document on the lump sum grants entitled “how to manage your lump sum grant” that will be forwarded to Alliances via email, where they can find useful information.

Jorge Molina also confirmed that **costs relating to personnel salaries during the 2 months of writing the final report are eligible.** According to an internal guidance note at the European

Commission, there are costs associated with drafting and submitting the periodic report for the last reporting period and the final report during the final review, post-project completion.

1. Presentation of the Report on good practices from Pilot II Alliances by REA representatives

The first European Universities report was drafted in May last year, where external experts analysed the initial periodic report of activities within the seven transformation modules of the first 17 Pilot projects reviewed.

The report aimed to not only give the first 17 Pilot projects insight into their performance but also to inspire other partners by showcasing their achievements during their first 18 months. It encouraged partners to learn from the practices of these initial Alliances and potentially adopt or reuse similar approaches.

REA then initiated the analysis of the good practices implemented during the pilot II SwafS projects' initial phase, acknowledging that partners are still working on the project and that they still had 18 months to further perform actions within the 7 transformation modules. The objective was to identify effective practices and potential areas for improvement, utilising the shared open deliverables, activities, and good practices within the community.

Two experts prepared the second report, published a month ago, which narrowed its focus to analysing good practices within the 7 transformation modules of the 22 projects. They proposed consolidating the overwhelming volume of good practices into a comprehensive diagram, emphasising those already tested within the first 18 months of the project. Three good practices were identified across various modules for all projects. The document is now published online.

Partners within Alliances might have had additional good practices they wished to include in the report. What is important to remember is that Alliances can use their policy brief or their remaining deliverables (as the experts do not only read the policy briefs), to highlight other good practices not mentioned in the Report on good practices, that are believed to be transferable in different contexts.

As feedback on this document, Alliances appreciated that they were contacted before publishing the document online, especially to fine-tune the content of it, they appreciated the fact that the document was easy to read and they found interesting that all topics were covered.

2. Follow-up to Q&As on the final report and policy brief (if needed)

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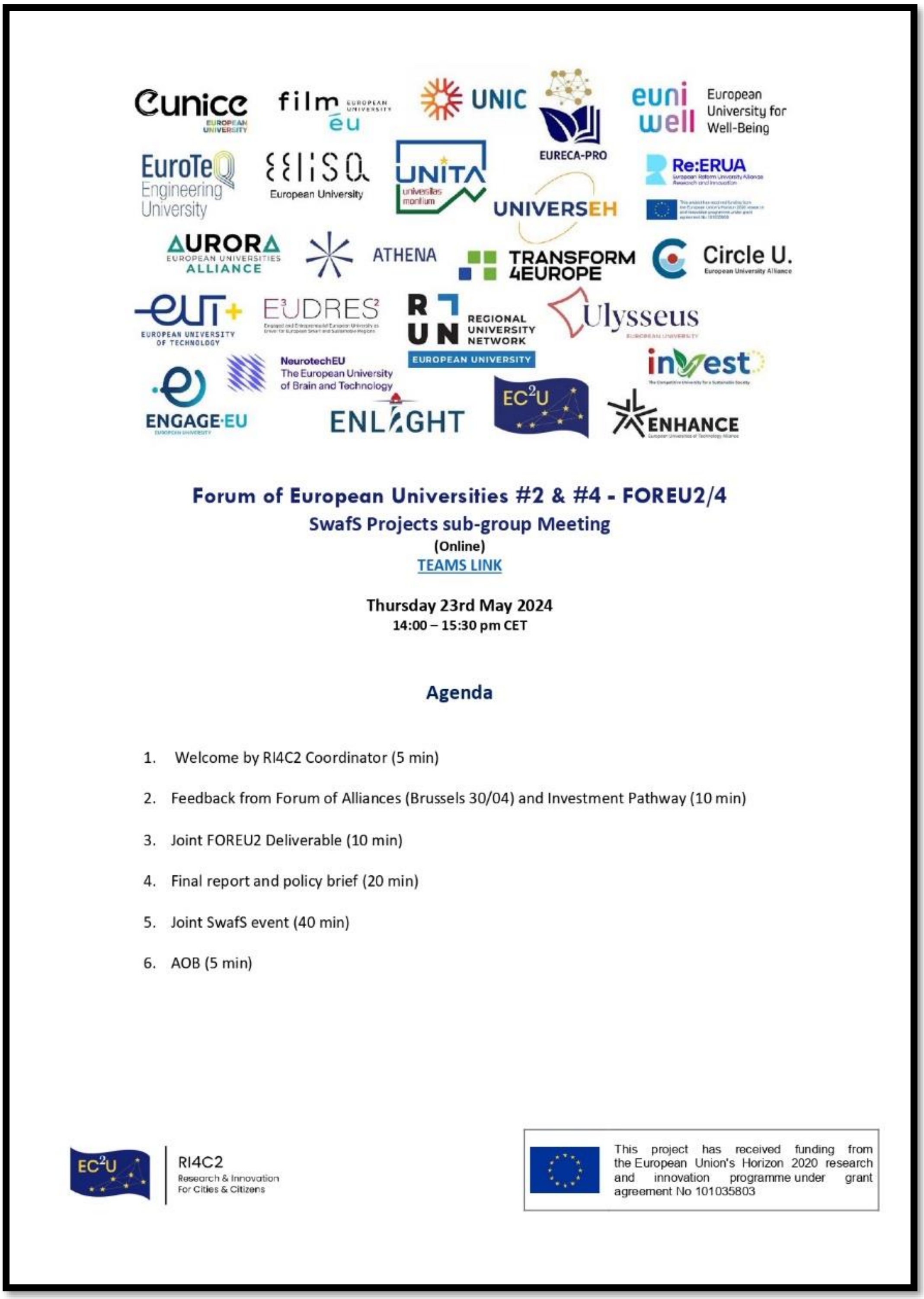
F. FOREU2 – SwafS sub-group meeting on 23 May 2024

1. Agenda



Forum of European Universities #2 & #4 - FOREU2/4
SwafS Projects sub-group Meeting
(Online)
TEAMS LINK

Thursday 23rd May 2024
14:00 – 15:30 pm CET

Agenda

1. Welcome by RI4C2 Coordinator (5 min)
2. Feedback from Forum of Alliances (Brussels 30/04) and Investment Pathway (10 min)
3. Joint FOREU2 Deliverable (10 min)
4. Final report and policy brief (20 min)
5. Joint SwafS event (40 min)
6. AOB (5 min)

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2. Minutes

NOTES, DECISIONS, ISSUES:

1. Welcome by RI4C2 Coordinator

A European Open Science Forum will be held in Poland on June 14 at 1 PM, featuring a round table on European universities as a new way of connecting researchers. Anyone interested in joining the round table or participating should contact Agnieszka Kosciuszkho. Further information will be sent via email. Participation is free of charge, with only travel and hotel expenses to be covered.

https://www.esof.eu/

2. Joint SwafS event

Circle U. plans to organise a final dissemination event for their SwafS project **on the 3rd of October** in the afternoon. The Alliance proposes to organise a **Joint SwafS event in Brussels, 4th of October in the morning,** following their own event.

All partners supported the offer from Circle U.

Some costs, particularly catering, can be covered by Circle U. with the possibility of sharing expenses if other Alliances are willing to participate. A survey will be conducted to provide information on the financial aspect and to determine which Alliances are capable of co-funding portions of the coffee break and lunch buffet.

A task group of 5-6 Alliance representatives will be formed to prepare a concept note outlining the objective and programme of the event. Interested individuals should contact Pauline Bordiec. The concept note will then be submitted to Pilot 1 and the REA, followed by the creation of an online form for SwafS projects to nominate speakers for the programme selection.

3. Feedback from Forum of Alliances (Brussels 30/04) and Investment Pathway

A one-day Alliances forum organised by Belgian universities took place **on April 30th** under the Belgian Presidency. The event featured various sessions focused on education, research, and related topics.

On **April 29th**, the Blueprint for the European Degree event took place in Brussels, organised by DGEAC.

Only the Alliances with Belgian partners presented, covering very interesting subjects. Students actively participated with engaging interventions. The day was dense with numerous presentations, leaving a positive impression. The full programme provided a fair overview, demonstrating that all university missions are now also being developed at the level of our Alliances.

In the next funding period, funding cycles will be extended to approximately 7 years, aligning more closely with the EU's multiannual financial framework. The funding level for the Alliances would be

increased, facilitated by a one-stop-shop predominantly funded by Erasmus, with contributions from other programmes.
DGEAC is preparing a narrative to explain and justify the necessity of a one-stop shop. This narrative will be shared with the Alliances to create a unified voice aimed at convincing the entire Commission and Member States to agree to long-term funding for the Alliances.

The results of the Community of Practice call are expected to be published end of June-early July. The project will be funded by Erasmus, and preparations for the Grant Agreement will need to be made during the summer, aiming for completion by fall. The launch announcement for FOREU4All is planned during the Satellite event in Toulouse in September.

About this Satellite event, it will be a side event to the EAIE event on the morning of September 17th, co-organised by the coordinators of FOREU1 and FOREU2 along with the Toulouse universities. The event will feature 20-30 minutes of networking, with the afternoon left free. The event will focus on the internationalisation of the Alliances through three sessions: 1) the importance of internationalisation (strategies and policy), 2) strategies in relation to Ukraine, and 3) strategies in relation to Africa.

4. Joint FOREU2 Deliverable

Feedback has been received from all parties, and the final version of the Joint report is currently being finalised. It will be **sent to the SwafS sub-group by the end of May**. The version to be submitted next week will be formatted according to EC2U/RI4C2 deliverables, which can be adjusted to suit specific deliverable designs of each Alliance. The initial timeline was respected.

5. Final report and policy brief

All documents, templates, and related materials will only be available once we have reached the first day of the reporting period. The policy brief will serve as an update to the first policy brief submitted. Personnel costs are eligible for two-months period of writing the final report (but no other costs are eligible during this period).
The CFS is not needed as SwafS are in lump sum.
The policy brief could also serve to reinforce the message regarding the importance of continuing to fund the Research and Innovation dimension of alliances.

6. AOB

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