

Report on A new vision for the European Universities alliances

Rapporteur: Laurence Farreng

Compromise amendments

CA 1 - Compromise on Paragraph 1

Covered: AM 82 EPP, 84 ECR, 85 S&D, 70 the Left

Fall: AM 86 Griset

1a. Acknowledges the warm welcome *and commitment* (EPP) given to the European Universities initiative by higher education institutions and the initiative's role in facilitating efforts to remove obstacles to *regional, cross-border and* international cooperation in higher education, *such as fragmented funding, disparities in accreditation systems and legal barriers* (ECR);

1b. Highlights the fact that mobility projects, the creation of common curricula and cooperation between universities in Europe are instrumental in addressing needs in strategic areas *and reinforcing the sense of belonging to Europe and its values, while preserving diversity and richness of the European Union.*

1c. Notes that the alliances are a powerful tool for the implementation *and advancement* of the Bologna Process; *highlights the leverage effect alliances have on transformation processes in the higher education landscape by pioneering and boosting innovative approaches as well as new methods for cooperation, creation of opportunities and accessibility for students;*(EPP)

CA 2 - Compromise on Paragraph 2

Covered: AM 88 S&D, 89 EPP, 90 RE, 102 Repp, 157 Repp, 226 S&D

Fall: AM 92 Vicsek

2. Underlines the diversity of the alliances in terms of governance, topics and subjects covered, *research activity*, and the size and location of participating universities; notes the large and successful participation of universities from medium-sized cities, rural areas and outermost regions, making it an accessible and inclusive initiative *that bridges geographically distant communities across Europe*; highlights the fact that the 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not appropriate for the alliances, *and flexibility is important in this regard*; notes that the Europe-wide geographical representation of universities within the alliances is key to *addressing local and territorial priorities*, tackling brain drain *and attracting international talent, while making, an invaluable contribution to European unity and integration*;

CA 3 - Compromise on Paragraph 3

Covered: AM 93 S&D, 94 RE, 95 Greens, 98 ECR, 99 Fourlas, 123 The Left,

Fall: AM 96 the Left, 97 Griset

3. Welcomes the integration of students in the alliances' governance structures, enabling young people to have *substantial and* real impact on their development, *as youth participation in democratic decision-making processes helps to make alliances more forward looking and addresses practical challenges students face; stresses the importance of aligning student*

engagement with student organisations to ensure transparency, fairness, and inclusivity in stakeholder involvement;

CA 4 - Paragraphs 3 a - Compromise on societal issues and inclusion

Covers: 75 S&D, 80 Greens, 100 Greens, 133 Repp, 207 EPP, 165, 147, 134, 101, 46, 45, 44, 26 The Left

3a.(new) Highlights that alliances have the potential and expertise to help universities address socio-economic challenges; underlines, the importance of incorporating societal impact as a cross-cutting element in activities of alliances; calls for clear strategies to ensure and monitor accessibility and inclusion of people with fewer opportunities¹ in all alliances' activities, especially by dismantling barriers to mobility and preventing all forms of discrimination, in line with the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education;

CA 5 - Compromise on Paragraph 4 and 4a - 4b (new)

Covered: AM 103 EPP, 107 Greens, 110 RE, 111 Greens, 114 Repp, 144 S&D, 179 S&D, 181 Repp, 197 The Left, 25 Repp,

Fall: AM 104 Griset, 105 Griset, Sorel, 106 Vicsek,

4. Welcomes pilot projects aimed at creating a European degree and/or a legal status; underlines, however, that alliances should not serve as the sole instrument for innovation in higher education; notes that alliances should have the freedom to specialise and be flexible in their undertakings;

4 a.(new) Welcomes the outcomes of the six Erasmus+ policy experimentation projects on the European degree and label conducted by 21 Alliances²; acknowledges the clear added value of a common framework for European Degrees, based on European criteria,(144) as a step towards the recognition of degrees and diplomas at EU level, enhancing mobility and the quality of education (144, 25) reinforcing the framework for cooperation and encouraging wider engagement in transnational academic programmes as well as (181) strengthening the global visibility and competitiveness of European higher education (EPP, RE, Repp);

4 b.(new) Notes that the European degree label should be accessible to all other joint university programmes (S&D) and be complementary to national qualification frameworks, adapting them when necessary (179), without creating an additional administrative burden (EPP);

CA 6 - Compromise on Paragraph 5

Covered: AM 120 S&D, 121 EPP, 122 Greens

Fall: AM 115 Vicsek, 116 ESN, 118 Griset, 119 the Left

5. Welcomes the significant increase in the number of mobility projects involving students, *lifelong learners, researchers as well as academic and non-academic* staff in universities participating in alliances compared to other Erasmus+ mobility projects;

¹ as defined in the REGULATION (EU) 2021/817 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education and training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013;

² Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2024)291;

5. a(new) Notes, *however*, that the initial objective of achieving seamless mobility for 50 % of students in participating alliances has not yet been reached *and will remain challenging without appropriate funding mechanisms; in this regard is worried about the potential competition between the alliances' mobility scheme and universities' general Erasmus+ mobility for the same limited funding provisions, as mobility targets for alliances are higher than those for general Erasmus+ mobility and therefore calls on the Commission to assess those requirements;*

CA 7 - Compromise on Paragraph 6, 6 a (new) and 6 b.

Covered: AM 125 S&D, 126 EPP, 127 ECR, 128 RE, 130 the Left, 131 Greens, 142 EPP, 214 ECR,

Fall: AM 124 Griset, 129 ESN,

6. Is *deeply concerned* about current threats to academic freedom in several parts of the world, including in some Member States *and third countries participating in Erasmus+ (131);*

6a.(new) *Stresses the need for alliances to uphold EU values, democratic resilience, and institutional autonomy (EPP) and to foster active citizenship; highlights their role as multilateral and multicultural learning spaces (S&D);*

6b. Underlines the *key* role that universities, including alliances, play in *protecting and promoting evidence-based science, building trust in democratic discourse (S&D, EPP, ECR), fostering cooperation based on EU values (EPP) and making themselves and the European higher education sector more attractive to non-EU students, academic staff and researchers;*

CA 8 - Compromise on Paragraph 7

Covered: AM 137 EPP, 138 Fourlas, 139 RE, 140 Repp, 141 EPP, 180 S&D, 112 EPP,

Fall: AM 135 Griset,

7. Welcomes the Union of Skills initiative, especially the upcoming proposal *for a future investment pathway and a clear* legal status for alliances *as it will make it easier for universities to* initiate and lead European projects, *allow for pooling of resources (138, 139), enhance their autonomy, reduce the administrative burden (180),* attract funding and broaden their governance structure, especially in the case of universities from non-EU countries, *as well as facilitating the institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation (140 SD);*

7 a. *Welcomes values-based initiatives such as the cooperation in solidarity with Ukraine, the global outreach of alliances and the alliances' role in the accession preparations of candidate countries from the Eastern neighbourhood and the Western Balkans (137, 141);*

CA 9 - Compromise on Paragraph 8

Covered: AM 143, 146 S&D, 225 RE

8. Welcomes the creation of FOREU4ALL, a community of practice for European Universities alliances; underlines its key role in disseminating innovations from the alliances to the broader academic community, *as universities and higher education institutions that are not part of alliances should not be left behind; reminds that policies and initiatives should benefit the entire higher education system (146);*

8 a. *Acknowledges the important role of other networks within the higher education sector, that bring together a broader spectrum of European universities irrespective of participation in an alliance; underlines the complementary nature of these networks with the alliances and their potential to prepare the ground for legislative change at national level;*

CA 10 - Compromise on Paragraph 9, 9 a and 9 b.

Covered: AM 148 Greens, 149 RE, 150 EPP, 151 S&D, 152 ECR, 153 the Left, 43, 156 ECR, 205, 19 the Left

Fall: AM 155 Fourlas, 204 Griset, Sorel

9. Underlines that the mission of universities includes all four aspects of the knowledge square: education, research, innovation *and service to society*; *stresses that alliances must be closely aligned with the labour market to address Europe's skills shortages and competitiveness challenges*; (EPP)

9 a. *Is notably worried about the lack of research and innovation pillars within the alliances given the current framework, as it undermines the full cooperation potential between universities within alliances*;

9 b. *Encourages the Alliances to deepen the link between education and research*; highlights the significant ability of the alliances to build *cross-border* networks of *excellence* for researchers and to share *and disseminate* knowledge at *EU level and beyond, especially in the STEM areas, including* in strategic fields *for the EU*;

CA 11 - Compromise on Paragraph 10

Covered: AM 161 S&D, 162 EPP, 163 ECR, 215 ECR, 57 ECR

Fall: AM 160 Griset,

10. Stresses the need for *coordinated*, (S&D) sustainable and predictable funding for current alliances; asks the Commission to consider reserving future calls for the continuation of successful alliances, *enabling them to deepen integration and build on their accomplishments (S&D)*; asks the Commission to keep the application *and reporting* (EPP) processes as simple as possible; *encourages a fast-track renewal process for successful alliances to secure continued funding without excessive administrative burdens*;(EPP)

CA 12 - Compromise on Paragraph 11

Covered: AM 166 S&D, 167 ECR

11. Underlines that the strategic vision for university alliances has to be reflected in the next multiannual financial framework *to maximise their potential and impact*; asks the Commission to evaluate each alliance in order to provide support and tailor-made solutions regarding their future development;

CA 13 - Compromise on Paragraph 12 and 12 a.

Covered: AM 169 S&D, 170 EPP, 171 Greens, 109 Repp, 173 S&D

Fall: AM 168 Griset,

12. Recognises the relevance for the European Universities initiative to continue be a part of the Erasmus+ programme *taking into account the current framework; at the same*

time invites the Commission to study the viability of creating a tailor-made solution for financing the European University Alliances in the post-2027 MFF, with a possibility to create a separate programme, enabling alliances to plan strategically, engage in long-term initiatives and establish enduring cooperation;

12 a. Calls on Member States to commit to co-financing alliances through national budgets and asks the Commission to present a comprehensive investment strategy for the alliances enabling them to fulfil their quadruple mission. This strategy should incorporate synergies with EU programmes such as Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, InvestEU, the European Social Fund Plus and the European Regional Development Fund, in order to optimise resources, avoid duplication, strengthen synergies and retain their competitive nature;

CA 14 - Compromise on Paragraph 13 and 13 a (new).

Covered: AM 175 S&D, 176 RE, 177 the Left, 178 Greens, 206 ECR

13. Highlights the fact that, in order to achieve real *and sustainable* success encompassing quality, excellence and inclusion, support for alliances cannot come solely from the European budget but should also come from *coordinated contributions from* national, *regional*, local and private sources, *provided that they can guarantee autonomy of higher education institutions and safeguard academic freedom;*

13 a (new). Emphasises that a closer integration of Alliances with the private sector can be mutually beneficial; encourages partnerships and structured cooperation between universities and businesses in order to create integrated systems that foster innovation, high-level technical and professional training, and facilitate students' transition to the job market as well as reskilling and upskilling for people outside of higher education;

CA 15 - Compromise on Paragraph 14

Covered: AM 183 S&D, 185 ECR, 186 Greens, 187 EPP,

Fall: AM 182 Griset, Sorel, 184 Griset, 188 Vicsek, 189 the Left

14. Stresses the need to strengthen the internationalisation of alliances, in line with, among others, the Global Gateway strategy *and Talent Partnerships*; notes that alliances are at the right level for establishing partnerships with non-EU countries, *in particular candidate countries*, and can *strengthen the international dimension of Erasmus+*, *through for example* Erasmus Mundus; asks the Commission and the alliances to ensure that all partners involved comply with *EU values, the principle of academic freedom and adhere to the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education;*

CA 16 - Compromise on Paragraph 15

Covered: AM 191 S&D, 196 ECR

Fall: AM 193 Griset, 194 the Left, 195 ESN

15. *Encourages* the Commission, the Member States and the alliances to shift from a 'project-based logic' to long-term, transformative cooperation *by introducing a funding approach that enables this transition;* underlines the importance for alliances to be able to scale up; underlines the need to set qualitative rather than quantitative goals, *emphasising the transformative impact for European Education Area;*

CA 17 - Compromise on Paragraph 16, 16 a and 16 b. (new).

Covered: AM 198 EPP, 199 S&D, 200 Greens, 201 RE, 202 ECR, 203 Greens, 224 ECR

16. Notes that alliances are testing innovative ways of teaching and acquiring knowledge, such as *European learning pathways*, micro-credentials, blended *learning mobility and the automatic recognition of qualifications*; *stresses the need to invest in secure digital infrastructure, and strengthen existing initiatives, such as the European Student Card*;

16 a. Emphasises the need to consolidate the interoperability of computer systems *and align European and national policies* to create genuine virtual European inter-campus; *encourages more cross alliance collaboration to enable secure, interoperable student identification, course registration, and academic record exchange as well as investment in integrating new educational technologies*;

16 b. (new) *Stresses the need to expand the use of micro-credentials, building on best practices, to integrate the alliances in a wider learning environment, bridging their work with other non-formal learning institutions; notes that training and up-skilling recognised through micro-credentials can facilitate the flexible revision, expansion and modernisation of university degrees*;

CA 18 - Compromise on Paragraph 17

Covered: AM 208 S&D, 209 Greens, 210 ECR, 212 EPP

Fall: 211 the Left

17. Asks the Commission to consider adding criteria to possible future calls, in line with topics linked to European strategic autonomy and competitiveness, such as *resilience*, energy, climate change, digital transition *and skills*, and defence *and keeping in mind the core objectives of adherence to EU values, education excellence and innovation*;

CA 19 - Compromise on Paragraph 18

Covered: AM 216 EPP, 217 Greens, 218 S&D, 219 RE, 221 ECR

18. Stresses the need for alliances to have the *appropriate* structures and capacities to support transfer from academia to business, *to contribute to the realisation of the EU's ambitions of strategic autonomy*; *calls on the Commission to dismantle barriers that impede the effective sharing and pooling of joint resources and knowledge, through actions such as the facilitation of joint recruitment of academic staff and researchers, as well as the development and use of shared facilities*;

CA 20 - Compromise on awareness raising

Covers: 222 S&D, 223 RE

18 a. *Underlines the need for effective and accessible awareness raising and information campaigns about the European University Alliances to foster greater engagement, especially at local levels and among students, as the current recognition of the initiative is very low*;

CA 21 - Compromise amendment based on the Implementation of the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027 report adopted on 16 January 2024

Covers: AM 213, 190

18 b. Calls on the Hungarian Government to comply with the rule of law and EU values and to put in place the necessary reforms so that Hungarian students, teachers and researchers of Public Trust Funded universities may benefit from the Erasmus+ programme, including the European Universities Alliances initiative;

CA 22 - Compromise on citations

Covered: AM 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

- *having regard to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, in particular articles 13 and 14 on “Freedom of the arts and sciences” and “Right to Education”,*
- *having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European strategy for universities of 28 January 2022,*
- *having regards to the Report on the Future of European Competitiveness of September 2024 by Mario Draghi,*
- *having regards to the Report on research and innovation of October 2024 titled “Align, act, accelerate – Research, technology and innovation to boost European competitiveness”, by a group of independent experts chaired by Manuel Heitor,*
- *having regard to the independent High-Level Report of April 2024 on the future of the Single Market by Enrico Letta, titled “Much more than a market – Speed, Security, Solidarity: Empowering the Single Market to deliver a sustainable future and prosperity for all EU Citizens”,*
- *having regard to the Council Resolution on a new European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030,*
- *having regard to the Council Recommendation of 13 May 2024 ‘Europe on the Move’ on learning mobility opportunities for everyone,*
- *having regard to the European Commission Report on good practices from European University Alliances Projects,*
- *having regard to the mid-term review of the European Education Area of 2023,*
- *having regard to the Commission staff working document of 20 December 2024 entitled ‘Report on the final outcomes of the Erasmus+ policy experimentation projects: European degree (label) and institutionalised EU cooperation instruments’,*
- *having regard to the Commission Staff Working Document of 27 March 2024 Accompanying the documents Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a blueprint for a European degree, Proposal for a Council recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education and Proposal for a Council recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education,*
- *having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions a STEM Education Strategic Plan: skills for competitiveness and innovation of 5 March 2025,*
- *having regard to the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on the European Research Area Policy Agenda 2025-2027 of 28 February 2025,*
- *having regard to the Principles, Guidelines and Indicators of the Social Dimension of Higher Education generated by the Bologna Follow-Up Group, Working Group on Social Dimension 2021-2024,*

CA 23 - Compromise on Recital A

Covered: AM 20 S&D, 23 EPP, 24 RE

Fall: AM 21 ECR, 22 Fourlas

A. whereas quality education and *training as well as* (EPP) academic cooperation are prerequisites for achieving the European Union's strategic autonomy, *promoting EU's values*³ (S&D), fighting skills shortages by *attracting and retaining talent* (S&D, RE), and fostering competitiveness with leading global universities *based on the development of human capital, resilience and well-being* (EPP);

CA 24 - Compromise on Recital B

Covered: AM 29 RE, 30 EPP, 31 S&D, 32 EPP

Fall: AM 27 the Left

B. whereas the importance of academia and universities for a competitive, *resilient and autonomous* (EPP) European Union is underlined in Mario Draghi's report⁴ on the future of EU's competitiveness, in Enrico Letta's report⁵ on the future of the single market and in Manuel Heitor's report⁶ on the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe;

Ba. whereas the fragmentation of EU's higher education and research undermines the capacity of the European Union to safeguard its sovereignty, promote its values, and assert global influence; greater integration could reinforce its strategic position; (S&D)

Bb. whereas the Competitiveness Compass emphasises the importance of high quality education, training and lifelong learning to fill in the skills and labour gaps; (EPP)

CA 25 - Compromise on Recital C

Covered: AM 33 S&D, 34 RE, 35 ECR, 158 Helder Sousa Silva, Manuela Ripa

C. whereas Erasmus+ is an EU flagship programme supporting education, training, youth, sport in Europe and *internationally, while fostering mobility and academic cooperation* (S&D, RE); *whereas stronger synergies with existing EU programmes* (ECR, Ripa, Sousa Silva), *such as Horizon Europe* (S&D) *would benefit those objectives as well as a more comprehensive approach in higher education;*

CA 26 - Compromise on Recital E

Covered: AM 38 EPP, 39 Fourlas, 40 S&D, 41 ECR

Fall: AM 37 ESN

E. whereas the European Universities alliances serve a multidimensional purpose, starting with the creation of joint curricula, progressing towards the creation of inter-university campuses with a strong European dimension, that fosters the mobility of students, *lifelong learners, researchers as well as academic and non-academic staff*, and other even more

³ as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty of European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/draghi-report_en;

⁵ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/ny3j24sm/much-more-than-a-market-report-by-enrico-letta.pdf>;

⁶ European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Align, act, accelerate – Research, technology and innovation to boost European competitiveness, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/9106236>;

transformative changes in the higher education landscapes in Member States and participating countries *for a truly competitive European Education Area (EEA) (EPP)*;

CA 27 - Compromise on Recital F

Covered: AM 47 RE, 48 ECR, 49 S&D, 51 RE

Fall: AM 50 Griset, Sorel

F. whereas academic freedom is a central principle of universities' missions and activities *as enshrined in Article 13 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel⁷ (RE)*; *whereas such freedom is crucial to the wellbeing of democratic societies and thus needs to be further protected and promoted (S&D, RE, ECR)*;

Fa. whereas the European Universities Alliances, by providing seamless mobility of students, researchers, academic and non-academic staff within the EU and beyond, are central to the realisation of the "fifth freedom" to enhance research, innovation and education in the Single Market, as described in the Letta report (RE);

CA 28 - Compromise on Recital G

Covered: AM 52 S&D, 53 ECR, 54 Greens, 55 RE, 87 ECR

G. whereas higher education institutions in Europe face challenges with transnational collaboration, especially with regards to funding, *the significant differences in national and regional legislations, legal statuses and governance structures and contractual barriers to knowledge sharing*;

CA 29 - Compromise on Recital H

Covered: AM 58 ECR, 59 EPP, 60 S&D

H. whereas the European Universities initiative has been successful (EPP), *exceeding expectations in terms of participation and engagement (S&D)*; whereas the aim of creating 20 alliances set out in the 2017 Council conclusions has been surpassed, as 65 alliances have now been created, encompassing more than 570 universities with more than 2 200 external partners, without any additional budget allocations *and without any guarantee of continuity on funded projects (ECR)*;

CA 30 - Compromise on Recital I

Covered: AM 61 ECR

I. whereas these current alliances were selected through five competitive open calls focusing on quality, excellence, *academic merit (ECR)*, inclusivity and equitable geographical coverage;

CA 31 - Compromise on Recital J

Covered: AM 63 EPP, 64 S&D, 65 ECR, 66 RE

Fall: 68 ESN, 69 the Left

⁷ Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel, 11/11/1997;

J. whereas the European Universities initiative is a key instrument for building an integrated, competitive and inclusive European Education Area, *capable of responding to global challenges as well as* strengthening European identity, *culture and values*;

CA 32 - Compromise on Recital K
Covered: AM 71 S&D, 72 EPP, 73 RE

K. whereas the alliances have proven their transformative potential to modernise the Member States' higher education systems, *playing a leading* role in educating a new generation of mobile European students *and have contributed to cutting-edge research*; whereas universities from several alliances are *key advocates and drivers* of legislative changes in their own countries;

CA 33 - Compromise on Recital L
Covered: AM 76 S&D, 77 RE

L. whereas 23 Member States are *currently co-funding* alliances with their national budgets;