ALL4 ONE

TRANSFORM 4EUROPE

MISSION STATEMENT

THE TRANSFORM4EUROPE ALLIANCE

WE ARE

Saarland University (Germany)

The University of Alicante (Spain)

The Estonian Academy of Arts (Estonia)

Universidade Católica Portuguesa (Portugal)

University of Primorska (Slovenia)

Jean Monnet University Saint–Étienne (France)

The University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland)

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski (Bulgaria)

The University of Trieste (Italy)

Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania)

PREAMBLE

The European Union has acquired a solid political, economic and social basis over the past decades. While preserving the richness of its cultural diversity, the EU offers high common societal standards and guarantees freedom, justice, the rule of law, democracy, and the principles of an open, diverse, inclusive society. Nevertheless, the European Union has been facing unprecedented challenges recently, ranging from internal political tensions and Euro-scepticism in a number of member states to the Covid-19 pandemic and the rise of armed conflicts in Europe and other regions of the world. Over the coming years, Europe, like the rest of the world, will continue to undergo significant political, economic and social transformation, while addressing three major changes that need to be shaped and managed: climate change, societal change with migration and ageing populations, and digital revolutions.

We, the members of the Transform4Europe Alliance, are convinced that universities play an important role in the European transformation process: We believe that these challenges can only be overcome with innovative solutions created by a new generation of highly motivated and skilled Europeans who, well aware of their cultural heritages, deliberately live the European idea, and show solidarity with all members of the European community of values. As an alliance, we share a common vision for European higher education and the ambition of becoming a major player in shaping the future of Europe through a transformative approach embedded in our regions. This renewed Mission Statement for the period 2023–33 replaces the first Transform4Europe Mission Statement 2020–25 according to the experience from the piloting phase and in light of the most recent political and societal developments. In particular, it builds on the foundations laid since 2019 during our collaboration as an alliance: The trustful relations that we have built, the structures that we have created, the actions that we have carried out in the challenging circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, are all key components of this joint venture. The partnership has been strengthened by the inclusion of three new members from three different countries: I) Universidade Católica Portuguesa, experienced in functioning as a multi-campus university and with a strong focus on values and university social responsibility, II) University of Primorska, a young and dynamic university with many good practices for a vibrant campus life integrating an international student population, and III) Jean Monnet University Saint-Étienne, having an extensive experience in the internationalisation of the study offer from a range of institutionalised cooperations. All three new partners have specific excellence in at least one of the Transform4Europe focus areas. Their strengths and expertise complete and balance the alliance's profile for the next stage of implementation.

To amplify the outreach of our activities and of the European university role model as such, the Transform4Europe alliance will associate further partners in the coming years. A first step in this evolution process has been the close collaboration with Mariupol State University: Started in spring 2022 with the objective to contribute to reconstructing the Ukrainian higher education landscape with close links to the European academic communities after the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, it has led to their involvement as associated partner whose perspective of a university from a non-EU state that finds itself in extraordinary circumstances will enrich our alliance's work in many ways.

OUR VISION AND VALUES

Transform4Europe – T4EU aims at becoming one integrated European University based on shared European values, a diverse and inclusive alliance deeply rooted in the respective regional ecosystems, educating and training knowledge-entrepreneurs as drivers of transformation for the benefit of sustainable and resilient European societies.

We share the values of peace, freedom, justice, democracy, equality, and human rights, and aim at contributing to social cohesion and active citizenship. We acknowledge the diversity of our cultural heritages including its Christian traditions as well as other religious, philosophical and humanist legacies represented in the idea of Europe and believe in safeguarding this diversity as the basis for a European identity and way of life.

In our scientific work, we rely on core values like the power of reason, knowledge-based progress, and academic freedom.

OUR MISSION

Our Transform4Europe Alliance will contribute to shaping the European University of tomorrow. As a single and sustainable alliance with efficient joint governance structures, infrastructures and services, our cutting-edge academic programmes and innovative learning environments will attract students, scientists and practitioners from all over the world.

Mobility, interdisciplinarity and inclusion will be the norm on the T4EU campus. The members of our universities will share a strong European identity and perceive themselves as active agents of transformation. They will identify themselves with the knowledge-entrepreneurial spirit of the alliance and consider it the term of reference for their learning and training needs and actions throughout their lives.

T4EU students, graduates and staff will be **knowledge-entrepreneurs** and will actively transform Europe, paving the way for a sustainable future. As bridges between regions, the T4EU universities will create networked European knowledge and innovation ecosystems, driving excellence in research and largely contributing to the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EEA and Europe as a whole.

KNOW-LEDGE ENTRE-PREN-EURS

KNOWLEDGE-ENTREPRENEURS are capable of recognizing, seizing and creating opportunities and acting on them in order to contribute to innovation and change. Knowledge-entrepreneurship differs from the traditional economic concept of entrepreneurship in that it does not primarily aim at solely producing or maximizing monetary profit, but rather the enhancement of knowledge production and the development of knowledge and expertise through an applied approach. Transform4Europe enriches this concept with a more social, value-based dimension towards comprehensive social responsibility and European citizenship.

OUR GOALS

In the full roll-out phase of the Transform4Europe Alliance, we commit to systematically implementing a transformative approach in all fields covered by our institutions and at all levels. We will use our well-established and distinctive but complementary profiles, as a rich combination of expertise and approaches, to further pursue the positive change and transformation that have been initialized during the pilot phase in a comprehensive and innovative way that none of the individual members of the consortium could achieve by themselves. This includes the transformation of governance and management structures, of the organisational culture and the internationalisation strategies of the universities on the one hand, and of services and education and training offerings on the other hand. We are committed in this new phase to streamline the piloted actions in the perspective of a comprehensive internationalization exercise that will involve all the human and physical resources of the partners. Given the potential of our combined approach for the enhancement of the European society and the transferability of the envisaged results of the collaboration to other universities and regions, the T4EU Alliance aims to become a major player and a role model within the European Education Area by 2025 and beyond. We will achieve this objective by:

- Transforming and progressively further integrating our universities into **one sustainable single European alliance** with a joint governance, shared support structures and services, and a joint legal entity that is internationally visible and attractive as a European pole of excellence and major driver of change. This European University will pursue student-centred pedagogical approaches and participative, co-creational governance principles.

- Making **mobility** within the alliance **accessible for all** members of the universities: An improved, flexible and inclusive mobility framework offering equal conditions and seamless mobility opportunities will establish both physical and virtual **mobility as the norm** for the students and the staff of our European University with a substantial number of options with embedded automatic recognition.

- Developing a new and comprehensive **joint academic offering portfolio** in all three study cycles including customised transdisciplinary study and training programmes, integrating the **transformative knowledge-entrepreneurialism perspective** into all education and training activities and making it a key concept for active European citizenship: We will educate and train future European knowledge-entrepreneurs, providing them with the necessary creative and innovative entrepreneurial mind-set, intercultural competencies and language skills. The programmes will be taught with innovative, student-centred teaching methods and with a challenge-based approach. A subset of these programmes will be developed in key areas with the explicit intent of addressing the features and requirements of the European Joint Degree for an enhanced global attractiveness and recruitment potential of the alliance.

Becoming the main drivers of **regional transformation** by establishing structured partnerships with key regional stakeholders and facilitate interactions among them in our Transformation Labs: We will contribute to joint research and innovation initiatives with and for the regions, implementing innovative models of knowledge-creating teams that can be replicated by other actors and in different contexts through a systematic knowledge transfer approach in line with the knowledge-entrepreneurship principle that permeates the alliance. This approach will initiate a major, broader process aiming at **creating networked European knowledge and innovation ecosystems** that will contribute to European economic and environmental sustainability as breeding grounds for excellent research and knowledge transfer. At the same time, we will initiate, facilitate and enhance further cooperation within the alliance academic community.

Continuously **qualifying both academic and non-academic staff**, equipping them with the professional and transversal skills to deliver excellent results. We will train pedagogical staff in innovative teaching methods, fostering student-centred teaching and co-creational approaches. We will upskill (young) researchers in important transversal fields like Open Science and leadership, enabling them to contribute to the transformation process of their institutions and in their academic practice. Non-academic staff will be provided with a broad training offer and incentives for professional development. External actors from the concerned regions will also benefit of specific teaching and training programmes offered as part of the lifelong learning efforts of the alliance.

Creating a **Transform4Europe multi-campus European University** with an inclusive and green campus life promoting a common identity to be enjoyed by all students and staff. We will strengthen the ties between the alliance members with the help of cultural and sports activities displaying the rich diversity of our communities.

Preserving our **cultural heritages** and actively integrating it in our activities **as a basis for the European Way of Life** and for our common European identity. We will promote and foster multilingualism with the help of improved language-learning options and incentives. We will actively involve cultural facilities in the development of our T4EU identity and work, establishing the use of innovative technologies.

Becoming a major player in the **consolidation and success of the EEA and the European project in general and internationally**, through a global outreach set of activities in which the alliance as a whole will establish a number of external partnerships by speaking with one voice to a set of prioritized academic actors worldwide. We will also take an active part in promoting the European Universities as a role model by disseminating our innovative T4EU initiatives and results.

OUR IDENTITY:
AN ALLIANCE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL-MINDED TRANSFORMERS

Transform4Europe – T4EU is a consolidated partnership composed of ambitious universities that share a common vision for European higher education and benefit from a high degree of complementarity in the pursuit of their common goals. All the members of the alliance are deeply rooted in their regions, and we consider the diversity in size, background, expertise and profile of our alliance members as a strength since collectively we are in a privileged position to understand and address the needs, expectations and potential of the different actors within the EEA through a diversity of approaches and perspectives that fully represent the territorial and cultural diversity of Europe.

The T4EU Alliance brings together ten universities with extensive experience in cross-border, intra-European and global cooperation, and in collaborating with and for our regions. Our complementary research foci allow us to concentrate our joint collaboration efforts on the following prioritized T4EU focus topics:

Knowledge entrepreneurialism for
– digital transformation and smart regions
– environmental transformation and sustainability
– societal transformation, community building and inclusion

Considering our common strengths, we have conceived a new approach for enhancing the societal impact of our engagement and for strengthening collaboration with our regions. This will imply an internal and joint transformation of our institutions, our academic portfolios, our infrastructures, services, and to establish a range of activities leading towards a progressive integration.

In accordance with the EU higher education policies, the T4EU approach is completed by the following transversal components:
– Key competences for lifelong learning
– Digital literacy, green skills, multilingualism and intercultural competencies
– Common European values and inclusiveness
– Entrepreneurial culture and mindset

We can base our work on a well–functioning governance structure built on mutual trust and efficient communication channels, which has been established during the pilot phase of our co–operation as an alliance. Additionally, we have established our T4EU Joint Offices, a solid network of experts in different fields of university management and administration, e.g., in the fields of communication, quality assurance, mobility, and professional development. A first set of jointly developed strategy papers forms the basis for an integrated long–term joint strategy for the alliance covering all the relevant fields with an important transformative impact on the structures of each of the partner institutions. Successfully piloted initiatives and activities in all fields of the knowledge square (education, research, innovation and societal outreach) have further strengthened the groundwork for our alliance.

OUR APPROACH:
TRANSFORMING EUROPE BY EDUCATING AND
TRAINING KNOWLEDGE ENTREPRENEURS

Transformation at all levels is both a reality and a necessity and must be addressed through a global approach. All actors, including universities, must decide between being either individual spectators and passive recipients of the results of these complex processes, or becoming an integral part of them, proactive in working with joined forces in order to become drivers of the transformation process as a whole.

Universities play an important role in European transformation processes by educating and training students, staff and stakeholders from their surrounding regions, creating new knowledge, developing research, and delivering solutions for major current and future societal challenges. Similarly, the regions in which universities operate are cornerstones of the transformation process as the direct frames of reference and the economic, social and cultural environments for all actors and important intermediators between the individual and the European level. The diversity of their cultural heritage forms the basis for resilience and openness, holding a big transformation potential.

We believe that universities become major actors in the European transformation process by organizing themselves in permanent, structured and coherent multi-actor networks acting jointly at a systemic level. Only in this way, they can become active agents of transformation and change, and powerful engines for the mutual development of each other's innovation and performance capacity. Together, they can contribute to the development of a European knowledge-based economy, better employment rates, a common European identity based on shared values and on safeguarding diversity as strength, civic engagement and social welfare. This is a powerful way to improve the competitiveness of the EU as a whole and further promote the integration of the EEA.

In addition, Europe needs smarter regions to tackle the challenges of our time – smarter, sustainable knowledge ecosystems that make effective use of new technologies and transform their traditional economies into climate neutral, sustainable models of development in which the universities play a central role. Yet the potential of university-region cooperation in the European transformation process has not yet been fully exploited; researchers collaborate with regional stakeholders at an individual or departmental level, but there is often a lack of structured collaboration at an institutional level. The T4EU Alliance sees a need for new models and strategies to harness this potential and network university-region cooperation throughout Europe in order to achieve a greater impact. As a response to this necessity, the T4EU universities have joined forces with key players from their regions in order to educate and train not only highly qualified experts, but also European knowledge entrepreneurs who can act as dynamic agents of transformation through a networked, applied, multi-actor approach.

Applying a co-creational approach, we bring together practitioners from the different regions and students and staff from the different universities. Experiencing diverse cultural heritages, they all get to live international and intercultural cooperation, learning to communicate in different languages and to take multiple perspectives while contributing to tackle the common challenges of the European societies. We can base this work on our longstanding experiences in the field, opening strategic partnerships with economic and societal stakeholders for all members of the alliance, sharing infrastructures like starter centres or science parks and events like science festivals, student competitions and expert talks. At the same time, we are jointly developing educational and training offerings to anchor knowledge-entrepreneurialism in curricula and professional development programmes.

THE KNOWLEDGE-ENTREPRENEURS that Europe needs are by definition capable of recognizing, seizing and creating opportunities and acting on them in order to contribute to innovation and change. Knowledge-entrepreneurship differs from the traditional economic concept of entrepreneurship in that it does not primarily aim at solely producing or maximizing monetary profit, but rather the enhancement of knowledge production and the development of knowledge and expertise through an applied approach. The T4EU Alliance enriches this concept of knowledge entrepreneurship with a more social, value-based dimension towards comprehensive social responsibility and European citizenship. The transformational T4EU knowledge-entrepreneurial mind-set is characterized by specific competencies (creating new values, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, taking responsibility) and specific knowledge (systemic, critical, generative and reflexive, with both societal and scientific impact). In this sense, the entrepreneurial mind-set at the heart of the T4EU Alliance can be differentiated from the concept of entrepreneurial universities as defined previously by the European Commission and the OECD (https://www.oecd.org/site/cfecpr/guiding- framework.htm).

T4EU KNOWLEDGE-ENTREPRENEURS are global citizens capable of being critical towards the current status quo, demonstrating an integrative, applied approach across diverse European cultures, understanding and dealing with complex systems, and applying interdisciplinary and co-creational approaches to problem-solving. They make use of a comprehensive set of knowledge to grasp social, cultural, economic and political consequences in a world of interconnected economies, ecosystems and climate patterns where the local is inseparable from the global. They are equipped with the necessary skills to contribute to Europe's development towards a green and sustainable continent characterized by strong values of peace, justice, social cohesion, inclusiveness and active citizenship, and with a shared sense of European identity as an underlying principle. They transform Europe from within through networked engagement across the T4EU regions. Their transformative knowledge-entrepreneurial spirit will help to turn creative ideas into reality, thus contributing to addressing the major challenges Europe and the world are facing today, including recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic or overcoming the energy crises, to name but two of the most recent ones.

THE FOUR PILLARS OF TRANSFORMATION

As members of the Transform4Europe Alliance, we share the common concept of transformation described above and our goal is to train and educate agents of change towards a more just, sustainable and resilient future, thereby acting as drivers of transformation ourselves. Proactive transformation as we understand it is the result of an analytical process based on transformative knowledge-entrepreneurialism.

Based on this common understanding and our own individual transformation profiles relating to our individual experiences of historical, regional and institutional transformation, we base our approach on the following four pillars of transformation:

1. **T4EU INDIVIDUAL MINDSET:** Individuals as drivers of transformation should be at the centre of the process, as the orientation and mind-set of each individual actor are the starting point for any form of comprehensive transformation. Thus, European transformation needs individuals who, through their knowledge entrepreneurial mind-set, can actively contribute to shaping a world in which well-being and sustainability are achievable. This is particularly important in challenging times characterized by global crises caused by armed conflicts, societal and economic instability or migratory movements .

2. **T4EU UNIVERSITIES:** In order to empower students, staff and stakeholders to act as agents of transformation, universities are responsible for conveying the values, skills and knowledge needed by all-round citizens with both academic and societal responsibilities, starting from the local regions of the alliance and moving towards global citizenship.

3. **T4EU REGIONS:** In collaboration with their universities, the regions have major potential to drive the transformation of Europe and the EEA as knowledge and innovation ecosystems. In order to reach their highest potential, the regions represented in the T4EU Alliance must be interlinked in an interregional network so to expand their impact at the continental level.

4. **T4EU EUROPE:** The complex societal challenges that Europe and the whole world are facing cannot be solved by individual actors. European transformation concepts need to be as diverse as Europe itself, and require different perspectives, approaches and solutions directly linked with and shared by the local and regional communities. T4EU will pursue true European added value by networking complementary regional transformation networks from across Europe that share a joint vision for facing major challenges.

We believe that these four pillars are crucial for a successful transformation of university-region cooperation, which will have a major impact on the enhancement of European integration.

These four pillars of transformation lay the foundation for a **T4EU impact on a global scale:**

In the aftermath of the pilot phase, the alliance has the ambition of reaching out with a single voice to global actors and entities with a similar vision and complementary expertise with which collaborative ventures can be developed and implemented. These ventures will aim at a comprehensive supranational and multi-actor transformation in the key sectors identified by the present document through innovative academic and societal forms of collaboration.

OUR COMMITMENT: TACKLE EUROPEAN CHALLENGES BY MEANS OF TRANSFORMATION

We, the members of the Transform4Europe Alliance, are convinced that the challenges Europe is facing can only be overcome with innovative solutions created by a new generation of highly motivated and skilled Europeans who, well aware of their cultural heritages, deliberately live the European idea, and show solidarity with all members of the European community of values. We believe it is the duty and aspiration of our universities to educate and train this new generation of knowledge entrepreneurs to actively contribute to and shape the necessary transformation processes on all levels, thereby driving transformation ourselves.

Through the successful transformation of our institutions, we aim to help to shape the future model of higher education in Europe and provide solutions needed to overcome the challenges of the 21st century.
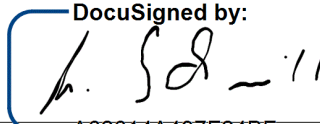
We are convinced that the university of tomorrow will be a European University. Affirming our Joint Declaration of Europe Day 2022, we are committed to ensuring that our Alliance will contribute to renew and foster European integration by building bridges that span national, cultural and linguistic borders.

This mission statement was endorsed by the decision–making bodies of all T4EU partner universities. We, the presidents and rectors of all alliance members, hereby adopt this mission statement and declare our solemn intent to jointly pursue its ambitious objectives. We attach high importance to this project as an integral part of our individual development strategies to ensure the sustainability of the alliance.

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