

## **A CALL FOR POLITICAL ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE ‘EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY’ INITIATIVE**

*A media release by the ‘European University of the Seas’ (SEA-EU): [www.sea-eu.org](http://www.sea-eu.org)*

The ‘European University of the Seas’ (SEA-EU) Alliance was officially launched in October 2019, as part of the flagship ‘European University’ Initiative of the European Commission, to renew the vision of universities’ role as key leaders in and shapers of the future of Europe. There are now 41 such ‘European University’ alliances, approved and co-funded by the European Commission, mainly as part of the Erasmus suite of programmes.

Almost one year after the launch of the SEA-EU Alliance, the Rectors and Presidents of its six constituent universities met (virtually) on July 13th, 2020 to take stock of the past year, which was highly atypical in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic and for which resilience, in its various forms, has been brought to the forefront. The six are united by virtue of being coastal institutions: Universidad de Cádiz (Cádiz, Spain – Coordinator), Université de Bretagne Occidentale (Brest, France), Christian-Albrechts Universität zu Kiel (Kiel, Germany), Uniwersytet Gdański (Gdańsk, Poland), Sveučilište u Splitu (Split, Croatia) and L-Università ta’ Malta (Malta).

The Rectors and Presidents of the constituent universities of SEA-EU, have agreed to: reaffirm their commitment to this strategic alliance; confirm that their collaboration encompass all disciplines and units within their respective universities; provide all necessary support for an active role for students in the various dimensions of the Alliance; reinforce virtual learning and virtual mobility; develop a robust system of quality assurance; and promote teaching and learning across multiple European languages.

At the same time, the Rectors and Presidents of the SEA-EU Alliance emphasize the pressing need for political actions at European, national, regional and local levels, in support of the goals and aspirations of the ‘European University’ initiative and the quantum leap it represents for the construction of the European Higher Education Area of the future. Structural changes are required to Higher Education regulations, policies and practices across Europe in order for the necessarily ambitious goals and objectives of the SEA-EU Alliance to come to successful fruition. Funding and support from various stakeholders need to be locked in, and beyond the initial three-year time horizon of the Initiative.

The ‘European University of the Future’ will need to combine and exploit strengths and resources that exist in different universities and in different countries. The exciting mission to mainstream learning, science, knowledge and curiosity to SEA-EU’s many publics will depend mainly on the willingness to dream, risk and experiment shared by the constituent universities. However, such an investment needs to be matched by firm commitments for support by local, regional and national governments as well as European institutions.

We have noted and warmly welcomed the European Commission’s active interest in dedicating a specific pilot call for additional and complementary funding via the Horizon 2020 to ‘European University’ alliances. We encourage and exhort the European institutions to support SEA-EU and the other ‘European University’ consortia in order to dream and build dynamic, locally embedded yet globally engaged universities for 21st century Europe.



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