

# A European Strategy for Universities

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A Summary  
EDDIE Consortium

The Eu Commission has published on 2022, January 18th, the new “[European Strategy for Universities](#)”, which is focused on four objectives, one of which is strictly related to the topic of the EDDIE project (Empower Universities as actors of change in the Twin Green and Digital Transitions).

In general, the strategy is meaningful for different reasons: it is meant to support the Role of the European Universities in promoting a “European Model” in line with EU’s interests and values (rule of law, human rights and international norms and standards), it will strengthen the linkages among European Universities, and it will support their capacity in training a new generation able to face the complex challenges foreseen in the future.

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## The premises of the strategy

There is a global consensus on the idea that excellent and inclusive universities are a condition and foundation for open, democratic, fair and sustainable societies as well as sustained growth, entrepreneurship and employment.

Europe is home to close to 5 000 different types of higher education institutions. With their diversity, they play a critical role in achieving the European Education Area (EEA) and the European Research Area (ERA), in synergy with the European Higher Education Area.

This new European strategy focus on different dimensions and needs to be addressed to support Universities and their competitiveness on a worldwide scene.

The higher education sector must adapt to the rapidly evolving skills needs, mainly related to green and digital transitions. Future-proof education, research, and innovation, in close cooperation with the related industries and stakeholders has to be implemented, also to attract talented youth.

In this new scenario transnational cooperation is a must and it can be supported if Europe effectively tackles legal issues and solves administrative obstacles to international strategic institutional partnerships.

Funding of universities is an impellent need to support universities in fulfilling their growing societal mission too.

The Keyword is cooperation: “The Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation is a first step in facilitating deep transnational cooperation for universities to be able to thrive and to strengthen a sense of European belonging.”

## Four Joint Objectives

By mid-2024, the Commission proposes to focus on achieving the following four joint key objectives:

1. strengthen the European dimension in higher education and research through transnational cooperation
2. support universities as lighthouses of our European way of life
3. empower universities as actors of change in the twin green and digital transitions
4. reinforce universities as drivers of the EU’s global role and leadership

Following we report some of the actions previewed to meet the first 3 objectives. We have reported the ones particularly meaningful for the EDDIE project.

## A new framework for enhancing European cooperation (objective 1)

To reach the first objective, the EU Commission proposes some flagships initiatives and related actions.

- Support The Erasmus+ European Universities initiative, in combination with other instruments (e.g.: Digital Europe) to strengthen higher education institutions.
- Work towards a legal statute for alliances of universities by mid-2024 to mutualize their strengths together, make common strategic decisions, act together with a legal personality, and facilitate pooling together resources, activities and data.
- Work towards a joint European joint European degree by mid-2024, to be delivered at national level, to attest learning outcomes achieved as part of transnational cooperation among several institutions and based on a common set of criteria.
- Scale up the European Student Card initiative by deploying a unique European Student Identifier available to all mobile students in 2022 and to all students in universities in Europe by mid-2024.
- Review the Recommendation on further European cooperation in Quality Assurance in higher education in 2023 to further develop a European Quality Assurance and Recognition System.

## A Lighthouses of our European way of life (objective 2)

This objective has a trifold focus. Following, we highlight the actions the EU proposes to support the quality and relevance for future-proof skills, which are meaningful for the EDDIE project. The EU proposes to:

- Contribute to professional reskilling and upskilling through micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability,
- Extend the EIT label to lifelong learning activities such as mentoring, re-skilling and upskilling modules and programmes, and open the EIT label beyond academic education.
- Support Cooperation among universities and with the industrial ecosystems (e.g.: by promoting intersectoral mobility, between academia and businesses or providing European support - including a toolkit for universities - for the development of incubators in close cooperation with the entrepreneurial sector)
- Support pedagogical innovation, focused on the learners, with a variety of learning spaces and flexible, interdisciplinary paths, also promoting the creation of 'living labs'.

## Actors of change in the twin green and digital transitions (objective 3)

In relation to digital transition, and specifically to the digital skills training, the EU proposes to:

- leverage on the Digital Education Action Plan to develop the digital skills and competences of students and workers and to support the launch and rollout of a targeted European platform to promote cooperation between higher education institutions, compatible with the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and interoperable with other European standards;
- leverage on the Digital Europe Programme, to provide support to specialized education and training programmes in cutting-edge digital technologies and for multi-disciplinary courses in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, microelectronics, and high-performance computing.