

YERUN endorsement of the “More Than Our Rank” initiative

The Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN) is proud to endorse the [More Than Our Rank](#) initiative, aligning with its commitment to fostering a responsible and holistic approach to assessing universities. At YERUN, we strongly believe that the primary goal of universities is to serve society, not score highly in rankings. Their value extends well beyond the metrics of global rankings, encompassing their diverse contributions to ecosystems, communities, and society at large.

The prevailing focus on rankings often perpetuates biases towards reputation and historical prestige, undermining the recognition of young universities' achievements and the broader diversity of institutional excellence. While rankings have traditionally served as proxies for quality and excellence, they fall short in capturing the multifaceted impacts of universities, particularly in areas such as:

- Teaching quality and student outcomes, including social mobility and socio-economic inclusion;
- Engagement with local and global communities, addressing societal needs;
- The promotion of diverse research outputs beyond high-impact journal publications.



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YERUN believes that the current ranking systems suffer from systemic, fundamental challenges. These include methodological inconsistencies, lack of transparency, and an overemphasis on research output and reputation. They also fail to acknowledge and highlight the greater diversity of the European university landscape. Limitations not only misrepresent institutional impact but, on some occasions, can also unduly influence governmental strategies and funding allocations.

The endorsement of this initiative is timely given the current political emphasis on [European competitiveness](#), as highlighted in the [Political Guidelines](#) for the next European Commission and in the recent [Draghi report](#). The [report](#) underscores the importance of leveraging universities as engines of innovation and excellence, yet its reliance on international rankings as a measure of success risks overlooking the broader contributions of institutions to their ecosystems. As Europe seeks to position itself as a global leader, it is imperative to adopt evaluation systems that reflect the true breadth of universities' impacts, fostering an environment where diverse strengths are acknowledged and supported.

As the higher education sector faces increasing pressure to demonstrate its value in (economic) competitiveness terms, YERUN [advocates](#) for a more comprehensive and inclusive framework for assessing universities. This involves moving beyond the narrow confines of rankings to emphasise tangible societal impacts, innovative teaching, and collaboration within ecosystems. The European

Commission's development of the [EHESO](#) - European Higher Education Sector Observatory (building on the past U-Multirank), for which YERUN provides advisory support, is a promising step toward multidimensional alternatives that recognise the diverse strengths of institutions. This likewise aligns with initiatives on research assessment reform, such as [CoARA](#), the Coalition on Reforming Research Assessment, of which YERUN is an active member and strong supporter.

Endorsing *More Than Our Rank* reflects YERUN's dedication to reshaping the narrative around institutional success, prioritising meaningful and diverse contributions over one-dimensional rankings. We urge stakeholders to join us in this important initiative, paving the way for a higher education landscape that values inclusivity, innovation, and societal relevance.

To get involved, display the More Than Our Rank logo on your web pages and share a statement highlighting your institution's unique activities, achievements, or aspirations that rankings often overlook.

Every academic institution is more than its rank, and together, we can drive meaningful change.

- About YERUN -

YERUN - Young European Research Universities Network - founded in 2015 and based in Brussels, brings together excellence and value-driven young research universities. The network's objective is to strategically represent its members in the decision-making process at EU level, thus shaping their future and promoting their role in European societies. Further to its policy advocacy activity, the network also strengthens cooperation opportunities among its members in areas of mutual interest and raises their visibility via a dedicated communication strategy.

- YERUN Members -



YERUN, Young European Research Universities Network, December 2024

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