

EMU European Military University

Concept Note¹

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1. Introduction

European Universities are a **new type of cooperation** after an idea of French President **Macron**, launched in his Sorbonne speech and accepted by the European Council of Heads of State and Government at their 2017 Gothenburg summit. The idea was to make European higher education more resilient, more competitive and more sovereign in view of the huge demographic, economic, technological and geo-political challenges of our days.

European Universities are not conceived as isolated short-term projects, but meant to become holistic and **transformational** undertakings, set out in a long-term, 10-15 year' perspective. Partners cooperate in order to **upgrade and upscale** their performances and **position** themselves at regional, European and global level.

A European University Alliance would consist of at least **9 higher education institutions** drawn from the four corners of Europe. Partners would agree to **benchmark and integrate** important aspects of their missions, fostering excellence, inclusion and competitiveness. Other academies and organisations may join as **Associate Members**.²

41 alliances were selected in the 2019 and 2020 pilot competitions. 17 in 2019 and 24 in 2020. In both rounds two-thirds of proposals were rejected. An evaluation is planned, and a new Call is expected in 2023 in view of selecting around **8 new alliances in 2024**.

Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe provide **seed money** (at least €24M) for an initial 4-6 year' funding period. Partners **co-fund** a similar amount, but mainly in kind, through their regular activities. Several member states provide **top-up money** and **other sponsors** are likely to join in.³

The Military Academies of Europe are **well placed** to launch a successful European University bid in 2024, building on their strong competence-based education cooperation track record. The present note draws on the good work of **ESDC**, in particular through the 2020 **GAREA Recommendations** and the work of the **Implementation Group** for Military Erasmus, and supported by the **EUMACS**, and the **IMAF** conferences, all in sync with the guidance given in the **EU Council Conclusions** on the European Universities Initiative of 17 May 2021.⁴

¹ Status: Non-paper under the sole responsibility of Peter van der Hijden, independent advisor on higher education strategy, living in Brussels, former EC official (Head of Section Higher Education Policy). Peter successfully guided 8 European University bids selected for funding under the 2019 and 2020 EC competitions.

² Associated partners share ideas and contacts. They do not receive direct EC grant support for their contribution.

³ In particular the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility, the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and InvestEU.

⁴ Notably points a) to s) on pages 11 to 15: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/49659/st08658-en21.pdf>

2. Possible activities of an EMU European Military University

Partners in a European University Alliance agree to **align, pool and share parts of their missions** in education, research & innovation and societal outreach as well as aspects of their governance, human resources, library, data management, incubators etc. The European University would, for example, build a **virtual inter-academy campus** (covering all departments) in support of cadets and lifelong learners locally and across the alliance, building further on the achievements of the Implementation Group (IG) for Military Erasmus.

An alliance proposal consists of **Work Packages**. Each Work Package has a **Lead Partner**, but the actual work is carried out in **Task Teams**, composed of academic and support staff from the partner institutions. These colleagues, professional peers, create **Task Results** by working together during **4-6 initial years**: exploring, piloting and implementing their ideas. A tentative overview of Work Packages and Tasks is presented in annex, in a first and preliminary attempt to match **military specificities** with the European University concept. Work would need to address land, air, naval and cyber forces training.

The active engagements of the members of the **Implementation Group** should be envisaged. The EMU could build its academic and professional education activities around the descriptors developed in the **SQF-MILOF project**, thereby actively contributing to its implementation and further promotion.

3. Obligations and benefits for participating academies

Obligations

Participating academies would nominate their own officials to **join EMU Task Teams** in their field of expertise, either as leader (several teams per academy), member (of a good number of teams) or contact person (all teams). The officials would contribute to EMU as an acknowledged part of their regular task.

Participating academies would commit to **introduce and benchmark transformations** step-by-step in line with the reform agendas of the European Higher Education Area or **Bologna** process (three cycle system, competence-based learning, recognition, quality assurance), the renewed **EU** modernisation agenda for higher education (tackling future skills mismatches and promoting excellence) and the European Research Area or **ERA** (e.g., open science and open recruitment where possible). All academies have started to undertake these transformations as part of their institutional, national, Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 and EMILYO engagements.

Participating academies would commit to **execute the EMU Work Programme** as summarised in the overview of Work Packages and Tasks in annex. The intensity and scope of collaboration will no doubt be subject to debate among partners in the coming months and years. The foreseen draft EMU **Mission Statement** will give an indication of the level of ambition of the alliance and its members.

Benefits

Alliance building can **accelerate transformation processes** already underway at partner level by providing **platforms** for exchange of experience and good practice.

Pooling and sharing of facilities will save resources. **More cadets and lifelong learners** will be able to access a wider range of challenge-based, transdisciplinary courses. Academic and support **staff** will be able to access infrastructures and pursue **career paths** across the Alliance consortium with more diversity and gender equality and more mobility options.⁵

A European Military University will help Europe's armed forces **unite bottom-up**. European Universities are a suitable vehicle for academies interested in working together on reforms in a **relatively wide range** of areas. European Universities are not designed to only execute more focussed smaller scale activities in isolated areas.

EU and national grants will cover part of the additional costs of intensified cooperation and execution of tasks. They will not cover the total as the envisaged transformations originate to a large extent from institutional and national reform agendas, designed and carried out as part of the regular institutional work programme of each academy (and not as add-on features).

4. Risks and risk mitigation

A potential risk of joining a European University alliance are the **transaction costs** i.e., resources spent on co-operation efforts instead of dedicating them to core tasks in education, research and innovation. This risk can be mitigated by **aligning** the activities of the alliance with the ambitions and needs of the individual partners, as is done in the example given above of the virtual campus, that would serve the needs of both local and international users.

Another risk could be that a 'EMU European Military University' would **create a divide** between those academies that become full partner of the alliance (around 10), those that become associate partners (maybe 20 initially) and those that decide to wait and see (another 30). This risk could be mitigated by pro-actively involving '**outer-circle**' members in alliance activities, using them as a sounding board and allowing them access to most alliance facilities.

5. Tentative road map

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| 2021 | Overall idea in draft mission statement and concept note |
| 2022 | Task Teams and stakeholder engagement activities (internal and external buy-in). Green light from EU defense ministers' council |
| 2023 | Final proposal writing and internal try-out submission |
| 2024 | Formal submission, selection and launch of the alliance |
| 2024-2027 | Build up and testing phase (initial grant) |
| 2028-2029 | Roll-out phase (prolongation grant) |
| 2030-2050 | Consolidate and develop further |

As a first step a **mission statement** could be drafted on the basis of which a 'coalition of the willing' of some 10 academies could be formed. Task Teams, once nominated, can start collecting ideas and present them to a central Proposal Writing Team.

⁵ In line with European Charter for Researchers and the Code for the Recruitment of Researchers.

EMU European Military University

Work Packages and Tasks

(Tentative overview)

WP1 EMU Governance and Management

Task 1 Install the EMU Governance and Management Bodies

Task 2 Set up the EMU Data Management System

Task 3 Support the EMU Task Communities

WP2 EMU Initial and Continuing Education

Task 1 Map and analyse security and defence training models in Europe and beyond

Task 2 Build the EMU Virtual Inter-Academy Campus (course catalogue, interaction, tests, certificates)

Task 3 Roll out the EMU International Semesters Programme (mainly on campus)

Task 4 Renew and expand EMU Modules as Micro-credentials (mainly online)

WP3 EMU Research and Innovation

Task 1 Define a Common EMU Research and Innovation Agenda

Task 2 Pilot the shared use of EMU R&I Infrastructures

Task 3 Set up the EMU Doctoral School

WP4 EMU Staff Development

Task 1 Design the EMU Human Resources Strategy

Task 2 Test the EMU Staff Mobility Scheme (shorter and longer stays)

Task 3 Organise EMU Staff Training

Task 4 Explore multiple career options (academic/administrative/military/civilian)

WP5 EMU Societal Outreach

Task 1 Define the EMU Citizen Engagement Strategy

Task 2 Set up the EMU Incubators Network (fostering entrepreneurship and start-ups)

Task 3 Explore cooperation options between military and civilian higher education

WP6 EMU Sustainability and Dissemination

Task 1 Pilot an EMU Outer Circle Strategy (involving all 65 academies)

Task 2 Analyse the EMU internal and external funding options

Task 3 Support EMU Dissemination activities (task- and stakeholder related)

Task 4 Pilot the EMU Global Dimension (working with academies worldwide)