

YERUN leaders agree on key points to bring the reform of Research Assessment forward

YERUN members have met from 28 to 30 November for their Autumn General Assembly in Maastricht. A core topic on the agenda related to the ongoing discussions and initiatives to change research assessment in Europe: at national levels, the Dutch Initiative Room for Everyone's Talent and the Norwegian NOR-CAM, and at European level, the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment, CoARA.

YERUN leaders have reflected on the changing demands and the increasing expectations for universities. They have discussed the contributions their institutions make and the added value they provide to various areas of education, research, leadership, innovation and societal impact, from the perspective of their institutions, but also from the perspective of their staff.

Contributions highlighted by YERUN leaders focused on their impact, on socially and community-engaged activities, and on the partnerships they are building with other sectors, with the goal of being a key player in their regional innovation initiatives. There is a particularly promising window of opportunity for young universities, as they are often located in areas where there is ample scope and expectations for them to play an active role in their region. But another key aspect for the contributions of our universities remains to be Talent Development, how to attract talent and to ensure generations are skilled and ready to embrace different career paths.

When reflecting on and exploring how these contributions are evaluated and recognised at present by current systems of assessment, YERUN members agreed on some recommendations for the ongoing initiatives to take forward.

- The need to **broaden recognition** and **increase the diversity** in the assessment of universities and of their staff and teams. As higher education institutions, not only research assessment must be connected to education assessment, but also to leadership, innovation and impact in its broader sense. Contextual disciplinary and geographical differences should also be considered.
- Recognising the **importance of leadership** as an agent of change, providing direction, support and trust in our academic communities, but also in taking responsibility to enable dialogue with other players. The Covid-19 pandemic has put this contribution into the spotlight.
- Understanding the need to progressively start **changes in academic assessment**, and that special focus should be put on career development of **early and mid-career researchers**. We need to provide answers to those who see their careers evolving in a transition period. International dialogue and stakeholders' involvement are key to a successful implementation.
- More **opportunities and funding incentives** should support the contributions that universities are making in other areas beyond education and research. At present, funding to the institutions very much mirrors their activities in education and research (through intakes of students and research projects). The role they are playing in their regional sectors and in their social communities should also contribute as a source of future funding.

- About YERUN -

The Young European Research University Network (YERUN) is an umbrella organisation of young and research-focused universities in Europe, that strengthens and facilitates cooperation in the areas of scientific research, academic education and services which benefit society. The network's activities revolve around three main lines of action: policy advocacy, members' collaboration and communication. Through these activities, YERUN contributes to place young research universities on the map of Europe.

- YERUN Members -



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