

eUTOPIA

# EUTOPIA TRAIN

CAPACITY BUILDING  
FOR EXCELLENCE  
AND IMPACT



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<https://eutopia.university.eu>

<https://train.eutopia.university.eu>

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CAPACITY BUILDING **FOR EXCELLENCE AND IMPACT**

*EUTOPIA TRAIN sponsors academic innovation with societal impact: it aims to integrate pan-EUTOPIA research and innovation communities and structures and open them to society, business, students, and policymakers.*

On July 24, 2020, the **EUTOPIA TRAIN** initiative was awarded funding under the Horizon 2020 call Support for the Research and Innovation Dimension of European Universities (SwafS). The University of Gothenburg coordinates the project (2021-2023).

EUTOPIA aims to be more than a university network. It holds a fundamental vision regarding the value-added contribution of academia to society.

**EUTOPIA TRAIN** sponsors academic innovation with societal impact: it aims to integrate pan-EUTOPIA research and innovation communities and structures and open them to society, businesses, students, and policymakers. The project intends to link the research communities of EUTOPIA with the local and international needs of multiple stakeholders at the different levels of

the formulation of research agendas, their execution, and the dissemination of results.

**EUTOPIA TRAIN** gives today a clear frame to the goal set by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, CY Cergy Paris University, the University of Gothenburg, the University of Ljubljana, the Pompeu Fabra University-Barcelona and the University of Warwick to mutualize resources and tools and to define a shared Research & Innovation Policy. Objectives are to boost the research capacity of the six universities of the Alliance, in both human and technical resources, and contribute to developing the European Union R&I performance. The idea is to generate a cross-institutional strategy based on joint governance and common understanding to reach a state-of-the-art capacity building for excellence and impact.

The guiding principle of the **EUTOPIA TRAIN** activities is the concept of a complete academic environment centred on the interconnections between research, education, and innovation. The idea displays cross-boundary research, collaborative education, and cooperation with public and private actors from across society.

## OUR ALLIANCE

### TEN EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai in Cluj-Napoca (Romania)  
 Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium)  
 Università Ca' Foscari Venezia (Italy)  
 CY Cergy Paris Université (France)  
 Technische Universität Dresden (Germany)  
 Göteborgs Universitet (Sweden)  
 Univerza v Ljubljani (Slovenia)  
 Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Portugal)  
 Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona (Spain)  
 The University of Warwick (United Kingdom).

### AND FOUR GLOBAL PARTNERS

Monash University (Australia)  
 The International University of Rabat (Morocco)  
 Stellenbosch Universit (South Africa)  
 Kyungpook National University (South Korea)

## OUR BACKGROUND

The EUTOPIA Alliance brings together the operations and intentions of ten regionally and nationally distinct European universities. The Alliance started with a pilot phase EUTOPIA 2050 (Erasmus+ EUI) a project within the framework of the European Universities Initiative. During the EUTOPIA 2050 phase, several accompanying and follow-up initiatives, such as **EUTOPIA TRAIN (Horizon 2020 Swafs)**, EUTOPIA SIF (Horizon 2020 MSCA COFUND), and FLECSLAB (Erasmus+, KA220HED), were successfully submitted. The EUTOPIA alliance started in December 2022 its development phase, EUTOPIA MORE (Erasmus+, EUI), which lays the foundations to reach our ten-year ambition. Since the launching of MORE, new initiatives have germinated, such as EdLAB, (Erasmus+, EUI) and EUTOPIA HEALTH (Horizon Europe Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence Actions).

EUTOPIA rests on one conviction: today's challenges call for a transformation of universities. They should re-think the skills the universities need to provide for students and staff; how research can be highly impactful within academia and beyond; and finally, our level of action by supporting local-to-global initiatives to face today's challenges. This initial conviction has been reinforced by the new developments since 2018: the COVID-19 pandemic, which catalyzed the digital functioning of universities; the growing awareness of the issues related to climate change, which require a shift in social models and individual behaviours;

or the tragic war in the European Union's neighbourhood, which demonstrates the continuous need to defend European values. Solidarity and cooperation are needed more than ever as paths to resilience in our missions as universities. Such large-scale challenges can only be addressed by channelling interdisciplinary skills and operating at an international level, connecting the local to the global. Furthermore, knowledge is becoming ever more complex and subject to change, making a life-long learning perspective absolutely necessary.

EUTOPIA places at its heart the empowerment of students, staff, and partners by Connecting Communities across campuses, disciplines, and borders. Hence, we firmly believe that solutions to contemporary challenges cannot be engineered from the top down but rather require flexible construction from the bottom up, based on the distributed knowledge and experiences of various communities.

EUTOPIA acts as an international gateway for the exchange of knowledge and cultures and is associated with four universities beyond Europe: Université Internationale de Rabat, Kyungpook National University, Monash University and Stellenbosch University. This broader, more diverse network of partnerships allow our Alliance to better address global challenges. With its global partners, EUTOPIA is a more robust alliance, with a greater impact on society, opening the prospect of a more diverse and attractive inter-university campus.

## WHAT EUTOPIA STANDS FOR

In coherence with the European values of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union*, we commit to the following set of values and principles, which are part of the alliance's shared culture and act as a reference point for our joint activities.

### Academic freedom in search for truth

Building on the principle of university autonomy from the Magna Charta Universitatum, the members of the alliance acknowledge and defend intellectual and ethical freedom. While some threats seem to appear in local environments, EUTOPIA members engage to protect and cherish academic freedom both in their universities and all around the globe.

### Excellence as a purpose of our teaching, research and innovation models

The universities that make up the EUTOPIA alliance pledge to consistently raise the bar for instruction, research, administration, and innovation to pursue excellence in their immediate surroundings, interactions with the community, and overall performances. In a non-competitive but collaborative way, supporting innovative teaching methods, novel educational frameworks, and bold research ideas, the universities of the alliance will pursue together in a confident way the highest quality for their students, faculty staff, and stakeholders.

### Inclusion

At university, inclusion means that all students and faculty involved in academic life should have access to both

the creation and pursuit of knowledge. A culture of inclusion is one where: Diversity is recognised, understood and valued; Cross-cultural dialogue and cross-cultural sensitivity are encouraged; Leaders are role models for inclusive behaviours; There is an environment that is flexible and adaptable and facilitates meaningful interactions; There is the transparency of and accountability for our actions.

### Sustainable, responsible and ethical attitudes towards the planet

EUTOPIA is to play an active leading role in the pursuit of sustainability as reflected in United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. Accordingly, the academic endeavour of the alliance is to be responsible and ethical toward mankind and the planet, within the general framework of the challenge-driven approach defined by the European Commission.

### Cooperation and openness

In the context of academic, financial, institutional, and staffing autonomy concerning their founders and other bodies of organisations, EUTOPIA encourages the establishment of sincere partnerships with these organisations based on the equality of partners, which enables universities to render high-quality services to society.

## EUTOPIA TRAIN


EUTOPIA TRAIN is an ambitious research initiative committed to building a challenge-driven knowledge-creation community that capitalises EUTOPIA partners' joint potential to promote innovation and societal impact. This programme, which aims to extend EUTOPIA's challenge-led model to the development of its Research and Innovation (R&I) dimension, tackles two main challenges:

- Integrate pan-EUTOPIA R&I Communities.
- Open up EUTOPIA research communities to society, businesses, students, and policy-makers.

To this end, three cross-cutting objectives will be targeted:

- Developing R&I synergies and delivering a joint Research Strategy
- Mutualising resources and tools
- Defining a shared R&I policy.

Objectives are to boost the research capacity of the initial six and now ten universities of the Alliance in both human and technical resources and contribute to the development of the EU R&I performance. The idea is to generate a cross-institutional strategy based on joint governance and common management structures. Among other actions, the project includes an Open Access metadata portal, a common Human Resources strategy and roadmap, and the creation of an EUTOPIA Grants, Legal, and Innovation office.



*"We connect education, research and society to create a wider pattern. We do it through a new 'ecosystem', a network to foster and multiply collaborations and develop opportunities, and thanks also to creative collisions and interpenetrations towards innovation and knowledge transfer."*

Vision & Mission Statement, EUTOPIA MORE



**MAIN  
RESULTS**



## A COMMON RESEARCH & INNOVATION **AGENDA**

*“The primary objective of the Agenda is to enhance capacity building for excellence and impact through research and innovation collaboration.”*

### Capacity building for excellence and impact through collaboration

Through collaboration, EUTOPIA seeks a leading role in improving excellence in education, research and innovation at a local, national and international scale.

Working with a shared set of values and purpose, EUTOPIA universities are developing long-term and sustainable collaboration, sharing good practices and

opportunities, and piloting new models of deeper and more ambitious collaborations across the ‘Knowledge Square’: education, research, innovation and service to society.

### Vision & Mission

EUTOPIA’s vision is to empower future generations with academic knowledge to contribute to the establishment and maintenance of sustainable, resilient, democratic and inclusive societies.

## PRINCIPLES

The core principle guiding EUTOPIA revolves around creating a holistic academic environment that deeply intertwines research, education, and innovation – a complete academic environment. This principle underscores the vital integration of these elements to push advancements and generate sustainable growth for societal benefit. The principles outlined below serve as prerequisites for establishing such complete academic environments:

- **Comprehensive and Multidisciplinary Approach**

Tackling worldwide challenges demands a comprehensive strategy involving diverse stakeholders. This approach emphasises collaboration, knowledge exchange, and the pursuit of effective solutions through a multidisciplinary approach in both research and education.

- **Cross-sectoral collaboration and Innovation**

Confronting global challenges necessitates collaboration across disciplines and sectors, with a strong focus on innovation. These principles highlight the necessity of breaking down traditional disciplinary boundaries, fostering partnerships with various entities, and embracing innovative strategies, technologies, and business models to drive progress and create fresh opportunities.

EUTOPIA aims to create academic environments that foster research and innovation collaboration and transdisciplinary approaches to tackle complex global challenges and empower future generations to contribute to sustainable and inclusive societies by aligning the priorities and principles with the vision and mission.

**PRIORITIES**

**FOUR FOCUS AREAS 2024-2026**

- Health & Wellbeing
- Environment & Resilience
- Identity, Diversity & Cultural Heritage
- Democracy, Inclusion & Equal Opportunities

The alliance has a wide range of expertise within different fields of research and innovation. The focus areas emerged after an extensive analysis of existing research strategies within the TRAIN institutions. These focus areas show potential alignment with ongoing and forthcoming initiatives within EUTOPIA and existing research centres and infrastructures across EUTOPIA's institutions.

The formulation of this Agenda engaged essential stakeholders, notably the vice-rectors for Research and Innovation from the ten EUTOPIA universities, along with representatives from the six TRAIN universities. The process began by examining the participating universities' current Research and Innovation Strategies. Subsequently, it delved into each institution's aspirations and the alliance's collective ambitions concerning Research and Innovation.

Various collaborative initiatives and programs within the alliance, including Connected Research Communities, Grants, Legal & Innovation Offices (GLENN), Young Leaders Academy, Research Mobility Programme, and SIF MSCA co-fund, as well as initiatives undertaken independently by each university, significantly

contributed to shaping the activities and objectives of the Research and Innovation agenda. These efforts served as vital input sources, guiding the development of the Agenda's direction and objectives.

The four focus areas reflect complex global challenges, necessitating collaboration among stakeholders with diverse expertise and perspectives. They are rooted in the concept of complete academic environments, stressing a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral, and innovative approach. This concept serves as a guiding principle for the future endeavours of the Agenda, shaping its development and implementation. A fundamental aspect shared across all four focus areas is utilising science and technology as tools to achieve excellence in research. Each area requires competencies in digitalisation, sustainability, and other skills relevant for the future. One of the anticipated long-term impacts is the transformation of education, making it adaptable and flexible for the future landscape.

**HEALTH & WELLBEING**

Within the alliance, many centres of excellence in health and wellbeing exist. As health and wellbeing represent a critical global challenge that impacts the livelihoods, productivity, and overall quality of life for individuals and communities worldwide and is an area of significant interest and experience across the alliance, it has



been chosen as one of the four focus areas to be included in the R&I agenda. With an increasingly interconnected world, this challenge has become more complex and multifaceted, influenced by a variety of factors ranging from socioeconomic disparities and environmental changes to evolving lifestyles and healthcare systems. The alliance tackles these challenges by encouraging and supporting further work on this focus area.

EUTOPIA recently secured the **EUTOPIA Health** project under Horizon Europe Widening Actions (beginning in January 2024). This project perfectly resonates with the alliance's aspirations to foster capacity development, enhance institutional harmonisation, and bolster research efforts in health and wellbeing. It stands as a tangible and significant stride toward accomplishing the Agenda's objectives and aligning with the broader vision and mission of the EUTOPIA alliance.



**ENVIRONMENT & RESILIENCE**

Environmental resilience is a critical area of focus within the alliance due to the urgent global challenges that threaten ecosystems, biodiversity, and the overall stability of the planet. These challenges arise from various factors, including human activities, industrial growth, and the unsustainable utilisation of resources. As a result, they pose significant risks to the long-term sustainability of the environment and the wellbeing of both current and future generations.

Recognising the profound impact of these challenges, the alliance has deliberately prioritised environmental resilience as a key focus area within its Agenda. This signifies the alliance's commitment to address and mitigate the detrimental effects

of human activities on the environment. The alliance recognises the intertwined nature of ecological systems and human wellbeing by devoting attention to environmental resilience. It underscores the importance of preserving and protecting the environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

**IDENTITY, DIVERSITY & CULTURAL HERITAGE**



In Research and Innovation, EUTOPIA emphasises European values within the context of Identity, Diversity, and Cultural Heritage. These values, rooted in fundamental principles like human rights, democracy, tolerance, and diversity, underpin innovative governance models and resilient societies.

EUTOPIA's approach is driven by research, aiming to foster collaboration, innovation, and progress in societal development. Additionally, EUTOPIA recognises the intrinsic value of Cultural Heritage and its contribution to shaping identities. Cultural Heritage encompasses historical, archaeological, artistic, and intangible elements integral to understanding and appreciating our past and present. Within its research and innovation endeavours, EUTOPIA prioritises the preservation and exploration of Cultural Heritage, aiming to integrate these historical and cultural dimensions into its framework. By doing so, EUTOPIA seeks to enrich its research efforts further and promote a comprehensive understanding of societies.

**DEMOCRACY, INCLUSION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**



From a research and innovation perspective, democracy, inclusion, and equal



opportunities are fundamental drivers of progress and advancement across various disciplines. These principles have ethical significance and serve as catalysts for fostering innovation, creativity, and groundbreaking discoveries. In particular, research that focuses on democratic processes, such as the quality of government, public policies, and public opinion, plays a critical role in promoting the sustainability of democratic

and inclusive societies. By investigating and understanding these processes, researchers can contribute to informed decision-making, policy development, and enhancing democratic institutions. This research ensures that the voices and perspectives of diverse populations are heard and considered, promoting a sense of inclusion and providing equal opportunities for all members of society.

By recognising and prioritising these principles, we can foster a more inclusive and democratic research landscape that fuels transformative discoveries and contributes to the advancement of society.

### EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

Placing early career researchers at the forefront of the Agenda is a strategic decision to promote innovation, advance research, and nurture the future generation of global leaders across various disciplines. By prioritising this group, the Agenda recognises the potential impact of providing tailored support and opportunities for professional development in cultivating a diverse and

skilled research community capable of tackling complex global challenges. Several key strategies and initiatives can be implemented to support early career researchers and facilitate their professional growth. Initiatives such as the **Young Leaders Academy** programme have been established to provide targeted support and resources to this cohort.

### AIM & OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the Agenda is to enhance capacity building for excellence and impact through research and innovation collaboration. This is achieved through three distinct goals.

**Develop and strengthen R&I collaboration to promote knowledge sharing, excellence & societal impact**

The first objective is to develop and strengthen research and innovation (R&I) collaboration to promote

knowledge sharing, excellence, and societal impact. This objective aligns with the principle of comprehensive research collaboration, emphasising diverse stakeholders' engagement. By promoting R&I collaboration, EUTOPIA seeks to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, resources, and ideas among students, faculty, and academic and non-academic partners. This objective will contribute to establishing an open and inclusive academic space that connects communities across various disciplines,

ecosystems, and geographical borders. Consequently, it will enhance EUTOPIA's capacity to address global challenges and achieve excellence and societal impact through collective efforts.

**Foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement to drive societal impact.**

This objective aligns with the principle of innovation – fostering a culture of creativity, exploration, and forward-thinking in various fields, including business, technology, science, and social development - and the recognition that solving global challenges requires innovative approaches, technologies, and business models. By fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, EUTOPIA aims to create an environment that encourages creativity, experimentation, and the development of novel solutions.

By pursuing these three objectives and implementing the suggested activities, EUTOPIA will enhance its capacity for excellence and impact through research & innovation collaboration and continuous improvement. These objectives provide a clear roadmap for achieving the overarching aim of the Agenda.

This objective will enable EUTOPIA to drive societal impact by addressing global challenges with fresh perspectives and innovative ideas.

**Implement monitoring, evaluation and feedback mechanisms to follow the results and impact of the agenda**

The third objective involves implementing monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms to track the results and impact of the Agenda. By adopting these mechanisms, EUTOPIA aims to effectively monitor the progress of its initiatives, evaluate their outcomes, and make informed decisions for improvement. This objective underscores the significance of accountability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making in achieving the desired capacity-building and societal impact.

## OPEN SCIENCE AND SOCIETAL OUTREACH

Currently, many universities are focused on incentivising and rewarding a small number of academic activities, including publishing and attracting external funding, while other activities such as archiving data, (open) peer review and Citizen Science are implicitly neglected during assessment. Likewise, there is a strong focus on Journal Impact Factors, while Real World Impact is largely ignored.

Nonetheless, many researchers already practise Open Science to some extent by, for example, publishing in Open

Access journals and participating in research outside their expertise to contribute to multi-disciplinary problems. However, the shift toward Open Science is a shared responsibility, and only by changing the incentives will we fully allow researchers to take part in the transition to Open Science and to contribute to the sustainable challenges.

The overall goal of EUTOPIA is to stimulate Open Science practices and contributions to multi-disciplinary problems that have a real life rather than a pure academic impact.

EUTOPIA-TRAIN brought forward mainstreaming Open Science and increasing societal engagement as one of its top priorities. The following goals were defined:

- Mainstreaming comprehensive & critical Open Science practices
- Deduplicating efforts
- Leading by example
- Increasing the channels for societal outreach

## OPEN SCIENCE AND RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT COURSES

Research institutions are supporting their researchers in embracing transparent and reproducible science.

The EUTOPIA-TRAIN project aimed to be a stellar example, uniting efforts to provide top-notch Open Science training.

### Output

- 6 training guides providing hands-on information (available online)
- 6 webinars with keynotes from Publishing Directors, European Commission policy officers, (senior) researchers, and data stewards

### Impact & Uptake

- 245 participants during the events
- 912 downloads of training materials (1,189 views)

## OPEN ACCESS PORTAL FOR EUTOPIA

A twofold objective:

- Amplify the visibility of the Open Science efforts of researchers within the EUTOPIA network,
- Cultivate a culture of cross-institutional collaboration among these researchers.

### Output

- OpenAIRE EUTOPIA and Monitor Portal on which publications and datasets of EUTOPIA partners can be found

## FRAMEWORK POLICY FOR RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

• While many researchers practise Open Science to some extent, the shift towards Open Science is a shared responsibility.

• Our goal was to create a framework policy conditions for research assessment which reflect Open Science efforts.

### Output

- Two background notes on research evaluation with overviews of developments and approaches
- Online workshop at the EUTOPIA level
- Framework policy providing general principles and a toolbox of indicators for inspiration

### Impact & Uptake

- Broader discussions on research assessment within the Alliance
- Ultimately, EUTOPIA signed the CoARA Agreement.
- Background notes downloaded 709 times (viewed almost 14,000 times)

## OPEN SCIENCE AND CITIZEN SCIENCE LINKAGE

Citizen Science is scientific research entirely or partially conducted by non-scientists (citizens), often in collaboration with or supervised by professional scientists.

We aimed to raise awareness of Citizen Science among EUTOPIA researchers and university policymakers and offer them education and support.

**Output**

- An international community of practice on citizen science, sustained by a series of peer learning sessions
- Two online training events

- Citizen Science Starter kit providing guidelines tips and tricks to researchers (available online)
- Establishment of a Citizen Science Education and Support Service

**Impact & Uptake**

- The Citizen Science Starter kit was downloaded 1.117 times



EUTOPIA Open Research Portal (OpenAIRE)



EUTOPIA Research Repository (Zenodo)



## YOUNG LEADERS ACADEMY

The EUTOPIA Young Leaders Academy (YLA) is a strategic initiative launched in 2021 by the six initial partners of the EUTOPIA Alliance within the framework of the EUTOPIA 2050 ERAMUS+ project and enlarged within the framework of the EUTOPIA TRAIN Horizon 2020 project.

The EUTOPIA Alliance has been awarded a second ERAMUS+ project EUTOPIA MORE starting in December 2022 and gathering ten European universities. While the Young Leaders Academy's first cohort of fellow was enrolled under EUTOPIA 2050 and EUTOPIA TRAIN projects, two new cohorts are supported under EUTOPIA MORE project between 2023 and 2026 for a two-year appointment in the Academy.

The core mission of the EUTOPIA Alliance is to promote a connected and inclusive academic community, addressing global and local challenges, advancing excellence and inclusion, geared towards impact and fostering European economic development and innovation through a deep engagement of the Alliance with its local and regional ecosystems.

The EUTOPIA Young Leaders Academy is a major step toward this goal. Building on the EUTOPIA Alliance ecosystem, the YLA aims at creating a network

of high potential, early to mid-career researchers, coming from all EUTOPIA partner universities. Members of the Academy will constitute a community of promising independent research leaders at the scale of the alliance, sharing and promoting European values and the EUTOPIA vision of an interconnected academic environment.

The Academy is designed to contribute to the European Research and Innovation Area by:

- Strengthening Europe's human capital base by enhancing the research potential and career perspective of young researchers
- Supporting disruptive research to achieve knowledge-breakthrough in major research areas and innovation-intensive domains
- Reinforcing the link between academic research and societal stakeholders to promote knowledge and technology transfers and innovation
- Supporting the emergence of a European University network by deepening the integration of the knowledge and innovation ecosystem of the EUTOPIA Alliance.

## TRAINING RESOURCES & MUTUALISATION SCENARIOS

One of the main objectives of EUTOPIA TRAIN is to support the Alliance researchers, especially young talents, through a shared approach to skill upgrading and career. The EUTOPIA alliance is committed to developing joint R&I training resources open to all faculties, permanent and non-permanent staff and postgraduate students to strengthen human capital and enhance the alliance’s attractiveness and research leadership.

This purpose shall cover in the future both transversal and disciplinary skills, with the ultimate goal of offering mutualised training through distance learning modules and webinars, capitalising on each university’s existing training offer and expertise.

The EUTOPIA partner universities invest significant resources in offering training to support research and careers to the researchers community, and mutualisation would allow us to build on all the best practices and expand and diversify our collective range of expertise.

As stated in the basic principles of the Alliance, through the EUTOPIA 2050 project the vision advocated by EUTOPIA sought to address the profound paradox between the vision of openness of the partner universities and the limitations imposed locally for legal, administrative or financial reasons. In the EUTOPIA 2050 project, the learning communities were student-centred and student-empowering;

this may also be the objective of the training dedicated to supporting today the research community, putting early-stage researchers at the centre of our joint activities. However, training for researchers—very often disciplinary training, depending on faculties or research groups—is uneasy to identify by central services for sharing purposes at the local level, hence even more at the Alliance level. They are very dependent on research needs and can be very versatile.

As a first objective and step towards sharing and mutualising EUTOPIA training resources, it has been decided to focus on transversal skills for researchers, with particular attention to early-stage researchers (doctoral and post-doctoral fellows), also considering the growing number of common programmes within EUTOPIA, such as the EUTOPIA PhD Co-tutelle, Researcher Mobility Programme and EUTOPIA SIF Postdoctoral Fellowships. The Young Leader Academy programme also offers the opportunity to develop specific training to accelerate young researchers’ careers.

Transversal skills supporting career and personal development represent the first scope for EUTOPIA training mutualisation pilot activities and scenarios.

EUTOPIA universities recognise the necessity to ensure training possibilities for all researchers and staff and to promote lifelong skills upgrading. EUTOPIA may use this opportunity to offer high-quality courses on transferable

skills built on the best practices identified and the needs expressed by pilot EUTOPIA researchers’ cohorts.

In the frame of the EUTOPIA TRAIN actions of sharing best practices for and developing strategies to strengthen human capital, the first objective is to create a training offer for the EUTOPIA research community and produced:

- An inventory of the transversal skills training offers available in each university
- Assertion of the need for additional training support
- Identification of the scope and conditions for mutualisation,

- Pilot cases of mutualised training for more ambitious integrated programmes at doctoral and postdoctoral levels

- An action plan for implementing integrated training at the EUTOPIA level

As EUTOPIA is now an Alliance of 10 universities, gathering more than 22,700 PhD students and 23,700 academic staff working in 874 research groups, training EUTOPIA researchers is even more challenging and will benefit from all the mutualisation or joint opportunities we may build.

A training survey permitted to reach common definitions and identify categories of trainings for transferable skills. 13 categories were collectively identified to support academic or non-academic careers:

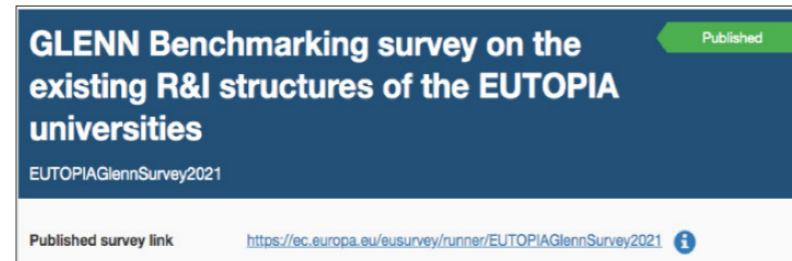
- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Digital skills                  | 8. Other (languages, summer schools...)   |
| 2. Entrepreneurship                | 9. Personal Development                   |
| 3. Ethics                          | 10. Research Funding & Project Management |
| 4. Knowledge Transfer & Innovation | 11. Research Integrity & Data Management  |
| 5. Leadership & Career             | 12. Scientific Output & Communication     |
| 6. Networking                      | 13. Teaching                              |
| 7. Open Science & Citizen Science  |   |

## GRANTS, LEGAL & INNOVATION SUPPORT OFFICE

To transform the inter-institutional dynamics and strengthen R&I collaborations, EUTOPIA members consider it essential to have a better knowledge and alignment of the support services offered in each university's R&I offices. With this in mind, EUTOPIA TRAIN created a network of GLENN officers (*experts from EUTOPIA universities appointed based on roles and functions*) and designed a benchmarking survey consisting of four sections:

- **General information:** Size of participant universities in terms of students and employees (academic, research and administrative staff)
- **Strategies and Performance in R&I:** Participation in R&I programs (KPIs), Innovation-related metrics, Strategies for R&I
- **Support offices and Services:** Pre-award services, Post-award service, Innovation and legal support, Ethics and security services, Gender dimension services
- **Recommendations and priorities for future EUTOPIA support:**
  - Expectations from GLENN
  - Ideas and initiatives of future cooperation

The survey served to gather the most relevant information and ideas of closer cooperation to advance towards the creation of a shared EUTOPIA Grants, Legal and Innovation – GLENN Office.



The results show that EUTOPIA universities have a complex and heterogeneous structure of R&I services providing support to a broad research community from centralised and decentralised offices in various areas of expertise and that these services, combined with specific incentives actively support the achievement of high levels of participation and excellent performance reported by partners in R&I European funding schemes.

The best-established areas appeared in the three support services mentioned below (a, b, c), with dedicated experts employed by partners in the central/central-delocalised offices and additional support services provided from decentralised units located in concrete faculties, departments or research groups:

- Preparation of research grant proposals (pre-award)
- Innovation and legal advice
- Grant and financial management (post-award)

Regarding best practices, training (e.g., grant writing courses, entrepreneurship training), review procedures, written

guidelines, and information events (in the form of project start meetings, seminars or workshops) were among the activities and resources that partners valued most.

Regarding innovation and legal services, the individual and personalised mentoring provided by central support offices appeared as a success factor that facilitates business development, contract negotiation, tech commercialisation, drafting contracts and licenses, IPR and connecting with external partners.

In contrast, efforts and resources dedicated to providing support in the services that appear below (d, e) have unequal presence among universities or are still under development in most R&I central offices:

- Support in ethics and security issues
- Advice to integrate gender in R&I projects

EUTOPIA partners reported robust deployment in personal data protection, assistance in preparing documents for the ethics screening procedure, support for connecting with external ethics advisors (central offices liaise with internal and external ethics committees), and support in preparing ethics self-assessments.

However, support in security and gender issues is generally under-deployed at the central level, with the advice offered for designing the security issues table and integrating the gender dimension

in research grant proposals highlighted as best practices. In contrast, improved review services, training activities and better resources are spotted as necessary to advance those services.

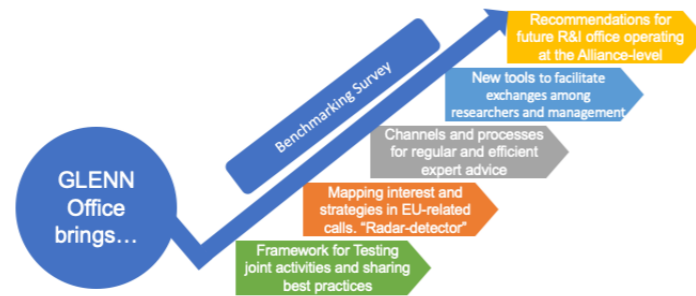
In terms of common challenges and future recommendations, priorities for the EUTOPIA support services offered by the six original members of the Alliance are related to the research and innovation funding (pre-award services), interconnection of local structures (staff exchange), training and development of personnel (researchers and support staff), sustainability of the Alliance (joint response), resources and digital tools (end-users), and new R&I support services in underdeveloped areas (i.e., gender).

To respond to those priorities, partners suggest three main lines of future collaboration articulated through GLENN.

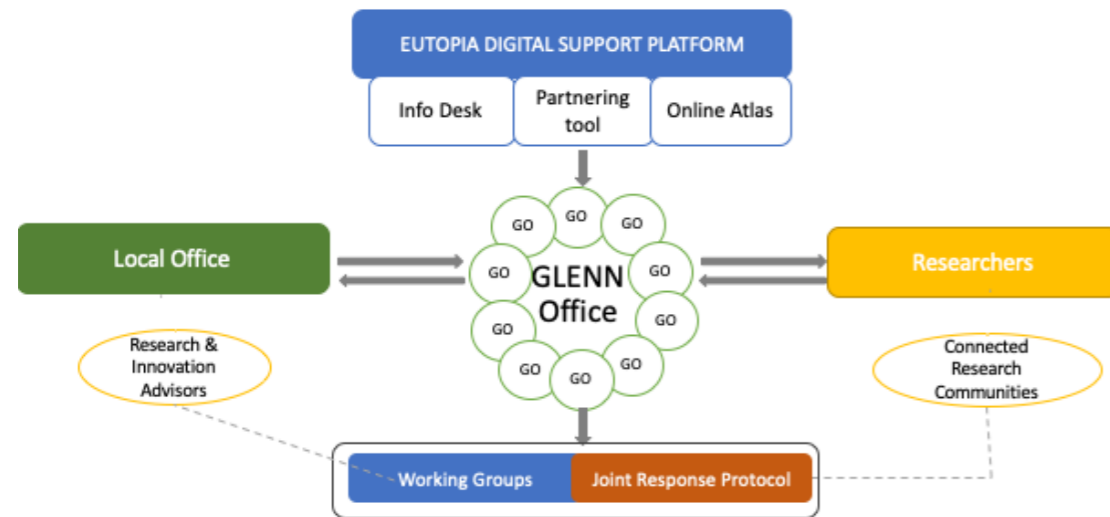
- A shared strategy for engaging with the research community (end-users) that can be easily accommodated to the local structures and needs of each EUTOPIA university.
- Closer cooperation among R&I support office personnel, including better interconnection of local structures and staff training.
- Contribution to building a stronger and sustainable EUTOPIA Alliance, thus improving the communication flow and joint response.

### Defining strategies to interconnect R&I Offices

The main purpose is to interconnect the local offices to create better services for the end-users (researchers). Joint activities. New tools. Expert working groups. Mutual learning.



### A connected network



### Sharing Best Practices



### GLENN RAPID RESPONSE PROTOCOL

The GLENN Office purpose is to interconnect our universities' research and innovation support offices to allow offering better services to the researchers (end-users), contributing to the development of EUTOPIA common agenda and, ultimately, strengthening the alliance. To respond to these objectives, a clear communication flow and joint response protocol should be established to consider joint application to R&I funding calls both under ordinary and extraordinary circumstances.

An action plan defined the concept, objectives and communication strategy to be activated, based on the GLENN officers' suggestions

### Concept and objectives

EUTOPIA universities need smooth coordination among several institutions to respond together to common challenges and R&I funding opportunities. There are two types of joint response:

- The Ordinary Response (OR) will be activated when there is a common interest in applying to a R&I funding call that is considered foreseen. A foreseen call is published by the funding entity following an ordinary procedure. It is expected to be announced and opened by the funding authority beforehand, and the potential applicants know

about it long in advance. A clear example of a foreseen call would be those included in the biennial work programmes of the EU Framework Programme (e.g., MSCA-DN, ERC StG, Missions, etc.).

- The Rapid Response (RR) will be activated under certain extraordinary circumstances, when EUTOPIA universities want to apply to a R&I funding call that is considered unforeseen.

An unforeseen call is published by the funding entity in short notice responding to an extraordinary situation. It is not expected to be opened by the funding authority beforehand, as it responds to a sudden change, and the potential applicants have very limited time to prepare until the call deadline. It does not include late reaction from researchers to foreseen calls. A clear example of an unforeseen call would be the extraordinary EU calls directed to face the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

In both cases, the idea of joint cooperation could come from different actors involved in the process, such as researchers that search additional partners within the alliance (bottom-up approach), or EUTOPIA Boards that decide to apply for strategic reasons (top-down approach).

## WORKING GROUPS

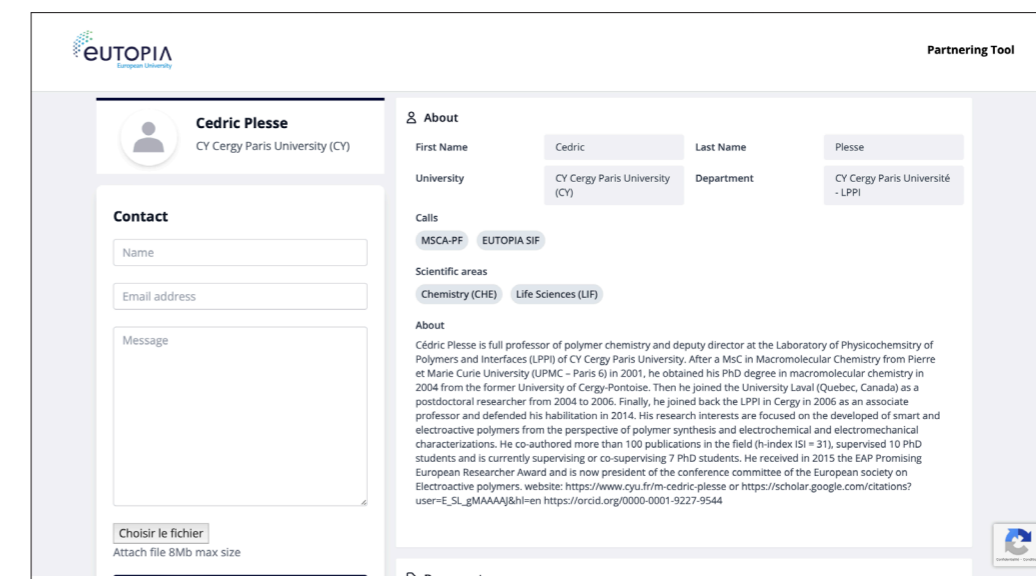
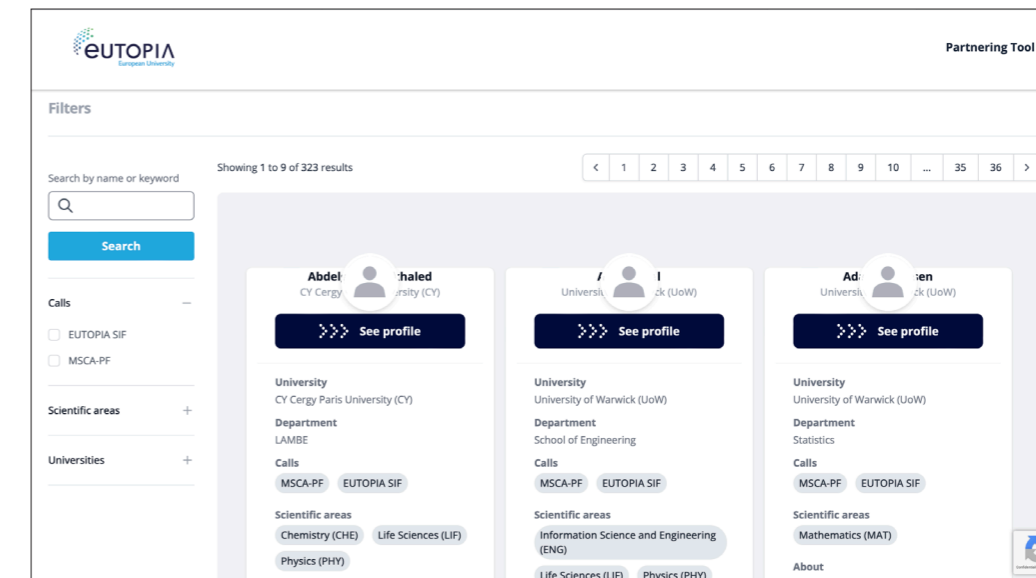
To contribute to the successful deployment of the GLENN Office, support staff from local offices across various domains of expertise in R&I management were organised into working groups. In these spaces, different activities were realised: sharing best practices, identifying common challenges, preparing joint events and assessing how to manage such areas. Each working group defined their own objectives and action plans.

## SOME LESSONS LEARNED

- Valuable lessons in terms of project management, multi-stakeholder engagement/cooperation and communications among the Universities of the Alliance.
- Working groups: small networks of specialists (bottom-up) who share expertise and propose/implement actions to support connected research (e.g. Info Days, ERC research course)
- R&I Cooperation can not be forced! It takes time.
- To collaborate to compete although we are also competitors => Good RESULTS (EUTOPIA grants: Doctoral Network, Widera, EUTOPIA MSCA-COFUND...)
- Digital tools: flexible digital tools, possibly including APIs to upload information available to other existing databases => reduce workload and maintenance.
- Communications and outreach strategies to ensure end-users are informed and engaged.
- Building cooperation on existing activities and if possible enhancing them (filling the gaps), don't reinvent the wheel.
- And we need strong commitment to build mutual confidence

## PARTNERING TOOL

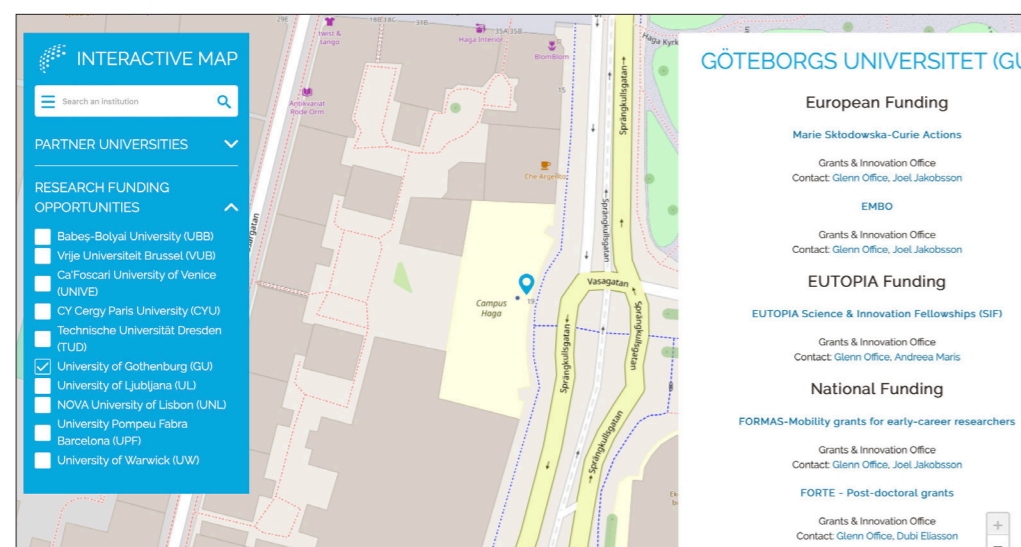
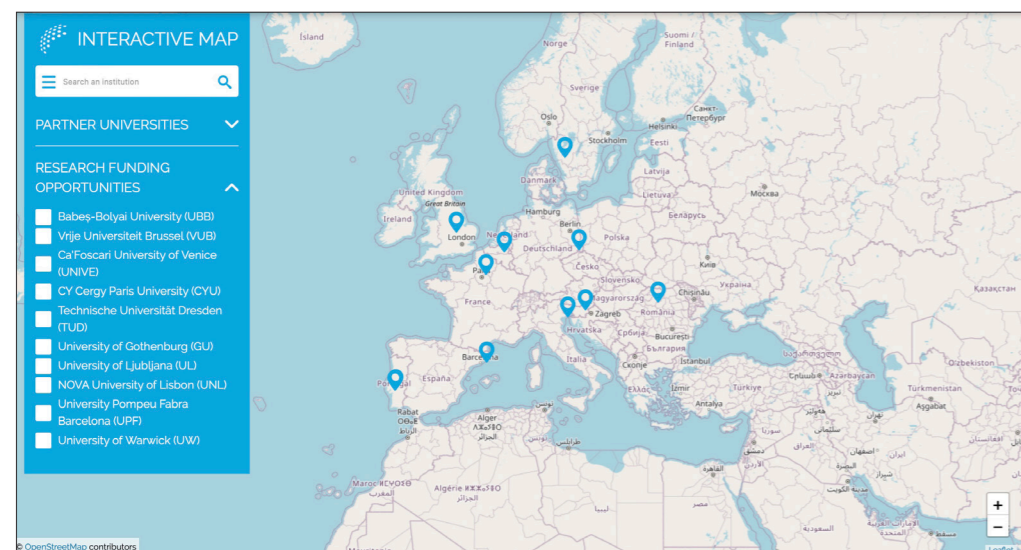
The EUTOPIA Partnering Tool was conceived to help researchers find a suitable potential supervisor for their post-doctoral research in one of the Alliance Universities, either to apply for MSCA funding or other doctoral and post-doctoral opportunities. The tool provides the names, research centres and investigation subjects of hundreds of researchers within the EUTOPIA universities, allowing an easy best-matching.



## ONLINE ATLAS OF RESEARCH FUNDING

Together with the [Central Research Information System overview](https://train.eutopia-university.eu/tools/research-portals) (https://train.eutopia-university.eu/tools/research-portals) and the [Rapid-response Protocol](#) designed to respond to funding calls and dissemination of R&I opportunities (under ordinary and extraordinary circumstances, EUTOPIA created in June 2022 a [R&I Online Atlas](#) displaying R&I funding opportunities on EUTOPIA's website. To provide long-term sustainability of the EUTOPIA

Research & Innovation collaboration network, EUTOPIA planned how to apply to future funding programmes, such as the MSCA COFUND and other calls of special interest to groups of researchers in the Alliance. GLENN offices were responsible for mapping relevant funding opportunities, and ensuring the efficient and targeted dissemination of EU and international R&I opportunities across the entire network.



## HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY & HUMAN CAPITAL ROADMAP

Since the beginning of the EUTOPIA journey, human resources (HR) concerns have been at the heart of the Alliance. Early in the process, it was identified that without HR present, a European university alliance would simply not be able to deliver upon its objectives. Thus the HR departments within EUTOPIA are integral to the success and effectiveness of the alliance. HR serves as a vital bridge between the academic and administrative aspects, ensuring that the alliance functions cohesively while respecting the diverse cultures and policies of the partner institutions.

HR's core role is managing and developing EUTOPIA's human capital. HR professionals are responsible for attracting, recruiting, and retaining top-tier academic, administrative and management talent. HR also plays a role in fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment within the EUTOPIA alliance.

Across the administrative and management services within EUTOPIA, HR supports and facilitates effective communication and understanding among individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, ensuring that the EUTOPIA alliance operates harmoniously. Furthermore, HR oversees compliance with legal and

regulatory frameworks, labour laws, and institutional policies across the EUTOPIA alliance, including in complex areas such as intra-European taxation, social security, and visa and immigration policies.

EUTOPIA's HR departments, therefore, serve as the backbone of the alliance, fostering collaboration, managing human resources efficiently and effectively, and upholding compliance and fairness. The HR departments contribute towards the alliance's ability to achieve its academic, research, and strategic European objectives while embracing diversity and unity.

The EUTOPIA HR Strategy has been prepared under the auspices of the TRAIN project by the six original EUTOPIA partners. During the drafting process, new partners joined the EUTOPIA Alliance and were invited to observe and contribute to the drafting process, as all ten EUTOPIA institutions will be required to implement the HR Strategy via the EUTOPIA MORE and EUTOPIA HEALTH projects. However, the HR Strategy remains a standalone deliverable by the six partner beneficiaries under the EUTOPIA TRAIN framework.



## HR STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

The EUTOPIA TRAIN's overall aims are to extend its challenge-led educational model to the development of its research and innovation activities and to tackle two main challenges:

- a. The integration of pan-EUTOPIA research and innovation communities and
- b. To open up EUTOPIA research communities and structures to society, business, students and policy-makers.

These challenges can only be confronted with the development of a joint Human Resources Strategy that considers the current challenges facing human capital management within the six EUTOPIA TRAIN institutions.

**The three objectives** of the HR strategy focus on supporting these two broad challenges by contributing to our researchers' skill development and mobility and attracting and retaining talent at EUTOPIA. Each objective is then linked with a strategic theme of the HR Strategy (in brackets):

- a. To integrate the R&I communities of the alliance, coordinating human resources activity in conjunction with the development of a common framework for research

and innovation and creating opportunities for researchers to collaborate and share knowledge across the alliance whilst also retaining and nurturing talent. (Leadership, Recruitment, Mobility)

- b. To foster talent promotion through a shared approach to skill upgrading, career development, and common training programmes. This means providing researchers with the skills and training they need to succeed in their careers and creating a more supportive environment for early-career researchers. (Leadership, Mobility, Career Assessment Modernisation, Staff Training and Development, Recognition and Reward)
- c. To create a positive and supportive work environment. This means each EUTOPIA institution creates this environment by promoting a culture of respect, collaboration, and inclusion by implementing policies and procedures that support employee well-being and work-life balance (Leadership, Well-being, Recruitment, Career Assessment Modernisation, Reward and Recognition)

## EUTOPIA AND RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is a sensitive topic for all academic institutions, not least because of the significant level of regulation (both internal and external), laws and agreements that govern the process at each EUTOPIA partner institution. The organisation of our institutions can be a significant barrier to cooperation. Only one of the original six EUTOPIA institutions has a centralised model for all their recruitment. The remaining five institutions (and the four new institutions under the EUTOPIA MORE project) have a mixed model whereby some recruitment occurs centrally, whilst most academic appointments take place within faculties or departments.

Recruitment needs more than ever a professional approach that goes beyond having a talk with candidates based on a resumé and past performance. It requires significant training and effort, and that is time that cannot subsequently be spent on the core tasks of our academics: education and research.

The international labour market is also more complex than a few years ago and the pool of candidates available to us is limited: unemployment of higher profiles is close to zero in many subject and research areas.

The issue of legal status for each EUTOPIA institution is a challenge for promoting cooperation in recruitment. Once recruited, the employment status of individuals can also be an issue.

EUTOPIA universities are situated in ten different legal jurisdictions, each with their own set of employment law and

terms and conditions. In some countries and regions, academics are considered civil servants, whilst in others they have a simple contract of employment. These different staff categories can often determine the recruitment procedures. Once again, this is an area beyond the scope of EUTOPIA or the individual institutions to change.

Nonetheless, routes for cooperation and joined up working, which build upon the EU's existing policy framework do exist. These are areas where EUTOPIA can potentially add value to the recruitment processes within each institution.

### Recommendations

The recommendations represent modest proposals for where added value could be achieved by cooperating more closely at the EUTOPIA level. The recommendations are feasible, practical, and can be implemented (in most cases) with minimal bureaucracy. They emerged from a 15 month process of research, questionnaires and workshops carried out by the HR Directors Group.

### EUTOPIA level

- a. Develop additional EUTOPIA branding to complement existing institutional branding to help attract talent.
- b. Establish a jobs board on EUTOPIA's official website where all relevant jobs can be posted (or linked to) to support the understanding that EUTOPIA is a collaborative alliance

and to promote mobility within the alliance.

- c. Enable better communication and networking for all HR staff across EUTOPIA.
- d. Prouce a lexicon available online to explain common terminology used in HR across EUTOPIA to help reduce misunderstandings and miscommunication.
- e. Instil a culture of mobility amongst EUTOPIA's administrative, technical and support staff, taking into account existing Erasmus+ arrangements.

#### Individual Institutional level

- a. References to EUTOPIA should, where appropriate, be included in the job descriptions of all new advertised positions. In most cases, this can be an additional generic line of text informing candidates that other duties commensurate with the role could include supporting the work of EUTOPIA.
- b. All job vacancies at EUTOPIA institutions should include not only the name and logo of the home institution but also EUTOPIA European University to improve EUTOPIA brand awareness for candidates.
- c. EUTOPIA institutions should post all their relevant job vacancies on the Euraxess jobs portal and link to the EUTOPIA portal jobs site (when established).
- d. During the recruitment process, EUTOPIA should, where appropriate, be mentioned to candidates and they should be informed that EUTOPIA will be a part of working at the institution to promote an understanding about EUTOPIA from the outset.
- e. All newly appointed staff should undertake an additional onboarding programme focused on EUTOPIA to embed new staff into the alliance and raise awareness of EUTOPIA's mission and values.
- f. Administrative staff should be offered the opportunity to attend language classes, in particular in English as the most common language of communication within EUTOPIA, to facilitate dialogue between the EUTOPIA administrative services.
- g. At institutions which operate a staff or personnel card system, they should make reference to EUTOPIA either by using the logo or name on the card.

The content of this brochure reflects only a part of the comprehensive work done by all teams in EUTOPIA TRAIN.

For more information, visit us:

<https://eutopia.university.eu>  
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