



EELISA

European University

**EELISA INNOCORE**

**Deliverable 1.3 Policy brief**

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2	2022-11-14	UPM	First version of the document sent to EELISA InnoCORE contacts and EELISA Exec. Board for perusal and comments.
3	2022-11-23	UPM	Second version of the document integrating comments, sent to quality check run by SSSA.
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## EELISA InnoCORE Partners

Number	Role	Name in original language	Name in English	Short name	Country
1	COO	Universidad Politécnica de Madrid	Technical University of Madrid	UPM	Spain
2	BEN	École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées	National School of Civil Engineering	ENPC	France
3	BEN	Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg	Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg	FAU	Germany
4	BEN	İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi	Istanbul Technical University	ITU	Turkey
5	BEN	Scuola Normale Superiore	Higher Normal School	SNS	Italy
6	BEN	Scuola Superiore di Studi Universitari e di Perfezionamento Sant'Anna	Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies	SSSA	Italy
7	BEN	Universitatea Politehnica din Bucuresti	Politehnica University of Bucharest	UPB	Romania
8	BEN	Budapesti Műszaki és Gazdaságtudományi Egyetem	Budapest University of Technology and Economics	BME	Hungary
9	BEN	Université Paris Sciences et Lettres	Université PSL	PSL	France

Alliance members



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# 1 Feedback on progress

## 1.1 Challenges and tangible progress

Please describe the **challenges** your Alliance encountered regarding cooperation between universities in the field of R&I in relation to the institutional change areas (transformation modules) foreseen.

### Strengthening human capital and enabling balanced brain circulation (ITM2) – *The challenge of creating the right incentives for the engagement of research and teaching staff.*

Human Resources, and very particularly research and teaching staff, represent the most important and most valuable asset of our institutions, as key actors putting in place the missions of HEIs: educating citizens, creating knowledge, transferring knowledge to society. In its different strategic meetings, EELISA partners have recognized the need and the importance of bringing researchers and innovators on board for the success of the project. However, while the involvement of researchers, innovators and other structural staff beyond core teams has been recognised as a major objective, it has also been repeatedly highlighted as a major challenge for EELISA InnoCORE. EELISA aligns with the statements made by FIT FORTHEM in its policy brief on this matter (challenge section)<sup>1</sup>.

Regarding the particular case of researchers, academic staff is dealing with very heavy workloads, meeting their research and teaching responsibilities. Experienced reputed researchers usually have already well-established networks and working with peers from other universities is part of their daily routine. Getting involved in new activities and engaging with new partners is oftentimes seen as additional work with limited added value, therefore, any new initiative or tool must be carefully designed to offer them a valuable opportunity. Because of this reason, EELISA partners have been cautious to approach researchers broadly without having first a clear offer and ready-to-use tools. Managing expectations and avoiding generating false expectations has been a major concern for EELISA partners. EELISA InnoCORE is tackling this challenge (see below), however, insufficient funding to put in place impactful programmes to boost connections among researchers and innovators, and the impossibility to fund certain activities under the current CSA<sup>2</sup> scheme (e.g. seed-funding for research projects) are a major hurdle. To this, it is necessary to add the uncertainty regarding the long-term sustainability of the instruments and tools put in place (see below).

### Strengthening human capital and enabling balanced brain circulation (ITM2) – *The challenge of staff involvement beyond the core team.*

Putting EELISA Alliance on track has involved a very high number of staff, units and departments at each partner university. Within EELISA InnoCORE, this includes experts from technology transfer offices, international research project management units, entrepreneurship and innovation units, open science experts and librarians, and gender equality units meeting on a regularly basis, in addition to the staff hired for coordination and contributions from research units for building InnoCORE tools (research groups, laboratories, research centres). The creation of a strong coordination structure with well-established networks of experts is one of the main achievements of EELISA (see below). However, it has to be noted that this also meant stretching human resources at its maximum.

### Sharing research infrastructures and sharing other resources (ITM3) – *The challenge of digitalisation and digitation of resources.*

The work done for the production of the first catalogue of research infrastructures revealed various fundamental challenges similar to those which other Alliances are facing (*Conference on Educational and Research Infrastructure Collaboration in European University Alliances promote by 4EU+ Alliance*<sup>3</sup>). Challenges encountered included: reaching consensus on the type and granularity of data

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.forthem-alliance.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/forthem/FIT\\_FORTHEM/Results/Briefs/D1.4\\_FIT\\_FORTHEM\\_POLICY\\_BRIEF\\_University\\_Alliances\\_Pilot1\\_2022.pdf](https://www.forthem-alliance.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/forthem/FIT_FORTHEM/Results/Briefs/D1.4_FIT_FORTHEM_POLICY_BRIEF_University_Alliances_Pilot1_2022.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Coordination and Support Action.

<sup>3</sup> <https://4euplus.eu/4EU-367.html>



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to be collected; differences in the processes (each partner defining its own processes for collecting, updating and curating their data); the heterogeneity of the digital tools used for the collection of data; or the diversity of the natural language used to describe the infrastructure. It has to be noted that the catalogue has been built by running a survey among EELISA researchers who, on a voluntary basis, decided to include the infrastructures they are responsible for on the catalogue. Within this context, the different levels of digitalisation and digitation of resources among EELISA partners emerged as a major challenge. Whereas some partners had already-existing online centralised catalogues, some other partners did not have such tools, making the process of building the catalogue a basically manual work using excel files. Once the first version of the catalogue produced, EELISA partners are facing now the challenge of putting the catalogue online with an appealing look and feeling (i.e. again digitalisation of resources comes as a major question). The whole process poses several questions that apply to the rest of online catalogues and tools that the Alliance is building: 1) How to keep the catalogues of the Alliance updated; 2) How to guarantee data and software interoperability among EELISA tools, and 3) How to guarantee interoperability among the individual partner's IT tools, i.e. how to transfer data from partner's tools that are used as primary source of information into the Alliance catalogues.

**Reinforcing cooperation with non-academic actors, especially academia-business's cooperation, with targeted actions aimed to put our innovation in the market (ITM4) – *The challenge of approaching external stakeholders with a sound coherent offer and strong trademark.***

The engagement with external stakeholders has progressed relatively slowly. One of the reasons for this has been the wariness from EELISA partners to contact industry and the private sector without having first a clear portfolio of what EELISA and its different projects can offer (EELISA, EELISA InnoCORE, EELISA Unfolds). Regarding contacts with the private sector, the European University portfolio includes opportunities encompassing all dimensions of HEIs: education (e.g. internships), research (e.g. industrial PhDs or joint projects) or innovation. EELISA partners consider of key importance approaching industry with a single voice and a single portfolio of opportunities, and avoiding contacting external stakeholders in a distributed manner. The separation between R&I (Horizon 2020), on the one hand, and education (Erasmus+), on the other hand, hindered the process and complicated coordination.

Please **describe how you tackled or intend to tackle these challenges**. Based on your project's experience so far (and if applicable), briefly outline case(s) that you consider as good practice and of interest to other universities or to policy-makers

Challenge	How EELISA partners are tackling the challenge
<p style="color: #4F81BD;">Creating the right incentives for the engagement of researchers (ITM2)</p>	<p>As first step for the involvement of researchers, during the first half of the project, EELISA InnoCORE partners made important efforts in connecting their European Project Offices under different schemes (WP5, policy liaisons board, 1<sup>st</sup> InnoCORE symposium). EELISA partners are also using their already existing networking activities, e.g. BME competence fair<sup>4</sup>, making special invitations to EELISA. Under the Erasmus+ strand, EELISA also put in place initiatives with the aim of boosting connections among researchers (EELISA Connect workshops<sup>5</sup> or the 1<sup>st</sup> joint call for EELISA communities<sup>6</sup>), some of them are being used as a source of inspiration under InnoCORE.</p> <p>At this moment, EELISA partners are working on two instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Launching of a call for workshops for researchers using a budget of 170,000 € that was set aside for open calls in EELISA InnoCORE GA. The call feeds from the learnings of the 1<sup>st</sup> joint call for EELISA communities and its design has</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> <https://innovacio.bme.hu/events/bme-competence-fair/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://eelisa.eu/eelisaconnect/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://eelisa.eu/events/first-joint-call-for-eelisa-communities-deadline/>



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	<p>been the subject of intense work and negotiations. Launching the call requires an amendment to the GA (pending).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Networking IT tool. Next year (May 2023), EELISA InnoCORE will put in place a networking tool for its researchers. The functionalities of the tool have been developed and tested.</li> </ul> <p>Partners have put on the table options not foreseen in the Grant Agreement (e.g. mobilities for visiting infrastructures) that are under discussion. Such an initiative would require the allocation of additional funds.</p> <p>EELISA is making very important efforts in communication and dissemination. After two years, the Alliance is well-known among EELISA academic staff, something that is key for guaranteeing engagement. E.g. 70% of the respondents (mainly researchers) of a survey that EELISA InnoCORE run on gender equality in September knew what EELISA is.</p>
Involvement staff beyond the core team ITM2	<p>The creation of a strong coordination structure with well-established networks of experts is one of the main achievements of EELISA (see below). However, as indicated, we must also note that this comes at the expense of adding an important extra workload for the permanent staff. One potential solution would be allocating extra resources and reinforcing human resources both at local and at Alliance-level (not only with project managers and facilitators but with experts on different topics).</p>
Digitalisation and digitation of resources ITM3	<p>Particularly, EELISA partners are working right now on tweaking the information provided for the catalogue of infrastructures. However, this remains a basically manual work. No short-term solution is at hand at this moment, since digitalisation of resources and information in many cases needs to be done first at local level (see below). At EELISA level, it is clear that an IT office endowed with sufficient resources will be necessary for the second phase of the project.</p>
Approaching external stakeholders ITM4	<p>This has been the subject of various meetings and the question is already being dealt with at EELISA-level, i.e. all projects coordinated (EELISA, EELISA InnoCORE<sup>7</sup>, EELISA Unfolds<sup>8</sup>). The same partner, BME, leads relations with external stakeholders under projects EELISA and EELISA InnoCORE, which will ease the development of a joint coordinated strategy.</p>

Please describe the **tangible progress** that individual partners as well as the Alliance as a whole have made in terms of introducing changes in their entities as a result of this project. Please elaborate on whether the inclusive and integrated cooperation approach of your alliance helps accelerate institutional change of all partners (e.g. through sharing of practices from institutions with strong expertise or infrastructure in specific areas to institutions without).

As of November 2022, EELISA Alliance has been running for two years, with its R&I dimension, EELISA InnoCORE, officially having started in June 2021. During this time, **EELISA managed to set up a robust and well-functioning coordination and management structure combining all its dimensions**. It is worth noting that, contrary to other Alliances, and although some EELISA partners had worked together in the past under Athens network<sup>9</sup>, EELISA was not built on a pre-existing network or association. This meant putting in place a new structure, binding together partners that, while sharing common interests and objectives, were not used to work under a joint structure. **Building trust and setting up joint working methods has been a major accomplishment. The EELISA office played a key role in this.**

<sup>7</sup> <https://eelisa.eu/eelisa-innocore/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://eelisa.eu/eelisa-unfolds/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://athensnetwork.eu/>



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In this sense, EELISA has created strong networks of experts working in the different fields of the Alliance, which in the case of EELISA InnoCORE involves among others technology transfer offices (TTOs), research managers, open science managers, gender equality units or research directorates and vice-rectorates. Each WP has its group of experts, grouping experts in the specific matter from each partner institution. **EELISA has triggered collaborations beyond the framework of the work package or project jargon.** In this regard, it is **worth noting the connection among European and International Research Project Offices and TTOs**, which are working together under different frameworks within the EELISA InnoCORE project but where exchanges of practices have also taken place beyond the project. The Alliance is successfully promoting the transfer of knowledge between partners.

EELISA partners would also like to highlight the achievements of the Alliance in two fields. Firstly, innovation and entrepreneurship, with the opening up of many of their innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives to all EELISA partners. Within the framework of EELISA InnoCORE and EELISA Unfolds, partners are opening their activities to the whole Alliance, broadening opportunities for students as well as academic and non-academic staff. Secondly, EELISA would like to highlight the commitment of the Alliance and its members, and work done regarding gender equality and diversity<sup>10</sup>.

Lastly, EELISA InnoCORE would like to stress the well-structured collaboration with other Alliances Swafs projects that is taking place under FOREU2. Led by University of Poitiers, the Swafs Subgroup provides Alliances with a useful forum for the exchange of experience. Additionally, there have been events organised by Alliances for exchanging experiences with other Alliances that have been most useful<sup>11</sup>. At least regarding Swafs, the exchange of learning is working well.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://eelisa.eu/gender-equality-and-diversity/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.charm-eu.eu/first-torch-annual-forum-held-successfully> or <https://4euplus.eu/4EU-353.html>



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## 2 Policy recommendations

### General remarks

EELISA partners fully believe in the potential of the European University initiative as a powerful engine for raising excellence and increasing global competitiveness of Europe. Building a fully operative and strong European University acting as a single entity will however require **action on many different fields, many of them out of the scope of universities**. In general terms, the ambition of putting in place a European University will need action from different stakeholders at different levels (local, regional, national and European) at least in two overarching dimensions: a) the **financial dimension**, particularly with regard to the financial sustainability of a pan-European structure which, from its very bases, is meant to be a public institution made of public institutions and meant to provide a public service; B) the **legal dimension** for making this structure possible.

**This process of integration and this new structure will however need to live together and respect under all circumstances the independence and autonomy of its constituent parts.** As in the case of the European construction, different universities are gathering together in a common project and they are and will be ready to put resources in common and putting in place joint instruments. However, this needs to take place within the full respect of the autonomy of its members.

EELISA Alliance would like to highlight the close correlation between the policy topics raised, some recommendations being valid for several topics. For this reason, some topics have been merged in a single section.

#### Policy topic 1: facilitating transnational cooperation

Knowing that the Commission proposed a [Council recommendation to facilitate transnational collaboration between universities](#), which action should be prioritised to address the challenges you encountered as an Alliance in sharing capacities, infrastructures, resources or staff in R&I?

#### Policy topic 4: access to excellence

What is your advice on how to accelerate access to excellence in science and in value creation for all participants for higher education institutions across the entire ERA, through the European Universities Initiative?

***Future funding programmes should have a holistic approach encompassing all missions of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).*** Universities are not just institutions providing education, but also have as fundamental missions generating knowledge (research) and transferring knowledge to society (innovation and entrepreneurship). Together with education, research and innovation (R&I) are intrinsic building blocks of universities. Therefore, a true European University cannot be confined to its education mission, but it must comprise all its dimensions. EELISA partners welcome the new approach of the “Erasmus+ call Partnerships for Excellence – European Universities - ERASMUS-EDU-2023-EUR-UNIV”, which seems to offer a more holistic approach and indicates European Universities to “develop and implement an integrated long-term joint strategy for education with, where possible, links to research and innovation”. Despite this, whereas there seems to be a better integration of the different University axes under Erasmus+, the call still poses many doubts to applicants regarding the type of activities that will be fundable: What will happen with the tools that EELISA InnoCORE is putting in place (e.g. catalogue of infrastructures, networking platform)? Can the most promising and successful tools be inherited or integrated fully within the new Erasmus+ proposal? Are they fundable under the new Erasmus+ call? Can the types of actions envisaged by EELISA for their R&I dimension (see below) be funded under the new Erasmus+ call? EELISA partners call the European Commission to conceive, in future funding schemes, holistic programmes that **clearly and tangibly** integrate all HEIs’ dimensions, **avoiding the segregation existing between Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 Swafs in the period 2020-2023.**



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**Long-term secured funding: going from a project-based approach to a strategy-based or programme-based approach.** EELISA partners believe that European universities are a meaningful instrument that will help raise excellence and increase global competitiveness of Europe. Being able to access the teaching resources and knowledge of nine universities and being able to move seamlessly through nine campuses will prove a fundamental advantage when attracting international talent and improving our Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs) global competitiveness. The same applies for researchers or innovators: being able to access resources from not just one but nine universities will certainly help improve the quality of research and will be a push for our innovators. However, **such an ambitious initiative needs a similarly ambitious commitment.** Building a new institution requires a **long-term clear strategy coupled with adequate resources.** Whereas **the project-based approach used so far have been useful to kick-start the process and lay its foundations,** such an approach will be clearly unable to meet future needs. A university cannot depend for its survival on winning three- or five-year grants, providing funds for implementing initiatives whose sustainability is permanently threatened.

EELISA partners do also believe that European Universities need a clear support from their national and regional governments, and would like to point out to the different levels of commitment and financial support received. Differences in support have created multi-speed Alliances, where partners having additional support can move at a faster speed than partners not having received additional funding. **National and regional governments (in this case, even via ESIF) should be encouraged to support European Universities on equal terms.**

**EELISA partners would also like to firmly express their concern with the discontinuation of specific funding for the R&I dimension of Alliances** ("Support for the Research and Innovation Dimension of European Universities" under Horizon 2020 - Science with and for Society, SwafS). Under the new Erasmus+ call, Alliances will be able to improve, strengthen and go deeper in their integration and bring in new partners not to just a project but to a more long-term strategy. In contrast with the Alliances Erasmus+ long-term and more sustainable vision, where an incipient programmatic approach is being envisaged along the lines described above, there is no clear straightforward continuation for its R&I dimension. The Erasmus+ call contemplates R&I but poses doubts regarding eligibility of actions (see above), and resources under the new call, although considerable, will not be sufficient to cover deeply all dimensions. Alliances will need to find additional funding sources.

EELISA partners welcome the European Excellence Initiative planned under WIDERA (HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03-01) as a potential opportunity for reinforcing certain aspects of the R&I dimension of Alliances and, particularly, for strengthening ties with institutions from widening countries. However, the requirements on the distribution of the budget raises concerns among some EELISA partners, who consider that the conditions will limit options greatly.

**Possibility to fund small scale joint research projects or joint calls fostering exchanges and mobilities between researchers, in order to create a strong network.** EELISA Alliance aligns with the statements made by FIT FORTHEM in its policy brief: "*Especially fostering cooperation in research activities across Europe in newly established partnerships would need sufficient seed funding or more small-scale funding schemes*". As highlighted above, the involvement of researchers in the Alliance activities and creating a sense of belonging and ownership are, and will be, one of the biggest challenges for European Universities. **Achieving this aim will require our institutions to start working as a single entity and deploying meaningful joint incentives, including joint Alliance-wide research support programmes** promoting exchanges between researchers from the partner institutions, seed funding and joint research actions. Under the current funding schemes, oftentimes CSAs (Coordination and Support Actions), many of this kind of actions are not fundable. Moreover, the current level of funding would only leave room for launching small-scale programmes involving a not very significant share of researchers. **The attractiveness of the type of actions that Alliances can put in place under the current schemes to foster collaboration among researchers is low.** EELISA Alliance welcomes the announcement made by DG RTD during the meeting held on 18 October with FOREU2 SwafS projects, where Alliances were informed that 20% of the budget under the HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03-01 could be allocated to research activities. Despite the limitations of the current call, EELISA Alliance welcomes this possibility, which we understand goes in



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line with EELISA's views. EELISA encourages the European Commission to open up this possibility under other calls (for instance ERC Synergy Grants) and to design calls so that more cascade funding in the sense described above is possible.

**The clarification of the legal statute will prove key.** Despite the importance of having a legal statute, EELISA Alliance would like to recall the European Commission about the complexities of such an endeavour and that any initiative needs to provide Universities with enough flexibility. No one-fits-all solution can be developed nor imposed, but a series of possible solutions should be offered. **Universities must be able to choose the solution that adapts better to their situation**, taking into account their national and regional legal frameworks, and most importantly **respecting under all circumstances the principle of autonomy**. The question of having a legal statute cannot and should not be imposed on European Universities Alliances. The lessons learned from the call ERASMUS-EDU-2022-POL-EXP-EUstatus – Pilot institutionalised EU cooperation instruments to explore the feasibility for a possible European legal status for alliances of higher education institutions will be extremely valuable for informing EELISA's decision about its legal entity.

**Policy topic 2: strengthening careers**

Is there a need to develop a model tenure-track system at European level to contribute to solving precariousness of early career researchers? If you believe so, how do you think it should be structured? In light of the [policy process on the reform of assessment](#) of research and institutions, what are your recommendations on how to address academic/researcher career assessment?

**Policy topic 5: Increasing global competitiveness**

Europe's relative weight at a global level when it comes to research-intensive universities is shrinking. In light of this, a European Excellence Initiative will be established to improve global competitiveness of Europe's universities, in synergy with the European Universities Initiative of Erasmus+. In your view, what would be key elements of such an Initiative? Secondly, could you envisage that such an initiative specifically targets EU objectives such as the Green Deal or European Missions?

**Achieving seamless mobility of EU researchers, as well as attracting talent from third countries depend on broader circumstances beyond the outreach of universities (including salaries, social security arrangements or life standards).** EELISA partners would like to recall that any strategy aiming to strength research careers will require simultaneous action on many fronts. "Europe could still do better in stimulating mobility and attracting and retaining talented students, academics and researchers to maximise Europe's global influence" ([European strategy for universities](#)); however, indeed "to succeed, the European strategy for universities requires alignment of policy priorities and investments at EU, national, regional and institutional levels" ([Council recommendation to facilitate transnational collaboration between universities](#)).

Particularly important in this regard will be the question of childcare and social services. In the different EELISA activities organised on gender equality and diversity, researchers from different EELISA institutions have repeatedly pointed out not only to the incompatibility between having children and moving to another country or changing careers ("moving to a different country can only happen before having children", EELISA Roundtable 'Women who make science happen' held on 11 February 2022), but also maternity, childcare and an uneven distribution of family duties are constantly highlighted as obstacles hindering the career progress of women researchers (findings from the survey EELISA InnoCORE run for the update of the Gender Equality Plan). A deep reflection on this situation seems to be necessary.

Lastly, as an Alliance having as partner a non-European Higher Education Institutions particularly affected by this, EELISA partners would like to take the opportunity to stress the bureaucratic and administrative obstacles that hiring staff or bringing students from non-European countries (and in some cases also from other European countries) involves, including lengthy and complicated visa procedures before arriving in the host country but also complex bureaucratic procedures for formalising work contracts once the researchers is in the host country.



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***The development of a model tenure-track system at European level generates conflicting views.***

EELISA partners initiated an internal consultation process on this matter but reaching an agreement was not possible. In fact, EELISA would like to draw the European Commission's attention to the fact that, when asked about the development of model tenure-track system at European level, **conflicting views arose among EELISA partners**. Whereas some partners expressed their disagreement and preference for keeping it under regional or national competence, other partners are supportive of developing a European model. EELISA partners also believe that several aspects still need to be improved as previous steps, including keep working on facilitating the mobility of junior and senior researchers (physical, virtual learning, blended) in a more systematic and flexible way and **guaranteeing that mobilities are duly recognised in researchers' careers in all countries and by all institutions**.

Some partners also put on the table the idea of testing the European model within Alliances: "European universities such as EELISA could be given special funds to organize several tenure-tracks. The members of the alliance would propose possible subjects of interest, and promise a full professor position at the end if successful. The alliance establishes a list of tenure-tracks to be financed. An evaluation process involving specialists of at least three partners of the alliance will be set-up. A bonus will be given for projects including strong collaborations within the alliance".

***Providing Alliances with opportunities to reach out to non-European Universities.*** Lastly, regarding policy topic 5, the European Commission could explore the possibility of putting in place funding schemes (maybe in the form of a call for proposals) for European Universities to boost links with non-European partners, maybe under the external action budget. If there are already opportunities under the current framework, an ad hoc information day addressed to Universities would be welcome.

**Policy topic 3: digital transition**

What are the specific needs of the alliances to accelerate their digital transition in the R&I dimension, and how can this be addressed at the EU level? In particular, do you see a need for *additional* dedicated e-infrastructures for data storage and management that are distributed and interoperable? Please take into account progress regarding the development of the federated e-infrastructure for research outputs (EOSC, see [ERA Policy Agenda](#)), and the implementation of a digital platform for cooperation in higher education (see the [European strategy for universities](#)).

***Digitalisation and digitation of resources and interoperability as key obstacles to be overcome.***

As described above, progress and work done under InnoCORE and EELISA has revealed two main challenges on the topic of digital transition: different levels of digitalisation and digitation of resources among EELISA partners, on the one hand; and very importantly, guaranteeing the **interoperability** of both already existing as well as newly created IT platforms, on the other hand. EELISA partners are not in a position to submit concrete policy recommendations outlining how to tackle these obstacles; however, two remarks seem relevant. Firstly, regarding the different levels of digitalisation, EELISA partners do agree that digitalisation comes in many cases to a local, regional or national question and, therefore, should be supported by regional and national authorities and decentralised budgets, included ESIF (European Structural and Investment Funds) or NextGenerationEU. Secondly, guaranteeing interoperability should not be construed as promoting a close centralization at EU-level, but the principle of subsidiarity should prevail.



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