



EUniQ Pilot Evaluation
Public summary

EUTOPIA





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This public summary was established in view of the pilot evaluations for the EUniQ project.
The pilot was coordinated by the following agencies:

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education – NAKVIS

Slovenska 9 • 1000 Ljubljana – Slovenia
www.nakvis.si

Academic Information Centre – AIC

Dzirnavu Street 16 • Riga – Latvia
www.aic.lv/portal/en/sakums

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Public summary

The EUTOPIA was evaluated by NAKVIS [Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education] and AIC [Academic Information Centre Latvia] in view of the pilots for the EUniQ-project.

The objective of the project is to develop a European framework for comprehensive quality assurance of the European Universities. An important part of the EUniQ-project is to run some pilots using the framework that was developed by the project.

The Roadmap Group of EUniQ convened an evaluation panel which studied the information provided to the panel and undertook an online site visit on 14-15 September 2020.

Brief presentation of the EUTOPIA

The EUTOPIA alliance presents itself as bringing “together the operations and intentions of six regionally and nationally distinct European universities: Goetheborgs Universitet (Sweden); Univerza v Ljubljani (Slovenia); Université de Cergy-Pointoise (France); Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Spain); Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium); The University of Warwick (United Kingdom).

EUTOPIA’s collective long-term vision seeks to have affected grand societal challenges by 2050. In furtherance of this, it aims to become by 2025 an open, multicultural, federated operation of connected campuses that facilitates both free movement for all its members, whether staff or students, and vigorous participation for all the citizens of its associated communities.

The Presidents of the six universities have declared that EUTOPIA will be:

- **Geared towards the challenges of the future**
Our alliance will be challenge-driven to prepare students and staff as European citizens and lifelong learners who care and act for the future of the planet and humanity.
- **Student-centred and student-empowering**
Our alliance will provide transformative and open learning opportunities, and extended horizons of expectation and ability, both across Europe and throughout the world.
- **Attentive to the plurality, potentiality and international pre-eminence of Europe’s regions**
Our alliance will build on its place-making strengths, connecting cultures and contexts in order to enhance European capability and creativity, and support the international pre-eminence of European innovation and influence.
- **Committed to the principles of openness and inclusion.**
Our alliance will foster and support knowledge co-creation, by building open resources and collaborative platforms, endorsing open science agendas, and sponsoring the

access, mobility and inclusivity mechanisms that liberate intellectual and social potential.”¹

The initiative is currently co-funded by a grant from the *Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency*, of the European Commission, under the action entitled **European Universities Transforming to an Open, Inclusive Academy for 2050**. The grant runs for 36 months starting on 01/12/2019.

The scope of this evaluation are the activities related to this grant. Hence, the start date of the reference period for this evaluation is the start date of the grant: 01/12/2019.

The Alliance, however, leans on many years of previous cooperation between its partner-universities. “The EUTOPIA alliance has grown organically from a series of bottom-up collaborations and top-down agreements. Partners have significant record of collaboration in research project and, to a lesser extent taught courses. EUTOPIA partners have identified over 20 EU-funded research collaborations involving two or more EUTOPIA partners.”²

The initiative under the grant scheme consists of seven Work Packages [WP]:

1. WP1: Management of the project

2. WP2: Learning communities

Main objectives: [1] to develop EUTOPIA’s education strategy and implementation plan, [2] to facilitate EUTOPIA’s curriculum, and [3] to implement pilots for realising EUTOPIA’s educational programmes.

3. WP3: Research, Innovation and Knowledge Creation

Main objectives: [1] to develop a challenge-based approach to research, [2] to integrate the research communities of the member-universities, [3] to promote innovation, and [4] to advance Open Science.

4. WP4: Place-Making

focuses on the role of universities as transformative agents that foster both international collaboration and place-based collaboration, in order to create the necessary leadership skills to contribute to societal welfare.

5. WP5: Inclusion and open societies

aims to unite the EUTOPIA universities in a joint project to promote and further increase the quality, performance and attractiveness of European higher education institutions.

6. WP6: Internationalisation

Main objectives: [1] collaborative development of a curriculum and an educational commitment determined to create a truly international graduate capability and aspiration in each university, [2] development of an more closely connected and self-reinforcing international community of faculty within and across universities, [3]

¹ EUTOPIA: Founding Vision, Mission Statement and Strategy of the EUTOPIA Alliance., p.2.

² EUTOPIA: Founding Vision, Mission Statement and Strategy of the EUTOPIA Alliance., p.5.

learning from and contributing to the existing non-European partnerships and operations of each EUTOPIA member, and [4] developing a dynamic ring of co-ordinated global activity and enquiry in order to boost the capability and reach of EUTOPIA's academic, socio-cultural, political and economic relevance.

7. WP7: Sustainability and dissemination

Main objectives: [1] set up the governance structure of EUTOPIA and the wider alliance, [2] create a long term and sustainable business model, [3] implement smart specialisation strategies, [4] construct a shared vision and common academic culture inventing new ways of interacting and promoting comparison, cross-overs and collective ways of teaching and researching, [5] develop measures to promote EUTOPIA's values, [6] foster the involvement of communities, [7] provide information to relevant targeted groups (e.g., press, policy makers), [8] disseminate results and outputs to other European universities, and [9] have an impact on wider society through formulation of recommendations for policy makers and by influencing the public through new communication models.

Main findings of the evaluation

The panel examined progress in line with the criteria and reference points of the EUniQ Framework, based on the reporting materials made available and the discussions carried out during the online visit with representative alliance partners.

The panel studied the documentation provided by the Alliance before the visit. The panel organised a preparatory meeting on 8 September 2020. The site visit took place online, on 14-15 September 2020.

The panel formulated its preliminary evaluation on the stage of development of the Alliance and its recommendations related to the criteria. These were based on the findings of the online visit which built upon the review of the information provided by the Alliance.

The main findings and assessment of the panel are presented below, with reference to the criteria of the framework.

1. Strategy and Policies

Criterion: The European University's strategy and policies enable the realisation of an inter-university 'campus' which assures, in close collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, the quality of a joint provision that responds to societal challenges.

The Panel is of the opinion that the Alliance and its EUTOPIA 2050 project is in alignment with the evaluation criterion regarding strategy and policies.

The Alliance's EUTOPIA 2050 project has a clear mission and vision, which, when successfully implemented, will lead to the establishment of a European University, with a strategy and policies enabling "the realisation of an inter-university 'campus' which assures, in close collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, the quality of a joint provision that responds to societal challenges".

The EUTOPIA 2050 project is coherent with that objective and the way it is being implemented also as "a comprehensive inter-university learning process" is promising. The

Alliance seems to be aware of the challenges and risks, and is dealing with these, in an apparent proper and effective way.

2. Policy Implementation

Criterion: The European University takes adequate measures to implement its strategy and policies in an effective manner and to enhance the quality of its education, and where possible, research, innovation and service to society.

The Panel is of the opinion that the Alliance and its EUTOPIA 2050 project is in alignment with the evaluation criterion regarding policy implementation.

The policy implementation process to date has made some notable progress, despite several challenges and delays introduced by the COVID-19 crisis. Relevant objectives have been set in relation to both the education and the research, innovation and service to society missions of the partner universities. These objectives are supported by management structures that widely include students and work actively to ensure an effective coordination across partners and within each partner's constituency. The resources aimed to support the project are also given constant attention, with several activities being developed both internally and externally to secure adequate funding. The alliance also pursues promising plans to engage with key stakeholders and the respective local communities to foster societal engagement and diversity. While the policy implementation process has highlighted a range of differences in national and internal procedures and regulations that guide the six partner universities, the Alliance is engaged in a continuous stride to narrow down these differences and find the most effective ways to build a common future as a "European university".

3. Evaluation and Monitoring

Criterion: The European University guarantees the effectiveness of its policy implementation for the benefit of the quality of education, and where possible research, innovation and service to society, by organising appropriate evaluation and quality monitoring systems.

The Panel is of the opinion that the Alliance and its EUTOPIA 2050 project is in alignment with the evaluation criterion regarding evaluation and monitoring. The panel observed a solid recognition of the importance of evaluation and monitoring activities among the partners and stakeholders involved in the project. As it is a very early stage of the project, it is difficult to judge how efficient the evaluation and monitoring mechanisms are. The panel has noted certain limitations for the setup of the Quality Board of the alliance and the multilevel reporting procedures, all are addressed in the recommendations section. The panel highlights that the Alliance's EUTOPIA 2050 project has a well-defined structure of reporting cycle and at this early stage of development the cycle is indicated to be beneficial according to the various actors involved in the process.

4. Improvement Policy

Criterion: The European University takes measures to improve the realisation of its policy objectives and the sustainability of the alliance.

Notwithstanding that, in the opinion of the panel, it is not possible to make a fair assessment of 'progress made', at this early stage of the project, the Panel observed quite a lot of intentions and developments promising proper alignment with the evaluation criterion regarding improvement policy. Especially the approach of the whole project as "a comprehensive inter-institutional learning process" is promising in that regard.

Annex: Composition of the panel

The panel of experts was convened and consisted of the following members:

Prof. Frank Bostyn, Chair

Currently Dean of the College of Business and Economics, with a broad experience and involvement in international accreditation (AACSB, EQUIS, AMBA) and national accreditation and quality assurance audits (NVAO, AAQ, etc.).

Former member of the board of AACSB International.

Founding Dean of NEOMA Business School and former Dean of Antwerp Management School.

Dr. Marina Ranga, Member

Dr. Marina Ranga works with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre in Seville, Spain and is also Associate Professor on Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of Warsaw's School of Management. Prior to that, she held academic positions at Stanford University (2009-2015) and at several universities in Europe (1998-2009). Her main areas of expertise include: National and regional innovation ecosystems; Regional innovation and smart specialization; the Entrepreneurial University; Gender in innovation, technology and entrepreneurship. In these areas, she developed a broad research and publication record and conducted extensive consultancy and evaluation work for the EC, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, several UN bodies, national and regional innovation agencies. She currently chairs the Strategic Advisory Board of Imperial College's Institute for Molecular Science and Engineering, and is a member of the International Advisory Board of the Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities and of the Scientific Board of the University-Industry Innovation Network (UIIN).

Gohar Hovhannisyan, Student member

Gohar Hovhannisyan is a PhD student from Armenia currently serving her mandate as the full-time Vice-President of the European Students' Union (ESU). She is a student-expert in quality assurance of higher education and has been part of accreditation panels of both universities and quality assurance agencies. She has worked with ENQA, EUA, ECA and other European organisations that carry QA evaluations.

She has worked on several projects across European countries aimed at enhancing student participation in quality assurance of higher education. Since the launch of the European Universities Initiative she has been developing ESU's policy and actions while monitoring the policy developments at the European level. Gohar is a member of the EQAR's Executive Board and of the Bologna Follow-up Group of EHEA.

The procedure was coordinated by:

- Coordinator: *Klemen Šubic*, Head of Department of international cooperation and information technology, NAKVIS – Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
- Coordinator: *Dāvis Vēveris*, Accreditation department expert, AIC - Academic Information Centre, Latvia.

The coordinators also acted as secretaries to the panel. All panel members and coordinators signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.



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