

ASSESS AND REWARD EUROPE'S UNIVERSITIES

STATEMENT DATED 30TH MARCH 2018

The [report](#) by the High-Level Group on maximising the impact of EU Research and Innovation Programmes described the EU's priority to overcome its innovation deficit and stated that Europe's universities need "urgent renewal". It suggested that "a clearly defined 'European university' label could reward research and higher education institutions which actively and successfully promote open science, open innovation and openness to the world [...] The EU could, in return, offer top-up funding for certain institutional costs at those universities." Universities of Science and Technology (S&T) already operate at the forefront of S&T, educate and train talent for the 21st century, prepare and cherish their faculty for the 21st century and have significant scientific, economic, social and societal impact. They already are 'renewed' universities, stimulate entrepreneurship and innovative mind-sets, work across disciplines, share infrastructure and collaborate closely with academic and societal players.

With this statement, the [universities of S&T](#) united within [CESAER](#) contribute to the debate about how to assess such 'renewed' universities, to reward their efforts through dedicated European funding schemes and to make Europe's universities better higher education institutions in all areas.

COMPETITIVENESS OF EUROPE BY CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Recalling our [plea](#) for 'More Knowledge for a Better World', we feel that the current narrative on the competitiveness of Europe in terms of creation of jobs and boosting economic growth needs broadening, including sustainable development. Tackling the global challenges involves the capacity to generate significant scientific, social, economic and societal impact and benefit and the creation of open knowledge societies, including a genuine European contribution to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ([UN SDGs](#)).

DIMENSIONS FOR ASSESSMENT OF EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

We advise that the assessment of European universities is carried out along the following dimensions at European level:

- EXCELLENT AND BREAKTHROUGH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Such universities provide excellent and breakthrough S&T training for the next generation of researchers, inventors and innovators and attract researchers and students from around the world. They push the boundaries, embrace opportunities, promote open science, open education and open innovation and deliver skills needed for data-driven societies.

- STEM GRADUATES AND INNOVATIVE MIND-SETS

Tackling future skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills (digital) development means delivering more excellent Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), reaching out to Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH), arts and medicine and promoting entrepreneurship, creativity and innovative mind-sets.

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- NEW FORMS OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

Such universities apply new ways of teaching and more flexible approaches to modes of study, including problem-based learning, online learning and teaching methods and transversal and transferable skills such as Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), sustainability and international skills.

- COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Through fundamental S&T driven by utility, such universities contribute to (disruptive and social) innovation, collaborates closely with academic and societal players (such as research and technology organisations, business and industry, public services, non-governmental organisations and citizens) and play a determining role in open innovation ecosystems.

- LEADING POSITION IN REGION, COUNTRY AND BEYOND

Such universities occupy demonstrably leading positions in their region, country and beyond and are net contributors to export and regional development. They are thus open to the world.

- SCIENTIFIC, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL IMPACT AND BENEFIT

Such universities have the capacity to generate significant scientific, social, economic and societal impact and contribute to the realisation of open knowledge societies and - consequently - are important contributors to sustainable development world-wide.

- VALUES

They apply and defend specific values (such as research integrity, academic freedom and institutional autonomy) and generic values (such as sustainable peace and prosperity incorporating respect for the rule of law and human rights, democratic citizenship, evidence-based policy making and the free circulation of knowledge). They have integrated institutional strategies for inclusion, gender equality, study success and sustainable development.

FUNDING NEEDS AND INSTRUMENTS

Support to develop the assessment of European universities is needed, allowing for further development of the criteria and their feasibility. In line with the Lamy report, a dedicated funding scheme is needed to reward new and innovative ideas that such universities already apply now and are willing to share with other higher education institutions. This is particularly true for the roles such universities play in innovation ecosystems and innovative mind-sets in terms of actively and successfully promoting open science, open innovation and openness to the world.

We are committed to offer our expertise to further the assessment of Europe's universities and the corresponding funding instruments. For more information, please contact our [Vice President for Leadership & Sustainability](#) or our [Secretary General](#).

CESAER is the European association of leading specialised and comprehensive universities of S&T that: champion excellence in higher education, training, research and innovation; influence debate; contribute to the realisation of open knowledge societies; and, deliver significant scientific, social, economic, and societal impact.