



CALL: H2020-IBA-SWAFS-SUPPORT-1-2020 SUBMITTED FOR H2020-IBA-SWAFS-SUPPORT-1-2020 / 18 JUN 2020

TOPIC: IBA-SWAFS-SUPPORT-1-2020 - SUPPORT FOR THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIMENSION OF EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES (PART I)

PROJECT: EU4ART_DIFFERENCES ([HTTPS://DIFFERENCES.EU4ART.EU](https://differences.eu4art.eu))

SCOPE OF THE POLICY BRIEF

In this second policy brief, the European Universities pilot I alliances are asked to report on the progress made through cooperation in selected R&I areas and provide a last set of recommendations to the European Commission for further policy development.

Policy background:

In order to strengthen strategic partnerships across the EU amongst higher education institutions, the European Commission targets the emergence of “European Universities” by 2024 by funding alliances from across Europe. The ambitious mandate aims to trigger systemic, structural and sustainable institutionalized cooperation between higher education institutions. As a complement to the Erasmus+ action geared towards supporting higher education cooperation models, Horizon 2020 supported the research and innovation dimension of the alliances between European universities, in line with their shared, integrated, long-term joint strategy and in synergy with their education dimension.

This initiative is one of the flagships of the [European strategy for universities](#) that aimed at supporting and enabling universities to adapt to changing conditions, to thrive and to take a leading role in the recovery of Europe, and in making our society greener, more inclusive and more digital.

In parallel, the [European Research Area Policy Agenda](#) sets out 20 voluntary actions for the period 2022-2024, including several of which are relevant for universities. The feedback from the alliances helped co-shape the ERA Policy Agenda 2022 – 2024, such as ERA actions 1 (sharing of data), 3 (reform of research management), 4 (strengthening careers), 5 (gender equality), 7 (knowledge valorisation), 8 (research infrastructures), 13 (empowering universities), 14 (engaging citizens), 17 (research management).

FEEDBACK ON PROGRESS (MAX 2 P)

Please build on the feedback provided in the Feedback to Policy Report PR1

1. Please describe the **challenges** your Alliance encountered in Reporting Period 2 regarding cooperation between universities in the field of R&I in relation to the institutional change areas (transformation modules) foreseen as well regulatory obstacles hampering the cooperation.

The most pressing challenges to our Alliance's cooperation in Research and Innovation (R&I) are directly related to areas of institutional change. Our four institutions have different regulations for doctoral studies and academic research in the field of Fine Arts: MKE has an existing doctoral programme provision since the early 2000s and has conducted research without relying on partnerships with universities. The EU4ART_*differences* project allowed our institutions to make great strides in establishing doctoral programmes: LMA established its doctoral programme in 2020. At the beginning of the project, ABARoma and HfBK did not have doctoral Fine Arts programmes and were not required to conduct academic research in that field. As of today, ABARoma has launched two doctoral programmes with two different universities (Roma Tre and Tor Vergata Universities). At the end of the programme, HfBK succeeded in securing national funding for a young researchers' group on an Artistic Research related project in the field of Stage Design. Fine Arts (see 3.) Another broader challenge is the ERA's overarching definition of research in narrowly scientific terms, which

promotes hierarchies between disciplines and hinders inter- or trans disciplinarity. These legacy definitions and outdated hierarchies still have a grip on policy and we see them as broader regulatory barriers to the development of the EEA's collective potential for knowledge production.

2. Please describe how you **tackled these challenges**. Based on your project's experience (and if applicable), briefly outline case(s) that you consider as **good practice** and of interest to other universities or to policy-makers.

Notwithstanding the differences mentioned in the previous point, our alliance has boosted our institutions' R&I cooperation. Throughout the course of this Horizon2020 project, HfBK enriched its existing offering of third cycle training and ABARoma developed two doctoral programmes, the first of their kind in Italy. Throughout the course of this Horizon2020 project, HfBK enriched its existing *Meisterschüler* offering of third cycle training and ABARoma developed two doctoral programmes, the first of their kind in Italy. We are the only alliance working in the field of Artistic Research (AR) in Fine Arts and have a unique position to assess and demonstrate good practice in our field. Our alliance has taken an innovative approach to what Horizon's terminology defines as open science, open data, and citizen empowerment, repurposing these formats in a way that accommodates the arts and promotes genuine transdisciplinary research.

We established Artistic Research Laboratories (AR Labs) as an interdisciplinary framework for collaborative research that expands traditional academic outputs by including artistic practices. AR Labs involve students, staff, and public in developing and applying artistic methods to real-world issues, for instance, co-creating artistic processes with local communities, using artistic expressions to publicly engage with social issues, and producing experimental ways of experiencing complex data. Despite being underfunded, the arts are capable of going beyond traditional academic silos, due to their capacity to expose diverse audiences to complex knowledge. These broad engagements benefit all institutions, as they reach people from wider educational levels and backgrounds.

We highlight the following examples of good practice:

- ABARoma's CARE lab, a collaboration with the National Institute for Nuclear Physics (INFN)
- HfBK established partnerships with the Technical University Dresden and the Dresden State Art Collection for cooperation even beyond the AR Lab
- LMA's public collaborations with the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art (LCCA) and The Centre for New Media Culture in Riga (RIXC)
- MKE's prolific production of key publications in the field of AR (3 publications) and their translation and mediation of international debates in the field of AR in the Hungarian context
- Alliance's partnership with the Society for Artistic Research (SAR) and our pedagogical implementation of the Research Catalogue (RC), an online, open-access, media-rich platform for research in the arts
- The initiation of Peers' *n'differences*, a joint series of colloquia involving all academies
- Engaged broader publics through AR Labs. All applied participatory research approaches in the local AR Labs engaged the broader public as co-creators of artistic knowledge (not just as subjects), e. g. the "Artistic Research Days" in September 2023 not only linked the partner academies in one major event, but also reached out to a manifold interested community.

Beyond the framework of the four institutions, the alliance progressed in making Artistic Research visible through intense public relations activities. We aimed to, step by step, disseminate a broadened concept of research from the current narrow understanding, and to create influence on the academic discourse about knowledge production.

3. Please describe the **tangible progress** that individual partners as well as the Alliance as a whole have made in terms of introducing changes in their entities as a result of this project.

The EU4ART *differences* project allowed our institutions to make great strides in establishing or adding on existing doctoral programmes: LMA established its doctoral programme in 2020. At the beginning of the project, ABARoma and HfBK did not have doctoral Fine Arts programmes and were not required to conduct academic research in that field. As of today, ABARoma has launched two doctoral programmes with two different universities (Roma Tre and Tor Vergata Universities). At the end of the programme, HfBK succeeded in securing national funding for a young researchers' group on an AR-related project in the field of Stage Design. MKE developed new teaching concepts for Artistic Research in their already existing DLA school.

To stabilize future research and innovation excellence in the partner institutions as well as future funding on multiple levels, our Alliance:

- Acquired further funding for future implementation of AR projects at national level through existing AR Lab structures, e.g. HfBK's Dresden Young Researchers' Group starting 1st January 2024 through European Social Fund, and the new Junior Researcher positions at ABARoma. Thus, all our academies, will still in the future have Artistic Research facilities.
- Created research support networks. Thus, all involved professors and academic staff intensified their networks, created new connections and shared valuable contacts with the students and the project team. They also accompanied individual AR projects, fostered and trained students for open-access knowledge-sharing, especially introducing the Research Catalogue as a new publication tool.
- Modified our pedagogic provision through experimenting and implementing a wide range of pedagogical tools that promote digital-first, media-rich, and open-access research on a transnational scale. This is evidenced by our extensive use of the Research Catalogue (RC), and our development of an Artificial Intelligence collaborative and multimodal system for eliciting creative knowledge in education, with the use of augmented reality interfaces to share data and research (°° Kobi).
- Implemented a research management culture through the AR Labs which provides a new framework for collaborative research that is interdisciplinary, distributed, and focuses on societal impact.
- Promotes transdisciplinary careers, e.g. through the implementation of an interdisciplinary collaboration between ABARoma and the National Institute for Nuclear Physics (INFN)
- Encouraged and inspired colleagues to develop an application for new experimental joint research format in the framework of the WIDERA call 2024-2027, and, thus, to possible future attempts.

Beyond these institutional and alliance-related activities, our joint activities also contribute to the ERA Policy Agenda and its priority areas by enacting the following further activities. Thus, our Alliance:

- Actively participates in ERA's R&I and Research Assessment Reform events in order to give visibility to our field in international policy making. However, we refrained from becoming signatories of the reform due to open participant hostility towards artistic fields in the workshops. We, therefore, recommend the organisers to create a code of conduct as a necessary action. However, much more needs to be done at a structural level to create a truly level playing field and a safe space for all disciplines.
- Promotes gender equality and fosters inclusiveness. The key positions in the project were equally divided between the genders. The overall team and partnering academies represent the idea of inclusivity and diversity aspects in recruitment processes.
- Deepens the ERA's aims to protect academic freedom through its unique geographical reach: Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Latvia. By promoting artistic experimental knowledge as well as artistic freedom and the freedom of opinion, our alliance has promoted a democratic and liberal approach to the role of academic knowledge production in a geographic area that is divided in different schools in the AR tradition and, even more important, lies at the edges of internal and external illiberal impulses.
- Represents new ideas: As one of the only two Alliances targeting Artistic Research, our project is a prime example of what the New European Bauhaus (NEB) aims to achieve. Our project is about collaborating to blend the arts, pedagogy, society, and research (however, we are fully aware of this policy's rhetoric instrumentalisation of the arts and its lack of consequential actions to foster an artistic sector—see next section for more details).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS (MAX 2 P)

In this section, the European Universities pilot Alliances make recommendations for policy. Given the unique strengths and focus of each European University Alliance, please focus only on those aspects of most relevance to your case.

Please feel free as well to expand to other policy topics you may wish to share your learnings and recommendations with (other recommendations).

1. The inclusive cooperation approach of the Alliances was shown to accelerate institutional change also in less R&I-intensive universities, clearly indicating it has a positive impact on capacity building in R&I,

next to education. It is however unclear up to now if the approach also positively affects excellent research. Therefore, please provide arguments and concrete examples how your Alliance provides (or is anticipated to provide) added value as compared to ‘traditional’ cross-border cooperation between researchers, such as through competitive collaborative research projects by the Framework Programme.

As indicated in section 1 (challenges), our alliance is made up of four institutions that have different histories and regulations for research. The different national histories and policy frameworks vary in how they define the arts as being a field that is capable of producing knowledge. Therefore, the question of 'less R&I-intensive' institutions is compounded by the arts, a discipline that some policy frameworks see as not even being R&I-intensive in any way. As mentioned above, this double bind is unfortunately promoted by several factors, such as the language used in calls for proposals and the fact that measures used to judge what is good research are heavily modelled on the hard sciences. A broader challenge is the ERA's overarching definition of research in narrowly scientific terms, which promotes hierarchies between disciplines and discourages inter- or transdisciplinarity. This ranges from researchers who participate in the Framework Programmes (i.e., Horizon) from the field of arts, social sciences, and humanities being called Scientists—to the expectation that these disciplines function as purely scientific endeavours (which often is counterproductive or does not apply to many types of inquiry). In any case, these 'soft' disciplines are not brought in as equal partners in research collaborations and the arts are often relegated to data visualisation. This disparity often means that some institutions are not allowed to even grant third cycle degrees across Europe. Our alliance responded to this by engaging in all the items mentioned further above. We recommend the building of truly interdisciplinary policies that create a level playing field for all disciplines and promote a higher-level Europe-wide reform that allows HEIs to valorise research, create third cycle programmes, and award degrees—similar to what the Erasmus Programme did for graduate and undergraduate levels. Given Europe's rich artistic culture, there is a structural dismissal of the arts as an equally valid field of knowledge production.

The project has had an impact on the institutional policies around research within our academies. Our institutions will continue to build on this, which can be taken as an example of a potential collaboration within the EEA. Nevertheless, even after the end of the joint project, these transformations in institutional policy-making will provide future development within the partner institutions as well as on the European level. These important developments and transformative processes nevertheless differ strongly from the processes happening in other European Universities. Given the fact that the outcome of Artistic Research can be extremely diverse, not always easy to understand, and rarely financially exploitable, the developed values (of societal discourse and knowledge production) can easily be overseen when comparing them to academic success in the hard sciences. Alternative concepts of research and of outcome communication can easily be rejected as “non-scientific”. Looking back on three years of interdisciplinary academic discussions, we consider a lack of interest in new knowledge models from the side of sciences in many cases.

While we have produced individual progress in many areas, policy gaps, like our experience of epistemic inequality (described in the first short policy brief), are more structural and need to be tackled from a policy perspective. Some of the structural barriers we encountered still hold and have potentially worsened.

2. The Alliances have repeatedly asked the EU and Member States (MS) to design a holistic support system, covering all their missions at once and reducing administrative burden to a minimum. Please explain your views and suggestions on how this should be realised in practice in the medium and long-term. Take into account differences in competences (e.g. R&I is a shared competence between EU and MS, while education is exclusive national competence) and be precise in the support target (e.g. the arrangement of common support for actual joint research activities might need to be different than support for building joint capacity in training, research coordination, etc). Be as concrete as possible, and where relevant illustrate your recommendation with practice examples of such holistic support currently provided at national level.

We recognise a series of fault lines in the definition of R&I, which has critical outcomes for the interactions between EU and MSs. While we recognise that minimising bureaucratic burden is important, we consider the following recommendations as actions needing urgent attention:

- Enforce a real, not a rhetorical, interdisciplinary funding programme that values the arts as equal partners in knowledge production. Higher education cooperation should be interdisciplinary in practice, not just in theory. A commitment to real interdisciplinarity (which is a core of Artistic Research) should be followed by concrete strategic actions. Challenge: HEIs in the artistic fields are

still not recognised as equal partners for knowledge production as other disciplines are, even when this contradicts the European Strategy for Universities.

- Overcome epistemic inequity by treating it as a question of governance, transparency, and responsible public investment. Recommended three-step implementation: recognise epistemic inequity; quantify it and locate biased and exclusionary distributions of funding Framework Programmes; penalise biased MSs and institutions by withdrawing funding allocations if equitable distribution goals are not met.
- Fix the gap between policy wording and policy implementation. Art HEIs are defined as universities in the EC Strategy for Universities, but policy implementation does not uphold this. For example, several arts institutions that are defined as universities by policy cannot award doctoral degrees because they are not recognised as fully research-capable universities. In spite of the egalitarian discourse, in an exploitability-oriented context, arts institutions are not seen as capable of producing research in the same way as other HE institutions. Thus arts institutions (universities that are not universities) have to team up with universities to grant advanced HE degrees.

In our first report, we suggested epistemic equity as a marker of institutional transformation that could be implemented and even quantified. Minoritized disciplines like ours find it difficult to have a say in forums dominated by the sciences. The situation today, as we write this report, is tangibly worse than back then. We agree with the EC's report when it claims that 'more institutional changes are needed for universities to become places of truly equal opportunities' (European Commission. 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European Strategy for Universities'. Strasbourg, 18 January 2022. <https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-01/communication-european-strategy-for-universities.pdf>). In this sense, we recommend a code of conduct that enforces equality as a pre-condition for engagement. In the absence of this, a transparent messaging that indicates that the arts do not play a role in the European project, its knowledge production, and the ERA will help our sector to plan, strategize, and adapt accordingly.

3. Please illustrate with concrete examples how your Alliance will integrate the work on the transformation modules developed under this H2020-SwafS support with the Erasmus+ support to the Alliance project. Please provide the current state-of-affairs and your plans to integrate all your missions.

This question does not apply to our alliance, as the EU4ART alliance has come to an end and the cooperation will only continue on individual level. However, there is no indicator for a reliable (also financial) support strategy from the EC for academic art institutions to allow the arts to prove their abilities in terms of knowledge production. Establishing this overseen field of interdisciplinary knowledge production in the field of the ERA would demand a tangible will of the EC to foster this relatively new field. The current situation rather confirms the biases we have expressed in our policy reports. We will continue our collaborations through other means but recognise that the differential in funding allocation and the exclusion of the arts represents a core structural deficit and risk at a European policy level. As described in the introduction, alliance members have developed different third-cycle models and installed an Erasmus+ collaboration for inter-state staff and student mobility. These initiatives will continue in lieu of EC economic support and exist beyond the Alliance.

4. Other recommendations (if not covered above).

We would recommend fostering the field of AR and its further development in the context of ERA through:

- Providing funding for transdisciplinary projects that include clusters of artists, designers, researchers from humanities and social sciences, engineers, and natural scientists to accompany research projects. This will support innovation through collaboration.
- Involving Artistic Research expertise in calls not exclusively focused on Artistic Research, to mainstream it and connect it with societal challenges. Rethink research panels to work in a more transdisciplinary way, including artistic researchers in scientific panels (and vice-versa), to provide a more diverse and innovative approach.
- Supporting pilot initiatives to create favourable framework conditions for Artistic Research at the institutional and policy levels across Europe. This can include developing appropriate evaluation criteria, career pathways, and intellectual property rights frameworks.
- Promote the use of artistic methods within community-based research/citizen science to address social and environmental issues in order provide to more inclusive processes and outcomes.



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This policy brief reflects only the author's view and the European Commission/REA is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.