

European University Association Contribution to the Public Consultation on the Europe 2020 Strategy¹

October 2014

With 850 members across 47 countries, the European University Association (EUA)² is the largest and most comprehensive organisation representing universities in Europe. 17 million students are enrolled at EUA member universities. As the voice of Europe's universities EUA supports and takes forward the interests of individual institutions and the higher education sector as a whole.

TAKING STOCK: THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY OVER 2010-2014

CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. For you, what does the Europe 2020 strategy mean? What are the main elements that you associate with the strategy?

- The strategy aims at improving Europe's competitiveness and productivity through more effective investments in education, research and innovation. It places emphasis on research and innovation – as drivers of growth – as effective paths to maximise return on investments and to help overcoming Europe's structural weaknesses. To assess progress a series of targets focus on the three strategic priorities of smart growth, sustainable growth, and inclusive growth, and address long-term challenges affecting growth in Europe.
- The main elements of the Europe 2020 strategy are the seven flagship initiatives, focusing on key areas for boosting growth and jobs. Several initiatives are relevant to universities, in particular the 'Innovation Union', 'Digital agenda for Europe', 'Youth on the move', 'Resource efficient Europe', and 'An agenda for new skills and jobs'. The 'Innovation Union' flagship particularly affects the research and innovation activities at universities, due to its emphasis on improving framework conditions and access to finance in order to ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create jobs and growth.
- EUA's contribution to the public consultation will focus on the 'Innovation Union' flagship.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/public-consultation/index_en.htm

² www.eua.be

2. Overall, do you think that the Europe 2020 strategy has made a difference? Please explain.

- As noted in the Conclusions of the EU Council meeting from March 2014,³ the crisis has slowed down progress towards the Europe 2020 targets. For instance, according to recent Eurostat statistics (*Smarter, greener, more inclusive? Indicators to support the Europe 2020 strategy*, 2013),⁴ the EU will fall short of its headline target of 3% of the EU's GDP invested in R&D by 2020.
- According to Eurostat data (*Smarter, greener, more inclusive? Indicators to support the Europe 2020 strategy*, 2013), the higher education sector accounts for 24% of total R&D expenditure in 2011 and is the second sector with the highest expenditure on R&D in Europe after the business enterprise sector (62%, or €160 billion).
- Nevertheless, there is still underinvestment of the EU in R&D in relation to other areas in the world, which affects Europe's competitiveness and its overall attractiveness for researchers. For instance, R&D spending in Europe is still lower than in the US and Japan, mainly as a result of lower levels of private investment according to available data.⁵ Moreover, according to Eurostat data (2013), R&D expenditure as a percentage of GDP remained relatively stable in the EU-27 at around 2% of GDP during the period 2000 to 2011. In contrast, progress was observed for other global competitors such as China and the United States (increase of 0.75% and 0.18%, respectively, over the period 2001 to 2009).
- Additionally, the EU's performance in terms of business R&D expenditure, patent applications and tertiary education is lagging behind other global players such as the US, Japan and South Korea.⁶ Increased investment in R&D remains therefore crucial to ensure that development of high-quality science and innovative products are not put in jeopardy and that Europe can maintain a competitive advantage relative to other global regions.

3. Has the knowledge of what other EU countries are doing in Europe 2020 areas impacted on the approach followed in your country? Please give examples.

- The no "one-size-fits-all" approach is viewed positively. Due to the diversity of legislative frameworks and economic situations in member states, budget and policy measures need to be different across countries. However, the crisis has had a clear impact, particularly on universities' budgets, and has increased the differences between member states in terms of R&D performance (e.g. R&D expenditure, tertiary education, business R&D investment, etc.). EUA's Public Funding Observatory report published on 10 October 2014 highlighted an ever-increasing disparity between the highest and lowest funded higher education systems in Europe. The evolving geographical divide between European systems in terms of investment in higher education has also been confirmed: whilst there are notable exceptions, countries in eastern and southern Europe still appear to be more affected by the crisis than countries in northern and western Europe. This situation represents a "challenge for Europe as a whole, whose global competitiveness is harmed by such imbalances and weaknesses in the

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

⁴ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-02-13-238/EN/KS-02-13-238-EN.PDF

⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

⁶ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Europe_2020_indicators_-_research_and_development

European Higher Education and Research Areas" (EUA Public Funding Observatory report, 2014).⁷

4. Has there been sufficient involvement of stakeholders in the Europe 2020 strategy? Are you involved in the Europe 2020 strategy? Would you like to be more involved? If yes, how?

- European universities constitute a basis of the scientific and innovation system in Europe. Europe needs, however, to fully harness the diversity and potential of all its universities, as well as to properly fund them, in order to build up capacity and consolidate its position worldwide. European universities are key for producing excellent research (both fundamental and applied and in all knowledge areas). Universities are institutions that uniquely combine strong research and teaching missions. They educate and train students at the graduate, Master and doctoral levels, providing thus the human resources to foster Europe's scientific and technological bases and the prosperity of our society. It is therefore essential that the development of the European Research Area (ERA) goes hand in hand with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
- As an organisation that represents the university sector, EUA became part of the ERA Stakeholders Platform established by the European Commission (EC) in 2012 to assist the implementation of the ERA priorities. EUA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the EC in 2012, with the objective to work in partnership towards the achievement of the European Research Area (ERA). Other stakeholder organisations which signed MoUs include EARTO, LERU, Nordforsk, Science Europe, and CESAER. In 2013, EUA and these other stakeholder organisations reaffirmed their commitment to contribute towards the goals of the ERA through the signature of a Joint Declaration with the European Commission.⁸ In the short time-span of just two years, this partnership approach has shown to be both achievable and productive. Thus, EUA sees the partnership as a real backbone of the European innovation eco-system(s) and as an important tool in addressing the development and implementation of the ERA.
- Additionally, EUA would welcome the opportunity to be directly involved in the Europe 2020 strategy by, for instance, contributing to the review process of the Europe 2020 strategy headline indicators in relation to higher education and research.⁹
- The European Commission has established this year the "Research, Innovation, and Science Policy Experts" (RISE) high-level group (HLG), a key advisory body in the field of R&I that gives direct strategic support to the European Commission. EUA welcomes the initiative of merging RISE's predecessor bodies, including the European Research and Innovation Area Board (ERIAB), Innovation for Growth (i4G), and the European Forum on Forward Looking Activities (EFFLA).
- EUA thinks that it can substantially contribute to high-level groups of this kind, as it can offer expert input and consolidated views on the university sector at a strategic level.

⁷ www.eua.be/Libraries/Governance_Autonomy_Funding/PFO_analysis_2014_final.sflb.ashx

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/joint_declaration_2013.pdf

⁹ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-02-13-238/EN/KS-02-13-238-EN.PDF

TOOLS

5. Do the current targets for 2020 respond to the strategy's objectives of fostering growth and jobs? [Targets: to have at least 75% of people aged 20-64 in employment; to invest 3% of GDP in research and development; to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20%, increase the share of renewables to 20% and improve energy efficiency by 20%; to reduce school drop-out rates to below 10% and increase the share of young people with a third-level degree or diploma to at least 40%; to ensure at least 20 million fewer people are at risk of poverty or social exclusion].

- The current set of targets (limited to only 8 headline indicators and 3 sub-indicators) has the advantage of allowing relatively simple overall monitoring and follow-up (i.e. data on the different targets as well as a wealth of related science and technology indicators are easily accessible through Eurostat). However, there are large disparities in progress towards Europe 2020 targets across the member states and more detailed assessment and taking into account contextual factors remains necessary.
- For instance, the target of 3% of GDP invested in R&D provides an important starting point for monitoring progress. However, as a single figure, it provides no indication of the impact, in practice, of the Europe 2020 strategy. It would be valuable to assess the impact of the strategy in different aspects, for example, the extent to which it is fostering research careers, training of new graduates that are better fit for new high-level positions in the job market, fostering more entrepreneurs, promoting collaborative research, or promoting the translation of research results into marketable products and services.

6. Among current targets, do you consider that some are more important than others? Please explain.

- During the process of consolidating budgets in crisis-stricken EU states, education and research were particularly heavily hit by cost-saving measures. To ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create jobs and growth (and thus help overcome the crisis), it is crucial to achieve the target of 3% of GDP invested in R&D.
- In relation to this target, some good progress has been made in key indicators such as employment in knowledge-intensive activities, tertiary educational attainment and enterprise innovation. For example, between 2008 and 2011 employment in knowledge-intensive activities increased in almost all member states (Eurostat 2013). Also, the number of tertiary graduates in science and technology grew by almost 70% in Europe between 2000 and 2011 (although this trend varied considerably across member states). Overall, this is a positive trend because tertiary educational attainment is an important enabler for driving innovation. Moreover, half of the EU's enterprises reported innovation activity in 2010 (Eurostat, 2013). This is an important achievement since regions with high levels of innovation are more likely to have higher levels of development (in GDP), labour productivity and employment rates.

7. Do you find it useful that EU-level targets are broken down into national targets? If so, what is, in your view, the best way to set national targets? So far, have the national targets been set appropriately/too ambitiously/not ambitiously enough?

- Yes, it is important that EU-level targets are broken down into national targets so that member states can take ownership of the policies and measures needed for meeting the

Europe 2020 targets. However, strategies at EU and national level should be better aligned to maximise investments and returns, and targets should be designed accordingly, to coordinate action and thus achieve more efficient and sustainable progress.

- For example, regional policy is crucial for mobilising the innovative potential of regions in each member state and the focus of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) on Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) is thus viewed as an important step forward. It is crucial for Smart Specialisation to build on the specific profile and opportunities of European regions. At the same time, it is vital that the role of universities in the (re-) definition and implementation of the S3 is acknowledged and that universities are not just a partner on individual and ad-hoc S3 activities. At present, their involvement is most often only at the implementation stage, which limits the range of actions and types of contributions. Assessment of the contribution of universities to Regional and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) needs therefore careful consideration and monitoring. For these and other recommendations, please see the report and joint declaration in 2014 by EUA and the JRC-S3 Platform on the role of universities in smart specialisation.¹⁰

8. What has been the added value of the seven action programmes for growth? Do you have concrete examples of the impact of such programmes? ["Flagship initiatives": "Digital agenda for Europe", "Innovation Union", "Youth on the move", "Resource efficient Europe", "An industrial policy for the globalisation era", "Agenda for new skills and jobs", "European platform against poverty"].

- The 'Innovation Union' flagship is an important catalyst for action at EU level, stimulating policy development and implementation measures in the member states (regional and national levels to complement the EU initiatives). It has a positive role in promoting broad investment in R&D: The EU budget for 2014-20 marks a decisive shift towards R&I and, in particular, Horizon 2020 is a key funding mechanism for future growth and further development of research at universities. The focus on excellence in the Horizon 2020 proposals is crucial to boost top research in Europe through competitive funds. As it was stated by EUA in its 2011 Statement, competitive funding instruments open to all research institutions should be a governing principle of Horizon 2020 with no programmes targeted specifically at certain types of research institutions as exclusive partners.¹¹
- Additionally, under the new EU Cohesion Policy framework, the existence and acceptance of RIS3 have become an 'ex-ante conditionality', and this is seen as an important step forward. Notwithstanding, establishing better and simpler operational mechanisms to achieve a greater synergy with competitive EU research funds (Horizon 2020) and allow match funding with ESIF, remains important.

¹⁰ www.eua.be/Libraries/Publication/EUA_Seville_Report_web.sflb.ashx

¹¹ www.eua.be/Libraries/Publications_homepage_list/EUA_Statement_to_Heads_of_State_Government.sflb.ashx

**ADAPTING THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY:
THE GROWTH STRATEGY FOR A POST-CRISIS EUROPE
CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

9. Does the EU need a comprehensive and overarching medium-term strategy for growth and jobs for the coming years?

- A medium-term strategy placing high focus on more effective investments in education, research and innovation is essential for the EU to achieve and/or sustain a competitive advantage while stimulating growth and jobs. Innovation requires wider interpretation and understanding than simply seeing it as the last step to commercial application: the importance of basic research and the use of innovative interdisciplinary approaches should continue to be recognised and supported. The breadth of university-based research has its impact at many levels in the economy and society.
- Europe has the capacity to educate and make talented students thrive, but a critical challenge in the coming years will be to recruit these students for Europe to remain globally competitive. To this end, it will be essential for the industry and the public sectors to show the young that the 'Grand Challenges' offer attractive career opportunities and that there is a demand for their knowledge and competence in society.

Additionally, governments must strive for good quality education and support it by providing necessary funding and policy/political support to universities. The ambition to provide forecasts of workforce requirements over the next 20 years is worthwhile, but the methodologies to develop these and the data behind it are not in place at this point.

10. What are the most important and relevant areas to be addressed in order to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?

Investments in research (EU and national level)

- Fostering research and innovation is widely accepted as key to competitiveness. Data indicates that 'Each euro invested in EU research leads to an increase in industry added value of between €7 and €14, while spending 3% of EU GDP on research and development by 2020 could create 3.7 million jobs and increase annual GDP by close to €800 billion by 2025.'¹²
- In early September 2014, the EU Council adopted a formal position on the EU 2015 draft budget proposal. It recommended making considerable cuts to the European Commission's proposed 2015 payments for research and innovation, which include the framework programme, Horizon 2020. As outlined in the recent EUA statement regarding the EU budget negotiations: "Political rhetoric must be backed up by commitment and action"(2014), EUA supports the views of the EP which proposes to reverse the cuts put forward by the Council and proposes additional funds in priority areas such as education and research.¹³ Both research and education have consistently been highlighted by EU policy makers as being crucial for Europe's future – and were prioritised as key areas for increased investment in the EU's long-term budget (multiannual financial framework) for 2014-2020. Moreover,

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/europe_2020_explained.pdf

¹³ www.eua.be/Libraries/Publication/EUA_Statement_web.sflb.ashx

EUA's work has highlighted that EU funding has become an increasingly important income source for many European universities, especially in the context of reduced national spending on higher education and research in many European countries.¹⁴

- Cuts in public finances in education, research and development seen in many member states threaten to undermine the contribution of universities to helping drive forward innovations in goods and services, both public and private. EUA has been monitoring the evolution of the economic crisis and its effects on higher education systems in Europe since its onset in 2008. The monitoring has been conducted in close cooperation with the EUA collective members, the National Rectors' Conferences, who have given continuous feedback on developments within their national higher education systems. The continuous feedback from various sources provided up-to-date reports of the situation and highlighted the evolving nature of the effects the crisis has had on higher education across Europe.¹⁵

Critically, universities are increasingly faced with the need to manage their research portfolios with a wide diversity of research funding schemes. National and regional authorities, as the universities' first and main funder, have a special responsibility in ensuring that their higher education system is financially sustainable over the long term.¹⁶

Investments in infrastructures

- The 2013 edition of EUA's Public Funding Observatory highlighted that in countries where cuts are taking place, funding for infrastructure has been one of the most affected areas, and it was likely that this trend continues. Taking account of the costs for infrastructure is an important issue for the financial sustainability and competitiveness of Europe's universities. Ageing facilities and equipment lead to increasing costs for institutions, deteriorate teaching and research environments and impact negatively the institutions' capacity to innovate. Thus, providing funding rules and instruments that allow covering the costs for university research infrastructure in an adequate way should be an aim both in the context of national funding schemes, and of European funding programmes.

Investments in collaborative research

- As an Innovation Union commitment, the Commission should develop further instruments to facilitate effective collaborative research and knowledge transfer in EU programmes, including a range of policy support measures. EUA's work on collaborative research in the context of the FP7 EUIMA project (European Universities Implementing their Modernisation Agenda), has demonstrated that universities and their external partners are driven by a variety of reasons to undertake collaborative research. Motivations include increasing business competitiveness, educating a highly skilled labour force, creating new goods and services and tackling societal challenges. It was also found that the existence of regional innovation strategies is an important component to foster university-business partnerships, because they provide a framework for the collaboration.

Investments in regional development

- Universities' role in regional innovation still needs to develop in many regions. The degree of alignment of university-based R&D portfolios with regional/national innovation strategies will be a crucial success factor. However, it needs to be acknowledged that universities might not align completely with the regional priorities, and they may pursue areas of

¹⁴ www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/governance-autonomy-and-funding/public-funding-observatory-tool.aspx

¹⁵ www.eua.be/Libraries/Governance_Autonomy_Funding/PFO_May_2010.sflb.ashx

¹⁶ www.eua.be/Libraries/Publication/2014_EUA_MoU_report.sflb.ashx

research excellence which may not be related to immediate local societal needs, e.g. European Societal Challenges or global issues. Ensuring the excellence of the research performed and of doctoral graduates has to continue to be a priority for universities.

11. What new challenges should be taken into account in the future?

- Available data reveals that R&D spending in Europe is still lower than in the US and Japan, mainly as a result of lower levels of private investment.¹⁷ It is therefore essential to overcome this gap by improving private-sector R&D investment in the EU. Towards this end, there is a clear need to promote knowledge partnerships and strengthen links between education, research and business, including collaborations with industry to strengthen the intersectoral mobility of professionals.
- Collaborative research activities are an important asset for tailoring education to the evolving needs of the job market, contributing to maximise the employability of graduates and creating and sustaining academic, technical and support staff positions. For example, all stakeholders involved in the project case studies of the EUA's FP7 project on "Promoting Collaborative Doctoral Education for Enhanced Career Opportunities" (DOC-CAREERS II) agreed that doctorate holders graduating from collaborative schemes are more employable in the business sector than those graduating from traditional programmes. The ability to be "bilingual", bridging the academic and industry sectors, and the development of transferable skills, were identified as the main reasons accounting for the enhanced employability perspectives of doctorate holders in the business sector.
- The continuous improvement of the quality of R&I programmes is necessary, including the reduction of administrative burdens (e.g. management procedures and implementation rules) and ensuring the competitive allocation of funding. While recognising that the EU Research Framework Programmes have acted as crucial multipliers in the development of European university research and training cooperation both between universities themselves and between other research, development and innovation actors, more needs to be done. The European Commission proposed a new generation of contractual public-private partnerships (PPPs), with the aim to carry out large-scale and long-term innovation activities with the support of Horizon 2020. It would be important to increase the transparency regarding the definition of the PPPs, and monitoring is required to determine the success and effectiveness of these initiatives.

12. How could the strategy best be linked to other EU policies?

- Beyond Horizon 2020 (EU's multiannual budget for 2014-20), the EU Structural Funds which are deployed in the member states, provide support to reforms and job creation. There is still a need for greater complementarity and synergy with EU funding systems (Horizon 2020 and ESIF) for improved efficiency and impact. Clear and timely information on how to combine funds is essential to allow efficient planning and pooling of resources to maximise achievements and impact. It is worth noting that in June 2014 the European Commission has published a staff working document entitled "Enabling synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related Union programmes – Guidance for policy makers and implementing

¹⁷ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-646_en.htm?locale=FR

bodies". EUA would additionally welcome practical examples on how specific actions (e.g. at regional or national level) are achieving synergies between funds.

13. What would improve stakeholder involvement in a post-crisis growth strategy for Europe? What could be done to increase awareness, support and better implementation of this strategy in your country?

Coordination between EU institutions and between EU consultative bodies/structures

- Efforts towards the completion of the ERA would profit from coordination and effective use of the various internal structures within the European Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament. Additionally, coordination should be observed between expert groups and internal structures, such as the Bureau of European Policy Advisors (BEPA); the RISE HLG; and the Chief Scientific Adviser of the European Commission, to take account of the stakeholders representing major public actors in research and innovation.
- The pan-European R&D stakeholders can play a crucial role in supporting the ERA actions, through relevant activities with their memberships, as demonstrated in the partnership established in the framework of the ERA Stakeholders Platform.

Take into account pan-European stakeholders' coordinated initiatives

- Research partnerships with businesses are becoming increasingly important to impact innovation in the shorter term, but the role of universities is often seen as secondary. EUA wishes to draw attention to the 'Responsible Partnering' Initiative, an initiative developed by EUA, EIRMA (European Industrial Research Management Association) and EARTO (European Association of Research and Technology Organisations). The 'Responsible Partnering' Initiative has been promoting good practice in research collaborations between universities, research and technology organisations and businesses since 2005 and has been used as a policy document on numerous occasions. The three partners think that this is an appropriate period to re-engage in a dialogue to re-think key issues, re-design and/or add new features to the 'Responsible Partnering' concept. As a first step towards this objective, a workshop is being organised in Brussels on 3 December 2014 with the aim to collect expertise and recent experience from the different stakeholders. The main intended outcome of this event is to identify common points of interest that could be developed in the future to provide coordinated policy input to the European institutions.

Take into account solid/consolidated evidence from practitioners

- It is worth highlighting that EUA's projects DOC-CAREERS I (Collaborative Doctoral Education: University-Industry Partnerships for Enhancing Knowledge Exchange) and DOC-CAREERS II (Promoting Collaborative Doctoral Education for Enhanced Career Opportunities), have informed the design of the Marie Curie "industrial doctorates" pilot initiative, an important aspect of the doctoral landscape in Europe at present.
- Also, EUA's "Salzburg Principles" (2005) and the "Salzburg II Recommendations" (2010) have been acknowledged by the European Commission as the inspiration for establishing its own "Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training".
- EUA has been monitoring the evolution of public funding to higher education institutions and the impact of the economic crisis on higher education systems in Europe since its onset in 2008 through EUA's Public Funding Observatory. The impact of inflation, changes in student numbers, and the evolution in terms of countries' gross domestic product are all taken into account. EUA's Public Funding Observatory comprises an interactive online tool

that gives the user the opportunity to look at the data and the developments over years in a customised way for 28 European higher education systems, with five new systems added this year; it also comprises an early Public Funding Observatory report, with the latest report published on 10 October 2014.

- The outcomes of EUA's FP7 EUIMA (European Universities Implementing their Modernisation Agenda) project are also relevant to the 'Innovation Union' flagship: One of the outcomes of the project is the 'U-B Tool', a unique web-based tool for the self-assessment of university-business research cooperation.¹⁸ The tool measures the importance of the strategic approaches adopted and the level of achievement of the goals set at the beginning of the collaboration. The tool was designed based on contributions from both university and business leaders.

TOOLS

14. What type of instruments do you think would be more appropriate to use to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?

- EUA considers that several EU-level instruments and initiatives in place in the area of research are proving to be valuable to build and to reinforce the research and innovation landscape in Europe:
 - a) The ERC is helping universities in basic research (although also creating, at least momentarily, concentration in certain areas of Europe), and young researchers to develop independent careers through the ERC Starting Grants.
 - b) The Marie Curie Programme has a structuring effect in Europe through promoting mobility of researchers and intersectoral mobility through the industrial doctorates programme.
 - c) The EIT KICs are developing to cluster major consortia of education, research and innovation organisations in all grand challenges areas, to reduce the gap between research-generated ideas and product/service development to the market.
 - d) Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies (LEIT), focusing on new opportunities for industrial leadership in Key Enabling Technologies (KET), ICT and space. Fundamental research in collaborative research projects under LEIT and the Societal Challenges helps structuring cooperation between universities, NGOs, SMEs, RTOs and big industry.
- However, funding instruments should cover the whole value chain of innovation, particularly aiming at closing the gap of research and innovation performance in different areas in Europe. For example, specific programmes supporting the creation of university spin-offs would contribute to more geographically balanced research and innovation activities in Europe.

Also, the creation of instruments able to support collaborations in strategic areas would be welcomed. For instance, the EUA-European Platform of Universities Engaged in Energy

¹⁸ The project involved a wide range of organisations from twelve European countries, including twenty-five universities, eighteen companies, five company-led innovation clusters, eight bodies representing public authorities in the field and six research and technology offices and incubator centres. University networks such as CESAER also contributed to the project.

Research (EUA-EPUE) is leading the new FP7 UNI-SET project on ‘Mobilising the research, innovation and educational capacities of Europe’s universities in the SET-Plan’. The project is carried out in partnership with KU Leuven, representing the universities in EIT KIC InnoEnergy. UNI-SET will facilitate the formation of new university groupings to tackle energy-related challenges and coordinate the voice of the universities in the policy-making dialogue at EU level.

- In parallel, member states and the European institutions should commit to providing mechanisms to take forward their commitment to the ERA and to support universities in their long-term missions as they are educating the future generations of citizens and researchers.

15. What would best be done at EU level to ensure that the strategy delivers results? What would best be done at Member State level?

- Increased autonomy enables universities to move forward in playing their full role in the ‘Innovation Union’. EUA supports, therefore, the emphasis placed in the ‘Innovation Union’ Communication (COM(2010) 546 final) on the need for European universities to be freed from over-regulation and micro-management in return for full accountability.
- There is an inherent danger that an over-emphasis on strategic short-term priorities in applied research funding can undermine the fundamental research base in Europe’s universities, limiting their ability to maintain and/or strengthen their institutional research capacity and to address societal challenges through interdisciplinary approaches.
- In the area of Structural Funds, successful models for designing innovation-orientated S3 involving universities should be disseminated. EUA has been contributing to this end, and one example of this was the high-level conference on “Mobilising Europe’s Universities for Smart Specialisation”, convened by EUA, the JRC-S3 Platform and DG REGIO held in June 2014.
- Making good progress towards Europe 2020’s R&D target requires a sufficiently high number of responsible, open-minded and high-skilled researchers for the creation and implementation of novel ideas. Universities are central in the education of the human resource base necessary for a knowledge and research-intensive economy. Universities are increasingly engaging in partnerships (with other universities, research institutions and businesses) to develop multidisciplinary approaches to tackle societal and scientific challenges. These initiatives should be supported at national and EU level.

16. How can the strategy encourage Member States to put a stronger policy focus on growth?

- Europe 2020 targets need to be linked in a realistic way to each member state taking into account the budget and policy measures needed to effectively respond to the Europe 2020 strategic objectives. In the case of member states which have already reached the 3% target, political and financial incentives to invest further in research and innovation should continue. For example, the target could be set to achieve a 0.5% increase of GDP invested in R&D by 2020 over and above the figure for 2015.
- In the context of the ERA, it would be useful to develop indicators to measure the EU’s performance against that of other geographical areas. This would help European countries to realise the challenges ahead in a global context. Europe’s global regional competitors are

investing heavily in research and innovation and in the next generation of young people who will be the innovators of tomorrow.

- Public authorities, as the main source of funding for universities, have a special responsibility in providing a stable regulatory and financial framework for universities to fulfil their missions. For research activities in particular, this means ensuring a certain level of institutional funding to guarantee research capacity. Public funders need to seek the right balance between different funding modalities and take into consideration the possible long-term impact of related changes on universities' activities.

17. Are targets useful? Please explain.

- Please see reply to Question 5 above (i.e., Tools – Do the current targets for 2020 respond to the strategy's objectives of fostering growth and jobs?).

18. Would you recommend adding or removing certain targets, or the targets in general? Please explain.

- Please see reply to Question 5 above (i.e., Tools – Do the current targets for 2020 respond to the strategy's objectives of fostering growth and jobs?).

19. What are the most fruitful areas for joint EU-Member State action? What would be the added value?

- Coordination of regional/national/European R&D and innovation programmes must be fostered, coupled with a necessary reduction of the complexity and range of different administrative procedures. Simplification and reduction of heavy administrative and accounting procedures should be the driving forces for future developments of regional/national/European R&D and innovation programmes.
- The European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs) have been designed to act across the whole research and innovation value chain, bringing together relevant actors at EU, national and regional levels and coordinating investments in demonstration and pilots. Since EIPs are challenge-driven, focusing on societal benefits and a rapid modernisation of the associated sectors and markets, they could hold potential in boosting Europe's competitiveness in key areas. Close monitoring will, however, be required to determine the success and effectiveness of the initiatives. As stated in a recent report of the Expert Group for the Review of European Innovation Partnerships (2014), "clear indicators need to be defined to monitor and evaluate success. The EIPs need to have a better sense of prioritisation where measurement of progress has to relate to systemic change, rather than the intensity of actions per se. These indicators should allow the Council to monitor the effectiveness of the Member States' commitment towards the EIPs."¹⁹
- The Joint Programming initiatives have been developed by the European Commission to pool national research efforts in order to make better use of Europe's precious public R&D resources and to tackle major societal challenges more effectively. This partnership approach between member states should be further exploited to identify future opportunities and how to value and implement them effectively.

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/outriders_for_european_competitiveness_eip.pdf