4EU Joint Strategy
for long-term co-operation

The 4EU alliance was formed as a response to the vision for the European Education Area discussed at the Gothenburg summit on 17 November 2017 and to the necessity of deepening the research cooperation under the European Research Area. However, it has strong roots in existing and long bilateral relations between its partners. The alliance thus shifts this already fruitful co-operation onto multilateral level.

Rectors of Charles, Heidelberg, Sorbonne and Warsaw University signed *Declaration on the establishment of the 4EU Alliance* on 10 March 2018 in Paris declaring the aim to create a new quality of cooperation in research, teaching, education and administration and to establish the appropriate infrastructure which will bring together researchers, students and staff from the four institutions. This was a crucial step in forming joint goals in the above stated areas. The vision, mission, key objectives, governance and resources are integral part of this framework strategy.

The 4EU research-based universities are institutions with a rich and **long tradition.** The alliance is a unique combination of experience and know-how as well as by **geographical coverage of the European territory** – **the Czech Republic, France, Germany and Poland,** which cover **32% of the EU territory**, stretching from the Mediterranean to the North and Baltic Sea. We cover the historical and cultural heritage of the so called "Western" Europe as well as the Central European countries, which ended up due to Cold War in the so called "Eastern Europe", with their relatively recent experience with the process of opening-up to the world and substantial transformations. There is a vast diversity of traditions, cultures and languages to which students will be exposed and will benefit from. We belong to regions with different economic background and demographic development.

Our countries educate **38%[1] of students of the EU countries**, 4EU partners educate about 180.000 students annually.

All four Universities play a decisive role in the formation of research and education era in their regions. They also take an active part in the delivery on the third mission of universities, i.e. they are socially responsible institutions. We intent to assist society to **adapt** to new global challenges and developments.

We share and are highly committed to the European values. Through our co-operation we want to enhance **European identity**.

We are facing **modernising and internationalising challenges and reforms** within our institutions with the aim to further innovate and modernize. We are all committed to the Bologna process and want to go within this partnership even further. We want to profit from

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[1] Source: Eurostat

the mutual sharing of capacities, know-how and expertise, through both bottom-up as well as top-down approach.
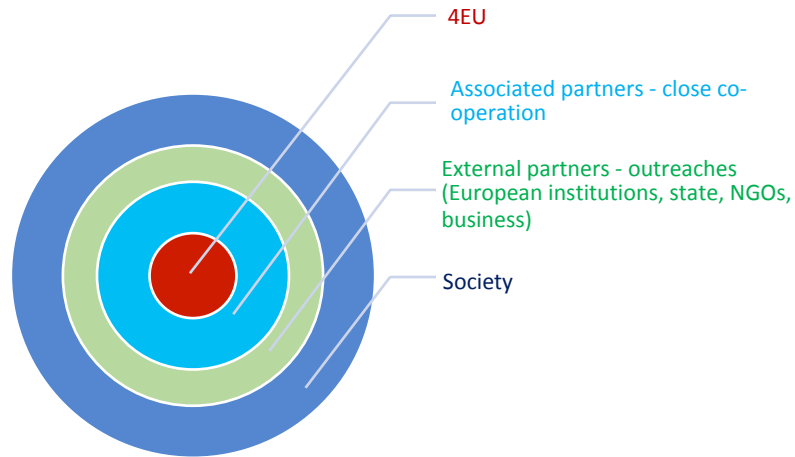
The rise of the knowledge-based society is already showing its impact through the rapid increase in the global student population, which in turn stimulates more competition among universities. The **globalization** of the scientific community is changing the way one does research. Sophisticated research instruments, open data policy and open science are now becoming essential and extend our ability to face global societal challenges. Consequently, handling such a large set of objectives, presents challenges that require an increase in budget and human capacity.

In the international cooperation, **European partnerships** are of a particular importance because we are building the European Research and Higher Education Areas and we should in return benefit from the traction provided by the European programmes. Therefore, European universities, and especially European research-intensive universities, are converging around similar practices. Their cooperation provides unique opportunities to take the advantage of their joint capacities and resources. In addition, such cooperation generates a **significant value added** and allows for cost reductions through, for example, access to the infrastructure.
The need for critical mass in common activities will allow for a definitive acceleration of the necessary processes, which would otherwise be very difficult for universities to deliver individually.

We are building a **sustainable and reliable European University Alliance** where the stakeholders will provide a federated platform for their students, faculties and staff. This will enable across-the-board sharing, integration and management of resources, which will open up new possibilities for research and teaching that are beyond the capabilities of each individual university with a transformative effect. The Alliance will position us with a competitive advantage to address today's scientific and societal challenges.

In order to even broaden-up our focus, we will look for cooperation possibilities with **external partners** to address some of the crucial topics, whether it is innovations, health, social issues, etc. We will engage in a dialogue and potentially co-operation with representatives of European and local institutions, global organizations (i.e. specialized UN agencies), entrepreneurs, professional associations, non-governmental organizations, national and local governments and their administrations etc. We intent to co-operate closely with European university associations and networks, especially those in which 4EU partners are members (LERU, Coimbra, UNICA, EUF, etc.).

- 4EU
- Associated partners - close co-operation
- External partners - outreaches (European institutions, state, NGOs, business)
- Society

It will create new opportunities for students, researchers and staff: bringing critical mass to specific topics and fields and enabling or creating new fields by combining capabilities. **Joint research tools and platforms** will be integrated to support both research and education at the best international level.

Due to the geographical balance of our alliance, which is covering various regions, we are determined to, besides building of research excellence, to work towards enhanced development of **research coherence** within the European Union.

1. Mission

The 4EU mission is to develop a barrier-free and continuously deepening cooperation in education, research and innovation within the alliance.

By working in partnership and collaboration, we serve society to the highest level with our core values:
- academic and research freedom
- ensure the democratization of education
- putting students at the centre
- collaboration in an interdisciplinary approach
- excellent research
- creativity and openness
- ensuring integrity
- and growing internationalization

with compassion and respect.

2. Vision

The collective ambition of 4EU is to strengthen the European vision of deeper cooperation and mutual enrichment and transform our organisations, share a common academic tradition and values and expand well-established collaborations for the benefit of the alliance and to better serve the society.

Our four universities are comprehensive, research-intensive, and innovative in teaching and learning and they all enjoy vigorous socio-economic ecosystems. They belong to the leading universities not only on the national and European level but world-wide. This alliance will solidify our already strong commitment to lead by example in creating university synergies in learning, research and innovation that reinforce each other in our missions and cooperation with external environment. This partnership is the next step in closer co-operation with very strong long understanding backgrounds.

3. Governance

Given the various administrative organizations, the local regulations and stakeholders in the four countries, some barriers may exist. It is therefore of utmost importance to organize the Alliance's governance in an effective manner that is simple, agile and efficient, while aiming to find solutions to avoid potential constraints.

Great importance will be given to **streamlining of procedures** in our four institutions in a coherent way.

The governance and management of 4EU is covered by a partner agreement that defines the rights and obligations of the partners.
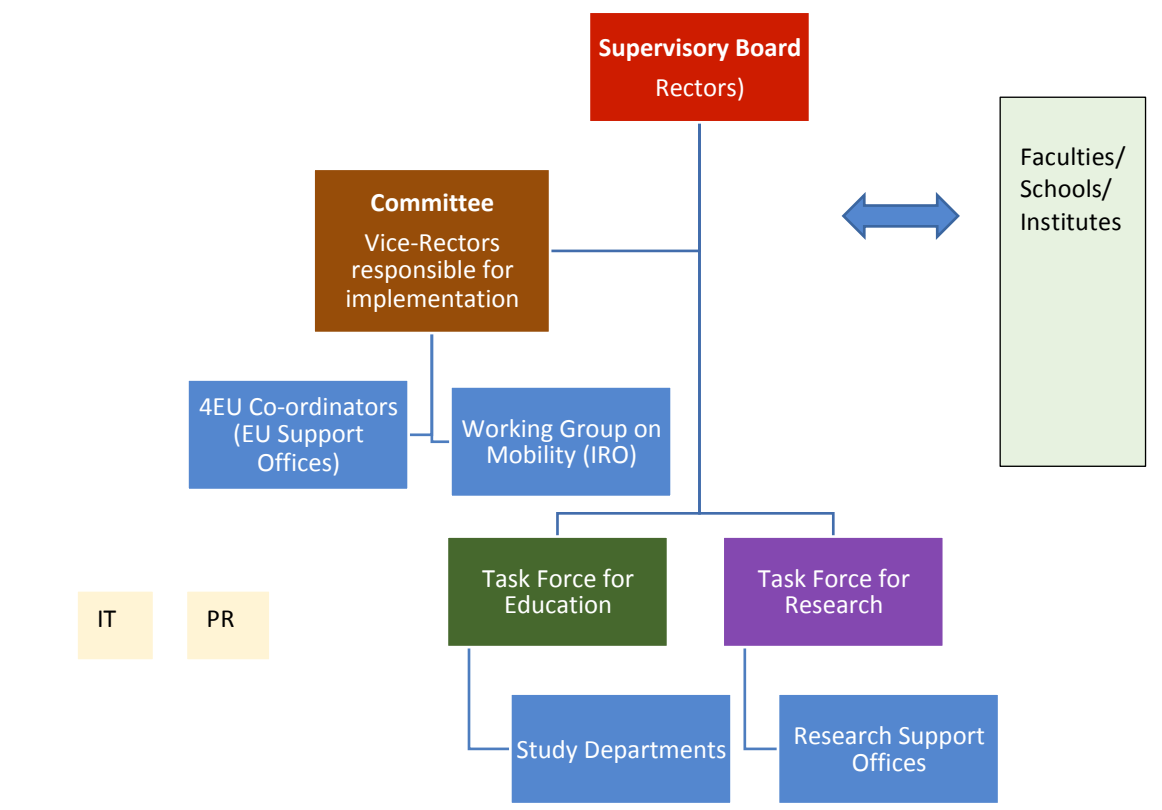
The governance is organized in four levels:
- **Supervisory Board**, composed of Rectors of the partner universities. The chair of the Board is selected from the rectors and rotates on annual basis. Supervisory Board meets regularly in person at least two or three times a year and communicates flexibly ad-hoc when necessary.
- **4EU Committee**, composed of the 4 appointed Vice-Presidents/Vice-Rectors responsible for 4EU implementation - in charge of orchestrating the activities, proposing and steering the agenda and monitoring the milestones and deliverables. They are supported by 4EU Co-ordinators, IRO (Working Group on Mobility), PR and IT Departments. They have regular communication with involved faculties/schools. The Committee meets on monthly basis or more frequently whenever needed and communicates on daily basis.
- **4EU Co-ordinators** are responsible for administration and co-ordination of activities, communication with faculties and other stakeholders (one representative per partner - usually from EU Support Offices/Research or IRO). Co-ordinators communicate on day-to-day basis and meet in person at least on quarterly basis.

- **Task Forces for Research and Education** (composed of relevant Vice-Presidents/Vice-Rectors). They are supported by relevant Offices (Research Departments / Study Departments). These meetings take place on quarterly basis.

Locations of the meetings rotate equally among Heidelberg, Paris, Prague and Warsaw.

Student bodies within the four institutions will be invited to co-operate actively, especially (but not only) in the area of teaching and education.

Scheme: 4EU Governance Structure

4. Goals

The core objectives of the alliance are to:

- integrate teaching and research to provide world-leading experience for students for the future world or generation from over the world where new ideas thrive
- implement unprecedented sharing of opportunities and activities across universities, and will thus have a crucial impact on the structuring of the European Research and Higher Education Area

- carry out educational programmes aimed to create pro-European intellectual elites that might assume in the future the responsibility for the European integration project
- play a pivotal role in addressing the societal challenges, from local to global scales reflecting UN Sustainable Development Goals
- enforce a strong interlinkage between administrations of 4EU partners

Our specific goals are clustered in five key areas: i) education and teaching, ii) research and science, iii) mobility, iv) governance and v) communication and visibility.

i) Education and teaching

"Towards more adaptable, aware and competitive young generation sharing European values"

4EU is fully committed to a quality education which prepares our students with interdisciplinary competencies to thrive in a complex mobile, heterogeneous, multicultural, multilingual and digitalized world. Particular importance will be given also to preparation of students for future challenges and entrepreneurship skills. 4EU will at the same time focus on reinforcing education aimed to create pro-European intellectual elites.

For research-based teaching and learning an extensive range of academic subjects is provided by combining the offers of the four educational resources ensuring the widest possible student access to the educational opportunities within our alliance. These include joint/double programmes (existing as well as new, unique cross-alliance degree programmes), joint doctoral school, co-supervision of thesis (master, PhD), joint summer schools, shared courses, rotation of students, etc. Various possibilities of co-operation will be explored.

We will maximize the profit from the fact that all 4EU partners are leading scientific institutions and therefore will immediately transfer the basic and advanced science to the education process.

We will focus on quality of education and student-centred learning.
Amongst the key guiding principles belong:
- a direct connection between education and research as an important principle
- complementary capabilities in research, education and innovation
- added value through the enrichment of each other's capabilities

Incentives will be developed to encourage students to spend time at other locations and thereby learn from international exposure. We will pay particular attention to the issue of familiarisation on site with specifics of living in another country, which helps to overcome stereotypes and allows one to learn, amongst other things, other languages, which is highly relevant for the European integration.

We will strive to contribute to better educated and knowledge society through, for example, life-long learning.

The essential principle represents a link between education and research, e.g. "**research-based education**".

We will seek to build a common infrastructure in teaching, for example:
- development of a repository for teaching modules available for the Alliance, including a repository for e-learning
- a fast digital infrastructure between the members of the Alliance to broadcast lectures, seminars, events, … (GEANT Network, see also Research)

> Goal 1: Joint study programmes
> Goal 2: Co-operation in development of pedagogical competences (usage of most innovative pedagogies, technology-enhanced learning and digital technologies)
> Goal 3: Development of a joint approach in evaluation of education
> Goal 4: Increased educational activities towards public – building resilient society considering current global challenge
> Goal 5: Building-up pro-European intellectual elites

ii) Research and science

"Towards excellent, coherent and cooperative EU research"

Current research societal challenges create more need to work across disciplines and institutions. In the 21st century, research is increasingly data- and computation-driven Transformative Research, Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

The 4EU alliance agreed on **four flagships** within which co-operation on specific projects will be negotiated:

Flagship 1:	Health and demographic change in an urban environment
Flagship 2:	Europe in a changing world: Understanding and engaging societies, economies, cultures and languages
Flagships 3:	Transforming science and society by advancing information, computation, and communication
Flagship 4:	Biodiversity and Sustainable Development

Workshops for all four flagships are taking place in September and October 2018 in the four capitals.

Following priorities in the area of research will be pursued:
- bridge Professors: Holds a position at two universities with labs (groups at each university)

- shared infrastructure: To provide comprehensive, creative and effective support (i.e. a) common cloud between the universities of the alliance, b) library services that are not regulated by contracts with publishers, c) a joint directory, which can index and find researchers from all partner universities for ambitious research projects, etc.)
- joint project applications using additional opportunities for financing such as H2020 respectively Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, national grant agencies etc.
- provide opportunities for serendipitous interactions to build connections, share interests, and encourage generation of novel ideas (e.g. alliance-wide workshops)
- create mechanisms to stimulate meaningful bottom-up collaboration between faculty, staff, and students with diverse disciplinary backgrounds (e.g. seed funding)
- utilize international research collaborations on faculty level
- research based exchange programmes
- inclusion of students and post-graduate students into research projects implemented under the alliance

Open access will be of our priority concern as well as cooperation with other leading institutions bearing in mind that research is of a global scale.

Shared activities in innovation and entrepreneurship will be developed, involving the complete value chain, from students to start-ups, incubators and accelerators, and offices for technology transfer. Industry support will be promoted as a means to support innovation, research projects, as well as education, professional and life-long learning.

> Goal 6: Co-operation within the flagships
> - Health and demographic change in an urban environment
> - Europe in a changing world: Understanding and engaging societies, economies, cultures and languages
> - Transforming science and society by advancing information, computation, and communication
> - Biodiversity and Sustainable Development
>
> Goal 7: Co-operation of research teams
> Goal 8: Shared research infrastructure
> Goal 9: Joint approach in evaluation of research outputs science
> Goal 10: Co-operation in innovations and technology transfer

iii) Circulation of students, researchers and staff

"Towards building cosmopolitan, open and internationally exposed university society"

Measures will be developed and implemented to reduce administrative and other obstacles for efficient student (at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral level), academic and administrative staff exchanges.

Existing instruments will be used to enforce mobility – above all efficient and well targeted use of Erasmus+ programme and other supportive instruments (European as well as national). This will also result in more effective use of various national schemes as well as bilateral and multilateral agreements and other platforms and networks for exchange.

We aim to develop:
- a basic joint student management system for those students who opt to be part of the Alliance network

- a joint research infrastructure management system, which could enable access to researchers from all partner universities (identification of platforms, including relevant policies in progress)

> Goal 11: Increased and barrier-free circulation of students
> Goal 12: Increased and barrier-free circulation of academic staff
> Goal 13: Increased circulation of administrative staff

iv) Governance

*"Towards an interconnected management and administration
and simplified procedures"*

The alliance strives for a close connection of management as well as administration. See governance structure above.

Within this cluster we are ready to share lessons learnt and best practices. We seek for staff professional development and temporary exchange of administrative staff. We organize workshops on special topics. We intend to build shared structures where appropriate.

The universities are making a coordinated effort towards reinforcing the skills and capacities of its personnel. In particular:
- Administrative staff will share best practices and work to ease the integration process and access to the resources. Staff mobility will be encouraged. Working groups have been established to liaise with the administration offices and identify the critical issues and resolve main bottlenecks.
- This will harmonize best practices and deepen the support provided to the faculties. This has already started, for instance within the European Offices and the International Mobility and Admission Offices.
- Joint faculty and administrative positions will be proposed by the Alliance when needed, in order to develop specific actions.
- Establishment of an administrative support system - 4EU contact points at each university facilitating the cooperation, responding to emerging issues, etc.

> Goal 14: Effective and closely linked administrations between 4EU

v) Communication and visibility
"Towards effective and efficient sharing of information and know-how"

Last but not least, we intent to share our lessons learnt with other European Universities and higher education institution. Therefore, communication and visibility of outcomes of our joint work will be adequately covered (i.e. website, informative material).

We will ensure effective and fruitful communication with different stakeholders including industry, NGOs and other groups as well as various European university networks and associations, in particular those which 4EU partners are members of.

Information flow within 4EU is already set up on a very high level. We will, however, also facilitate communication with society in order to have also feedback from society what society needs from universities.

Communication across the EU and beyond will play an important part in the global information sharing.

> Goal 15: Establishment of shared IT tools (shared space, web-site, etc.)
> Goal 16: Development of PR materials
> Goal 17: Development of a joint Communication Strategy

5. Resources

We are committed to use efficiently all available instruments to support above described goals. A mix of existing resources will be utilized – especially Erasmus+ programme, European research programmes, national programmes and our available internal institutional funds.