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A comparative report of European University Alliances and their complementarity to Unite!

Deliverable 8.1

Deliverable

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Abstract	This report is a necessary step to identify those other European University Alliances that best fit to contribute to the overall goal related to the contribution on how to share good practices and tackle common barriers, also based on the potential for interactions in the areas of research and innovation and education, at the local, regional, and national level as well as European level.
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History of changes

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v0.1	10 February 2022	Technische Universität Darmstadt (TUDa)	all	First draft
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v1.0	28 February 2022	Technische Universität Darmstadt (TUDa)	Coordinator and Management Team (POLITO)	Final version to be submitted to EC

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Objective of the report

In general, the outputs of WP8 within UNITE.H2020 will contribute on how to share good practices and tackle common barriers, as part of the overall European University Initiative monitoring framework (in line with the European Commission's aims). For this, the Unite! Alliance is convinced that next to the identification of potential partner Alliances, matchmaking workshops, pilot collaborations and pilot structures with those Alliances can directly contribute to this overall goal.

This report is a necessary step to identify those other European University Alliances that best fit to contribute to this overall goal. Unite! aims to select other European University Alliances or groups of Alliances that are either complementary or similar to our Alliance, based on the potential for interactions in the areas of research and innovation and education.

Method

As a first step, assessment and selection **criteria**, have been developed in the framework of the above-mentioned aspects for **compatibility**, which are either related to the **complementarity** or the **similarity** of the particular European University alliance with Unite! and its partners.

Based on these selection criteria, all Unite! partners analysed other European University Alliances through a desktop research and interviews with representatives and alliances coordinators in order to *qualitatively* assess the overall compatibility to Unite. This task started by building on the Unite! partners' existing collaborative contacts to partners of other Alliances for the identification of some potential alliances for joint collaborations.

The four areas and respective criteria against which the alliances were evaluated and scored are:

- Research, innovation and infrastructure cooperation
 - Specific internal initiatives to promote innovation in place
 - Research strategy in place (top-down policy)
 - Methods and procedures to share infrastructures for research and education in place
 - Plans to promote joint research collaboration/publications (bottom-up) developed and executed
- Local, regional, national and European cooperation

- Regional outreach strategies and regional focuses formulated
- International outreach strategies and international focus areas formulated
- Intra-university strategy for visibility and involvement formulated and in place
- Collaboration with other pre-existing networks/consortia established
- Synergies in our education initiatives
 - Focus on Joint Programs and European degrees in the mission of the alliance
 - Strategies and methods to reach the 50% mobility threshold formulated
 - Learning management systems for the alliance in place
 - Training for innovative pedagogical approaches and tools executed
 - Concrete activities to promote inclusiveness and accessibility in place
 - Concrete activities and courses for multilingualism and multiculturalism in place
- Possibility and benefits to exchange on governance models for European University Alliances
 - The requirements and purposes of the planned legal entity are spelled out
 - Plans for more integrative joint governance and procedures developed (transfer of competences and autonomy)
 - Active lobbying and fundraising strategies (national, European) in place
 - Strategies and methods for active student involvement in place and executed
 - Frameworks for quality assurance of the alliance formulated

Additional descriptive criteria, acc. to added value and portfolio were taken into account. As Unite! at the time lacked an Eastern European partner, the evaluation took the opportunity also to evaluate potential collaborations with Alliances that have strong representation in Eastern Europe.

A preliminary evaluation of the state of play of Unite! referred to each of the above-mentioned criteria was carried out (0=not addressed; 1=planned; 2=work in progress; 3=developed). Then, similarly, the state of play of each of the evaluated alliances was analysed. On the basis of the comparison between the score of Unite! and of the other Alliances, each of the above criteria was scored from 1 to 3 in an overall compatibility score of the evaluated alliance (1=not compatible; 2=slightly compatible; 3=compatible).

This extensive evaluation exercise was based on desktop research of all Unite! partners and in particular through interviews with representatives and alliance coordinators of the respective evaluated European University Alliances. The interview brought more detail and insights to the sub-items of each of the above-mentioned criteria and brought additional insights to the local, regional and national situation of the different Unite! partners. Those analyses are summarized in this report. In particular the excel tables that are attached to this report (Annex 1) provide a deeper insight into the executed evaluation and analyses.

Results

The initial discussion among Unite! partners, also based on the existing collaborative contacts to partners of other Alliances, led to the identification of seven alliances for potential collaborations: CIVICA, EuroTeQ, Una Europa, FORTHEM, EPICUR, Circle U and 4EU+.

The results of the analysis of these Alliances against the above-mentioned criteria are summarized in the attached tables. A qualitative description of the similarity and complementarity for the different evaluation criteria is also reported.

Unite! identified two preferred pilot activities with other European University Alliances: two joint matchmaking workshops, including an active participation of academic and administrative staff as well as Ph.D. students, to ensure a bottom-up involvement of the Alliances.

One workshop will focus on matchmaking in research activities and, thus, supporting the following Research objectives, identified in the Unite! Challenges and Convergences Roadmap (Deliverable 2.1) for the forthcoming common R&I Agenda:

- Objective R1: Enhancement of multidisciplinary research
- Objective R2: Promotion of a culture of excellence;
- Objective R3: Strengthening the impact of research on society;
- Objective R4: Open Science for knowledge co-creation.

This workshop should tackle the guiding question “How to tackle topics/areas from different points of view, namely Science & Technology and Social Sciences and Humanities?”. Therefore, this workshop is planned with one or two alliances strong in the areas of Social Sciences and Humanities. The expected results of this workshop are ideas for initiating PhD collaborations, initiating joint research projects.

A second workshop is planned as a matchmaking event that brings together two alliances with a similar focus, namely in Science and Technology. Apart from the above mentioned UNITE.H2020 objectives in research, this workshop is additionally addressing one of the innovation objectives identified in the Unite! Challenges and Convergences Roadmap (Deliverable 2.1), namely the objective “I1: Enhancement of an entrepreneurial culture”. The expected results of this workshop are ideas for initiating PhD collaboration, initiating joint research projects in common focus areas, to address open science and open access as well as entrepreneurship activities.

Annex 1 (excel file) gives an overview of the evaluation of the shortlisted Alliances which are preferred for the above-mentioned pilot activities.