

European University Association questionnaire

1) How can we make the European Education Area a reality and how do you see the role of the European Parliament in this regard?

GREENS support the Bologna process, which aims to improve the mutual recognition of qualifications and to guarantee a high quality of European higher education. A successful continuation of the Bologna Processes can contribute to an increased student mobility and enable citizen with a degree from another Member State to pursue their desired work at home without any restrictions. GREENS see the role of the EP as key in making sure that the relevant Programmes, such as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe are endowed with the necessary means and flexibility, in order to enable as many students and researchers to profit from such Programmes.

2) What do you think the EU can do to further European research and innovation?

The European research landscape is still resembling a patchwork of national research programs, lacking coordination and synergies, and a significant divide between strong and low performing R&I Member States, which then suffer from brain drain. As GREENS we support a well-endowed EU R&I and mobility policy beyond the Commission's budgetary proposals. In order to find solutions to todays and tomorrow's challenges, more European and international cooperation is necessary. Faced with increasing global challenges and pressure from populist forces on academic freedom Member States alone do not dispose of the necessary financial and international weight needed in order to respond to such challenges. We need to continue to build the European research area and make it attractive for external researchers who can bring new, inspiring scientific expertise to Europe. However, research is not only attractive through better material resources, but also through an attractive environment and social aspects, such as decent salaries, stable contracts and good childcare. We want to create fair rather than precarious career paths for scientists in all EU member states, so that it remains attractive to them to conduct their research here in Europe.

Furthermore, to enable innovation and advance research, it is also important to make publicly financed research results freely available through the implementation of Open Access to publications but also promoting Open Access to data. Therefore, we support European level projects such as cOAlition S, which make publicly funded publications freely accessible. We also fight for more open research networks and projects, to ensure public spending is reverted into valuable public benefits. Furthermore, we consider social sciences and humanities as an essential. Genuine freedom of science requires solid basic funding, so that not only for companies lucrative fields of research exist, but also that basic and critical research have a home in the EU, as well as research driven to meet wider public interests. As GREENS we are supporting the idea of creating European Universities. Universities are a European invention; they have shaped science, humanities and culture of our continent for centuries. The task of a European University is to anchor a comprehensive European education system throughout Europe and to promote the linkage of scientific disciplines that were previously national. In its teaching and research, they should combine existing strengths and competencies with the claim to be among the best universities in the world.

3) How can we ensure sufficient and sustainable funding for European cooperation and mobility in higher education and research?

GREENS would like to significantly strengthen the financial support for European cooperation in higher education and research and enhanced mobility of researchers. We are asking the European Commission and the Member States to reinforce their political and financial commitments. We welcomed the EC's proposed increase of the budget for Horizon Europe, yet demand to increase it beyond the EC's proposal. Likewise, we would like to significantly raise the budget of the future Erasmus+ Programme, in order to triple the number of participants.

4) How can we protect academic freedom as a core European value?

With increasing concern, we are observing a growing pressure on academics. From a GREEN perspective freedom of teaching and research constitutes a democratic fundamental right. Hence, we note with concern the restriction of these freedoms in some Member States as well as 3rd countries and condemn, for example, the government in Hungary for its action against the Central European University. The EU has very limited competences in the education sector, which makes resolute action difficult, yet we will use all means available to prevent the restriction of the freedom of teaching and research and will advocate, for example, the creation of a "European fund for the protection of persecuted researchers", in order to finance academic fellowships / stays for researchers, who were persecuted in their home country because of their work and had to seek protection within the EU, in order to be able to freely continue their work.

5) How should Europe evolve its capacity in education and research to retain leadership at the global level?

A deepened and dynamic European research area that is open to the world is of central importance in order to meet todays and future challenges as well as to strengthen the EU's R&I performance at the global level. The EU must show leadership and increase its investment in research and innovation that delivers benefits to society as a whole, ecological sustainability, better quality of life, social advances, affordable healthcare, the creation of sharable knowledge and the creation of decent jobs. Research tackling the climate and ecological crisis needs sustained and long-term support, not only through individual research projects, but also through the creation of European innovation centres and sustained funding. New developments in energy storage, in resource efficiency, recycling, the sustainable use of resources, substitution of hazardous substances, in water treatment, in the production of renewable energy and energy efficiency, should be supported in Europe. The European Union needs to be vigilant not to fall behind, such as in the field of digitization and robotics, biotechnology and nanotechnology where rapid developments are taking place, but also that new deployed technologies are truly sustainable and ethically sound. Future EU R&I policies needs to ensure that the sustainability and impact of ideas/technologies/solutions is assessed and taken into account at an early stage and that those truly sustainable ideas from the lab are getting faster on the market and their deployment is accelerated. Increasing international cooperation and the attractiveness of the European research areas for external researchers is pivotal (see pt.4). Europe's trademark should be providing attractive R&I facilities and working conditions, collaborative and open innovation spaces, and focusing on developing high quality products, services and solutions that are smarter, responsible and sustainable.