



Attention, Science / Education correspondents

For Immediate Release

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Universities key to achieving low-carbon society

During its annual conference, the European University Association (EUA), which met in Antwerp on 16-17 April, debated the role of universities in moving Europe to a low-carbon society and placed energy research at the heart of its work plan.

EUA is responding to the European Union's energy societal challenge – of moving towards a low-carbon society – by mobilising universities to lead the way in creating a secure, clean and efficient energy system. It will do so through its energy-focused project, 'UNI-SET', which seeks to identify and map energy-related research, education and training activities at European universities and create an open cooperation platform.

Advanced energy technologies are crucial when fighting against climate change and securing energy supply. By 2050, the EU aims to cut its greenhouse emissions by 80-95% in relation to 1990 levels. This requires the transformation of the entire energy system using new and yet to be developed energy solutions. It also requires the development of new professional competences and skills.

To meet this ambitious target, the EU needs to fully exploit its research, education and innovation potential.

Speaking at the conference, Lidia Borrell-Damian, Director of Research and Innovation at EUA said:

“Tackling climate change calls for global efforts and international cooperation. It requires an understanding of both the global and local challenges and finding sustainable energy solutions that can benefit society at large. For this reason we're encouraging universities to take the lead in fostering new partnerships to tackle energy related challenges.

“Universities can provide expertise and educational and research capacities to tackle the transition to a low-carbon society. That's why we're looking at how universities can adapt their educational programmes to the new needs of the energy labour market and advance their research activities to support and accelerate this major social and technological transformation.

“The UNI-SET project will make the energy activities of universities more visible, foster new collaborations and strengthen the voice of universities in the EU energy sector.”

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Notes:

1. [UNI-SET](#) (Universities in the SET-Plan) aims to mobilise European universities' expertise to address common European societal challenges in the context of the European Union's Strategic Energy Technology Plan ([SET-Plan](#)), a technology pillar of the EU Energy and Climate policy.

The project is funded under the EU's Seventh Framework programme and will be organised in two main phases of implementation between September 2014 and August 2017. More information about the project is available on the [UNI-SET website](#).

2. An [Energy Survey](#) has been launched to identify and gather information on university research and education programmes at Master and Doctorate level in all areas of knowledge related to the energy field. This is the first step in the implementation of the project.

Contact **Toni Giugliano**, Mobile: **+32 494392193** Email: toni.giugliano@eua.be

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.