

Press release: 13 December 2013

### Universities in the European Research Area (ERA):

#### EUA publishes MoU progress report and reaffirms commitment to ERA goals

In July 2012, the European University Association (EUA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the European Commission DG Research and Innovation, and a Joint Statement with the Commission and four other European stakeholder organisations (EARTO, LERU, NordForsk and Science Europe), committing the signatories to working in partnership towards achieving the European Research Area (ERA) goals.

EUA was today (13 December) invited by the European Commission at a meeting of the stakeholder organisations (SHOs) to present the main results of its activities carried out in the framework of the MoU and which have been submitted to the EC in an EUA progress report. Actions taken by EUA in the context of the MoU concern topics where universities' own initiatives are already helping to overcome the identified barriers and bottlenecks to achieving the ERA, and where EUA has been working with its membership to promote wider "take-up" and development of good practices already in place. These actions cover issues such as doctoral education, research careers and mobility, university-industry collaboration, cross-border cooperation and the development of open access to publications and data.

In terms of cross-border collaboration, for example, EUA has highlighted the innovative partnership that it has established with the EC's Joint Research Centre (Seville) [Smart Specialisation Platform](#) to create enhanced collaboration between universities and regions in research and innovation activities, including cross-border "twinning" and "teaming" initiatives, based on good practices.

On the topics of doctoral education/training, research careers and mobility and gender strategies, EUA conducted a major survey of its university membership on this set of ERA policy issues. A total of 224 universities completed the survey representing over 30% of EUA full individual members. These are a selection of the findings from the survey.

- 84% of universities were aware of [the EC Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#). 41% had implemented most or all aspects of the Charter and Code, while 35% were in the process of implementing it.
- On the advertisement of open vacancies for researchers through the [EURAXESS](#) Jobs portal: the survey results showed that almost two-thirds of respondents use the portal. 17% used the portal for all open vacancies of research posts and 48% used the portal for some research posts.
- On institutional policies to promote gender equality in research positions the survey results showed that the vast majority (82%) of universities had put in place policies promoting gender equality.
- On doctoral education/training reform: the survey results confirm that a "Quiet Revolution" has taken place in recent years in doctoral education/training across universities in Europe. Structured doctoral programmes have been developed which provide greater critical mass, inter-university cooperation, transferable skills training and career development opportunities. 84% of university respondents have established doctoral/research schools to create critical mass while over 90% of university respondents had structured doctoral programmes with institutional policies concerning admission procedures, progress monitoring, supervision and thesis assessment. Over two-thirds (68%) provided career development services to doctoral candidates while 89% provide transferable skills training.

Professor Helena Nazaré, EUA President, noted that "EUA's survey results from over 220 universities demonstrate clearly that universities are main drivers in moving forward the ERA agenda".

EUA also highlighted how it has been working collectively with other Stakeholder Organisations (SHOs) on common principles governing open access and in pursuing high-level dialogue with scientific publishers.

Today's meeting of the SHOs was also an opportunity to look at key priorities for the future. EUA has today with other stakeholder organisations and the European Commission reaffirmed its joint commitment to achieving the goals of the European Research Area (ERA) through the signature of a Joint Declaration on continued and closer cooperation.

More information on EUA's activities carried out in the framework of the MoU can be found in EUA's progress report which can be downloaded on the EUA website:

[www.eua.be/Libraries/Publication/EUA\\_Progress\\_Report\\_on\\_the\\_MoU\\_on\\_ERA\\_December\\_2013\\_FINAL.sflb.ashx](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/Publication/EUA_Progress_Report_on_the_MoU_on_ERA_December_2013_FINAL.sflb.ashx)

The European Commission's news alert relating today's Joint Declaration can be viewed [here](#).

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*The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA's mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.*