EELISA European University

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EELISA Grand Meeting in Winterthur: putting practice at the heart of academic excellence



- **From 9 to 13 November, around 150 representatives of the EELISA community will gather at ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences in Winterthur for the EELISA Grand Meeting.**
- **Bringing together students, university leaders, academic and non-academic staff from across the Alliance, the week will provide an important opportunity to advance EELISA's shared priorities, with a particular focus on the next funding phase and the role of practice in higher education.**

Winterthur, 6 November 2026.

Starting next Monday, the ZHAW campus in Winterthur will welcome a vibrant international community, bringing new faces, perspectives and energy to its hallways. Around 150 representatives from across EELISA will gather for the Alliance's Grand Meeting, including members of the EELISA Governing Board and Executive Board, the EELISA Student Council, and working groups focusing on EELISA Communities, Research and Innovation.

The series of meetings will provide an opportunity to advance ongoing work, take strategic decisions and strengthen coordination as EELISA prepares for its next stage of development, moving from EELISA 2.0 towards EELISA 3.0.

This year's Grand Meeting will place a particular emphasis on practice and its contribution to academic excellence. As the Alliance's only university of applied sciences, ZHAW brings a distinctive perspective to EELISA: one in which education and research are closely connected to professional practice, societal needs and collaboration with external partners.

Building on this perspective, the meeting will explore how collaboration with external stakeholders can be further strengthened across EELISA. Practice is not an addition to academic excellence, but an integral part of it: knowledge developed, tested and refined together with the people, organisations and communities it is intended to serve.

Handover of the EELISA Governing Board Chairship

One of the key moments of the Grand Meeting will take place on 12 November at the ZHAW School of Engineering, with a symbolic ceremony marking the transfer of the six-month chairship of the EELISA Governing Board from Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM) to ZHAW.

For **Regula Jöhl, Rector of ZHAW**, this is an important occasion: “It is a great pleasure to welcome the EELISA community to ZHAW for the Grand Meeting. As the alliance’s only university of applied sciences, we are particularly proud to bring the perspective of practice-oriented education to the heart of this gathering. From students taking part in the hackathon to lecturers, staff working across the different Work Packages, and our governing and executive boards, we look forward to welcoming the many people who make EELISA what it is and to strengthening our shared ambition to connect higher education with societal impact.”

The handover ceremony will mark the beginning of two days of Governing Board meetings, bringing together rectors, presidents, directors and other high-level representatives of EELISA member institutions. Their discussions will focus on reviewing the Alliance's progress and priorities for the final year of EELISA 2.0, defining key steps to strengthen its sustainability, growth and long-term institutional framework, and deepening cooperation and impact across education, research and innovation. They will also address the strategic and governance directions needed to shape EELISA's next phase of development (2027–2035).

The meetings will also provide an opportunity for member institutions to reaffirm their shared commitment to practice-oriented education and research through the signing of a joint pledge for practice, excellent teaching and research for impact.

A remarkable week opened by EELISA students

The Grand Meeting will kick off with the **second EELISA Student-led Bootcamp: Hackathon for a Circular Campus.**

Students from across the Alliance will come together to tackle real-life challenges related to circularity and sustainability on university campuses. Working in interdisciplinary and international teams, they will develop ideas and practical solutions while exchanging perspectives from their different institutions and fields of study.
The hackathon will set the tone for a week of collaboration, exchange and shared ambition, highlighting the central role students play in shaping the future of EELISA.

Stay tuned and follow EELISA throughout the week for updates and highlights from Winterthur!

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ALLIANCE MEMBERS

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