

ECIU Factsheet about the report on the outcomes and transformational potential of the European Universities Initiative

On 24 January 2025, the [report on the outcomes and transformational potential of the European Universities initiative](#) has been published by the European Commission. It is a token of proof of the work of alliances in the past years, presenting the strengths, achievements and progress of the European Universities initiative so far, building on the results of the pilot phase. It also identifies remaining aspects to be addressed and provides policy orientations to sustain success of the initiative in the long-term.

Why is the report important?

This is a key publication to build support for future investments into the European Universities initiative, therefore wide [dissemination](#) towards ministries, policymakers and stakeholders is very important.

The report also provides nice insights into the work of other alliances, sharing best practices and data, shedding some light on the developments in different alliances, serving as a benchmark and informing us [where ECIU University stands compared to other alliances](#).

Main references to ECIU University achievements

Newsflash: We're doing a great job! Being mentioned 97 times throughout the report, shows the impressive share and number of best practices and achievements of ECIU University compared to other alliances.

The four main success stories that are highlighted with a dedicated box explaining the practice, are about ECIU's digital platform and [XR Campus](#) (an example of a shared resource and facility, box 12, p. 133), our [micro-credentials journey](#) (an example of joint education provision and mobility, box 45, p. 187), our [Gender Equality and Diversity Strategy](#) (an example of impact on society and economy, box 57, p. 206), and our [Challenges and Local Partnership Areas](#) (another example of impact on society and economy, box 63, p. 217). These are all examples we can be very proud of.

Another proof of our success is that [ECIU University is responsible for 82% of all short courses leading to micro-credentials](#) that are developed by all the 39 Alliances that took part in the monitoring study or this report. On page 19, the report confirms that in October 2023, Alliances launched more than 430 short courses leading to micro-credentials (namely 431, see p. 166). In the data collection for this study, ECIU University confirmed the launch of 355 short courses leading to micro-credentials, being responsible for an impressive share of 82% of the total number of short courses that were provided by the total of 39 alliances that were studied for this report.

What makes ECIU also unique is that we're the biggest alliance (only two alliances have 12 full partners, like ECIU, see figure 10, page 85). And ECIU is next to a university alliance also a university network, focusing on collective interest representation of ECIU partners in Brussels, such as Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ beyond the European Universities Initiative (see section 5.3, page 90 and further). Many alliance partners are a member of such university networks (e.g. some ECIU partners are also a member of CESAER and EUA), but ECIU is the only alliances that is also a university network, with the same partnership.

Some more interesting data

The report shows a wealth of qualitative and quantitative data, best practices and serves as a benchmark how ECIU University performs compared to other alliances. Some examples:

- In the field of new joint educational activities offered by the alliances Table 5 (page 166) is interesting, it shows that ECIU University developed 82% (namely 355) of all (431) short courses leading to micro-credentials, and 27% (namely 141) of all (528) challenges that were offered by the 39 alliances that were studied for this report (data is from October 2023).
- Different types of support to alliance (partners) in member states are compared in Table 6 (page 274 and further). It compares co-funding arrangements, other measures of support, and policy/legislative changes that countries implemented to support transnational collaboration of universities because of the European Universities Initiative.
- Number of associated partners per alliance (figure 13, page 88) shows that ECIU, being an entrepreneurial university, working together with societal actors, has relatively little associated partners (since Aalborg University (Denmark) left, the ECIUn+ project has no associated partners).

Main conclusions and recommendations from the study

The report shows the success of the European University Initiative: 65 European University Alliances bringing together >570 higher education institutions from 35 countries, including all 27 EU Member States and teaming up with 2.200 associated partners. It also highlights the relevant references to the initiative that were made in recent landmark reports, about the importance of the initiative for European competitiveness like [Draghi](#), [Letta](#) and [Heitor](#).

The report concludes that further policy and funding support is needed for alliances to achieve their ambitious goals. Alliances, Member States and the European Commission are recommended to join forces, e.g. towards an investment pathway aiming to offer a

long-term comprehensive funding approach for the European Universities alliances for the financial programming period 2028-2034, complementing the core educational dimension funded under Erasmus+ with support across all alliances' other missions, seeking synergies with different EU instruments, as well as with national and regional funding.

In terms of policy, the Commission is supporting Member States to pursue work at national level continue to strive for full implementation of the Council Recommendations supporting transnational cooperation in higher education, notably the [Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation](#), the [Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials](#), the [Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable academic careers](#). The Commission is working together with Member States and stakeholders on the Blueprint for a European Degree, towards a European quality assurance and recognition system and towards a possible European legal status for alliances of higher education institutions. It is promoting the further development of the European Student Card initiative, and the full implementation of the Bologna Process tools.

About the study and methodology

The study aims to assess the progress, achievements and transformational potential of the European Universities initiative, since its inception in 2019. The study is based upon an in-depth assessment of alliances selected under the Erasmus+ calls 2019 (ECIU University + 15 other alliances) and 2020 (24 alliances). The report valorises the diversity of approaches, identifying key outcomes, factors of success, challenges and future orientations to increase outreach and efficiency. The co-developed monitoring framework that was used – developed together with the alliances, the higher education sector and Member States – evaluates the progress against the policy objectives in qualitative and quantitative terms.

The study builds on data collection through desk research of policy documents, reports, studies, papers, publications, websites and reports. Also, 191 interviews were conducted with EU and National level stakeholders, alliance coordinators, students, staff and associated partners. Eight Focus groups of students and staff of European Universities alliances took place, and data was collected in a pilot exercise of the monitoring framework for the European Universities initiative (data was collected from 39 alliances, including ECIU University). Data was collected between April 2022 and December 2023, which also explains why recent achievements are not included.

The study focuses on five areas of influence of the European Universities alliances: Alliance Governance and Cooperation, Joint Education Provision and Mobility, Society

and Economy, Research and Innovation and Impact on the wider Higher Education System.

Further information Further information can be found in [a news item](#) and on the [Commission's European Universities webpage](#). You can also find updated [alliance factsheets](#).

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