



ENABLING TALENT TO GROW

Strategic Plan
2021-2025

Foreword



YERUN PRESIDENT
Prof. Bernd Scholz-Reiter

It is with great pride that I welcome our new strategy. A strategy that comes at a key moment, as the Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN) was founded in 2016 and needed, after these four years of initial development, an advanced direction for its activities.

YERUN is a dynamic network of European research-intensive institutions that were founded after 1960. Our members are young universities with agile governance structures, that strongly focus on their students and that actively engage with their local communities.

Thanks to a wide range of activities organised among our members and coordinated by the YERUN Brussels office, YERUN has successfully established itself as a well-known network and a valuable stakeholder in the European higher education arena. When developing our activities, it became very clear to us how important it is to tune the individual strategies of our members, to reflect their common values and ambitions of setting the scene in higher education, and to showcase their innovative approaches in everything they do as young research institutions.



YERUN SECRETARY GENERAL
Silvia Gomez Recio

Despite being concise, this document has a long story behind. For one year the Taskforce on the Future of YERUN

(TFOY) has been digging into the "why", "how" and "what" of our network, reflecting on the elements that make us distinctive as young institutions and how we want to use such uniqueness to shape the European higher education system alongside our long-established peers.

The taskforce started 'from the roots', namely from the values of our network and the common goals of our members. This exercise was far from being obvious as young universities themselves are still in the process of defining their own identity, in a high-

Today, the momentum we are perceiving is unique, with the beginning of a new financial period (2021- 2027) at EU level and with the launch of a series of new Communications from the European Commission that aim at setting the scene for the higher education environment in the years to come.

Under these favourable circumstances, we aim to equip YERUN with a solid, forward-looking and inspiring strategy to guide our activities of the next years while ensuring enough flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and to initiate actions as the need arises.

At our October 2020 General Assembly, we reached a common understanding on the focus areas and priorities of the new strategy, right in time for a fresh new start of the network's future activities in 2021. I am honoured to serve as President at this crucial moment, during which YERUN will start organising all these activities.

I thank all YERUN members for their hard work and look forward to start implementing the YERUN Strategy 2021-2025 with all of them. With it, I hope to step up the network's impact in shaping the European higher education sector.

er education environment that is still dominated by long-established institutions, that favours tradition and reputation, and that does not appropriately recognise young universities' intrinsic values, such as dynamism, agility, courage and collaboration.

Having accompanied the YERUN institutions since the beginning, I am really pleased with seeing them now ready to challenge themselves with this new YERUN Strategy 2021-2025.

All my gratitude goes to the taskforce members and to all our members involved in providing invaluable feedback, for their efforts in developing this new vision, which I welcome with great enthusiasm and pride.



Enabling Talent to Grow

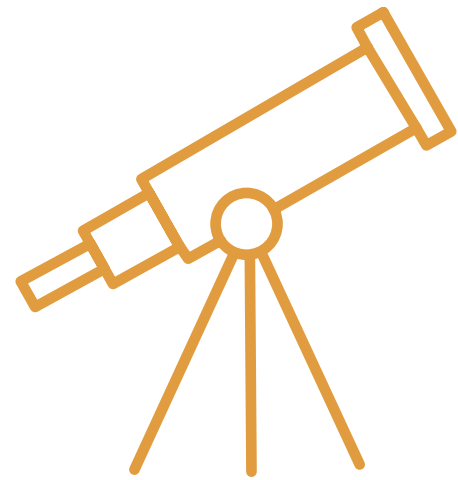
The Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN), founded in 2016, brings together like-minded young research universities in Europe.

As young universities today: we strive higher for recognition; we develop agile structures and methods so that we can adapt swiftly to rising challenges; and we invest in the academic community's well-being and development as key drivers of the university environment.

YERUN's primary objective is to raise the voice of its members through dedicated strategic representation and advocacy activity, in order to strengthen cooperation among its members and maximise their opportunities to collaborate in areas of mutual interest and benefit. YERUN members have learnt to work together, to experiment with new methods and to challenge themselves to become better.

In light of the achievements made so far and of the ambitions of its members, this strategy aims to step up the network's growth. YERUN has embarked upon a period of reflection with a view to establishing what the focus of the network for the next years should be.

VISION



We aim to shape a higher education **environment** where young universities have a **true impact** on the role and nature of academic pursuit, by being **inclusive, responsible, open and innovative**, and by **enabling talent to grow** in all its dimensions.

MISSION



» We **showcase the achievements** made by young European research universities through a dedicated communication strategy boosting their visibility at international level.



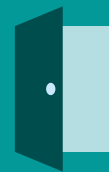
» We **promote collaborative and transformative activities** among our members, with a view to facilitating connections, learning from each other and achieving greater impact.



» We **influence and advise on EU policies** in order to shape the future of universities and to have a true impact on the role and nature of higher education in Europe.

VALUES

In pursuing YERUN's mission, its members will continue to forge their collaboration and decision-making under the following values:



Openness

We believe in an accessible, creative, dynamic and inclusive higher education environment, that provides the best opportunities and nurtures future talent.



Courage

We question the status quo, experiment with new ideas and pioneering solutions to the challenges we face.



Partnership

We acknowledge the need to work together to address complex issues and enhance excellence while learning from each other.

FOCUS AREAS AND PRIORITIES

YERUN establishes the following focus areas as the strategic domains in which to develop its actions. Following a thorough consultation with members, these areas have been identified as the key domains in which universities need to act in order to become the universities of the future. This new strategy will give YERUN members the opportunity to cooperate within macro-areas of interest and the flexibility to carry out different activities to implement the priorities the network will focus on.

2021 2025

OPEN CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

YERUN institutions can achieve maximum impact by collaborating in excellent education, scientific research and innovation and by encouraging the exchange of knowledge. When isolated and not connected to other institutions and sectors, knowledge cannot achieve its full potential. This is why YERUN will strive to create new opportunities to increase collaborations among its members and stakeholders, in an environment supportive of open science.

Priorities

Promotion of Open Science (e.g.: FAIR data, Open Access practices, YERUN Open Science Awards).

Enhanced European collaboration (e.g.: increased EU funding opportunities, European Universities Initiative, professionalised research and international support).

Knowledge circulation across disciplines, sectors and borders (e.g.: YERUN Research Mobility Awards, YERUN Summer Schools, training and collaborative activities).

RESPONSIBLE AND ENGAGED UNIVERSITIES

Embedding a true culture of societal engagement throughout the whole university community will contribute to building a better society overall. As universities, we are connectors within the ecosystems we live in: we strive to engage other parts of society as equal partners, with an inclination towards collaboration rather than competition. Universities adapt to ever-evolving challenges by developing agile structures, promoting institutional transformation and encouraging a culture of flexible leadership. YERUN institutions believe in the importance of facilitating a dialogue with other young research universities and with non-academic partners.

Priorities

Stakeholders' engagement (e.g.: Citizen Science, Science Communication, partnerships with other sectors).

Societal impact (e.g.: education and research that has real-world impact; contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals).

Organisational culture & institutional development (e.g.: benchmarking, inclusive leadership, socially responsible institutions and networks, diversity strategies, digitalisation strategies).

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

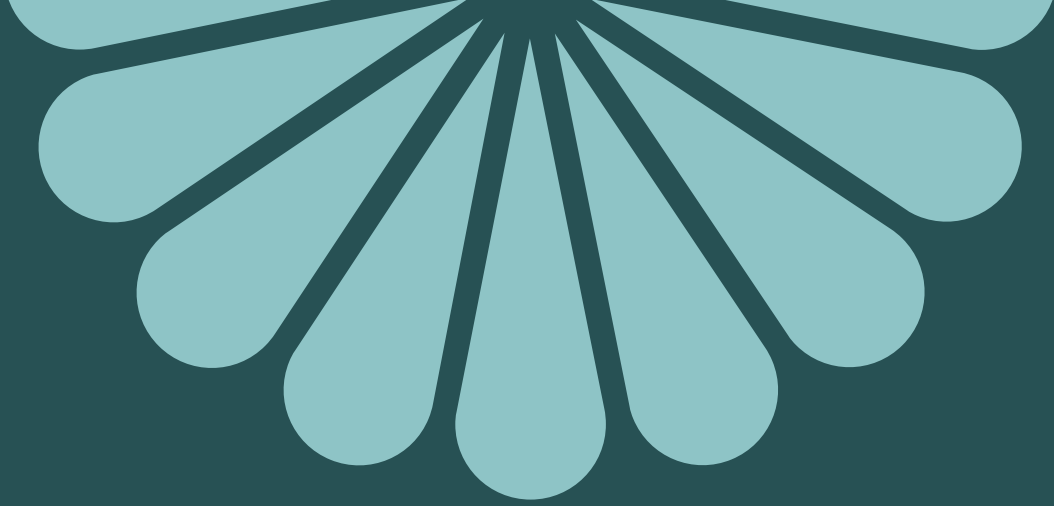
Talent is everywhere, and YERUN members strongly believe in the key role that universities have in creating new opportunities for their students, researchers, academic and administrative staff, leaders and stakeholders, so that everyone can maximise their potential. YERUN's focus will be on increasing the possibilities to learn about the most advanced forms of education, fostering a culture of lifelong learning and boosting the talent of our students and Early Career Researchers as future leaders.

Priorities

Innovative teaching and learning pathways (e.g.: new models of digital and blended education, digital structures, personalised curricula, research-oriented teaching).

Lifelong Learning (e.g.: micro-credentials, graduate and postgraduate professional development, research-oriented lifelong learning).

Career development and leadership in academia (e.g.: assessment of academic careers, metrics of academic performance and career progression, YERUN teaching awards, mentorship programmes).



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