

YERUN Launch Event
European Parliament, Room PHS 4B001, 9:00-13:00
Professor Anthony Forster's concluding remarks

This launch event has been a wonderful opportunity for us to showcase our YERUN network of 18 young research Universities.

Professor Martin Paul, President of Maastricht University was due to deliver these closing remarks but has been unable to attend and sends his apologies.

As Vice-Chancellor of the University of Essex I have had the privilege of being involved since the first exploratory discussions that resulted in the establishment of the YERUN network so I am delighted to be here today at the formal launch.

YERUN is a cross-European initiative and I am delighted to say that, despite being a relatively new network, as Europe's best young research universities, we are already successfully cooperating and collaborating in a range of areas and making a positive impact.

The presentations today of the 6 research projects are just an example of this collaboration but they really serve to demonstrate our interdisciplinary nature and the range of high quality European-funded research currently being undertaken by colleagues working across our network of Universities. It has been wonderful to see their enthusiasm and clear commitment to undertaking research that really makes a difference to everyday lives.

Added value of YERUN

As a group of young research Universities, YERUN is:

- empowering early-career researchers;
- contributing to the design of the future research environment, and fostering an open science culture;
- working with civil society and industrial partners to ensure our education and research are in line with labour market demands and contributing to addressing the needs of our societies; and
- ensuring that our graduates have the skills that will make them highly employable and able to succeed in building their futures.

Each of our 18 Universities plays a crucial role in the development of local and regional economies and innovation eco-systems, and, by working together, we are sharing knowledge and experience so that we can maximise both our individual and collective contributions to society.

By bringing new perspectives and strengths to European discussions, and working together on initiatives that positively impact on European students, staff and researchers, YERUN will I hope very quickly become a key contributor to our competitive knowledge-based economy.

Future perspectives

The major changes that we all see taking place in European societies underline the importance of new and dynamic interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary linkages and innovative research.

I am delighted that, two years on from our inaugural meeting and just one year after the opening of the Brussels office, YERUN is already firmly established as a Network and well placed to build these linkages, to emphasize graduate employability and to play a role as the voice of young research universities in Europe.

As a Network, our Universities are already actively engaged in student and staff mobility, are collaborating on joint research on topics that really matter, and are sharing best practice within and outside of the Network.

I am delighted that in January my University will be hosting the first YERUN Research Workshop bringing together researchers from across the Network to collaborate on one of our strategic research priority themes: Big Data, Data Analytics and the Digital Economy. I look forward to welcoming colleagues to the University of Essex and to seeing the research collaborations that result from the workshop.

As a Network we have expressed our support for the position of the Commission and EU stakeholders to establish an FP9 budget that matches the world-leading ambitions of the programme. We have presented our views and key requests for the next EU Framework Programme, FP9. We look forward to continuing to work with you and the EU institutions to deliver a FP9 that matches the world-leading ambitions of EU Research and Innovation.

And we are committed to maximising connections between education, research and innovation so that what we do as Universities has a tangible impact on society.

And finally

I would like to thank our European partners, friends and supporters and in particular those of you who have joined us here today. We look forward to continuing to build relationships and cooperation with the European Parliament and European Commission, permanent representatives, universities and research associations, and with all our European stakeholders.

This launch event is just the beginning and the easy part. Now the important focus for us must be on ensuring that we continue to be active players, using the collective strength of our 18 Universities to create impact, and bringing the young research universities' perspective to contribute to and complement the EU policy debate.

Thank you.