

# Workshop and bilaterals ECIU Board Members

## Summary on key take-aways for the ESEU project

### Context

During the workshop with the ECIU University Board (September 2024) and the bilateral talks with Board Members (November 2023), the ESEU-project and a possible European Status for ECIU University was discussed. Covered were the outcomes of the ESEU-project so far; obstacles Board Members encountered in transnational collaboration and that need a European solution; the national meetings of board members with their Ministries and how key topics related to European Universities, including the topic of the legal status of European Universities plays a role in these talks.

In the ECIU ESEU (European Status for European Universities) project, ECIU is mapping the needs of ECIU University towards the existing European legal instruments and the current ECIU foundation. In a recent meeting with the legal pilot projects, the adaptation of the EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) as a potential future European legal instrument for European Universities was discussed. Less focus on cohesion, adding an academic dimension, an easier process to set-up or adjust the EGTC could be considerations. Important question is where (which country) to establish a possible future EGTC?

### Process

The ECIU ESEU project will develop its EU Roadmap to advise policymakers on next steps for the institutional cooperation instrument, such as the necessary steps to adjust the EGTC to better respond to the needs of ECIU University/European Alliances. This roadmap is being developed based on the existing reports of ESEU ([needs analysis](#), [analysis of legal structures](#), and the [national context](#)). The topic of the legal entity will be discussed in the upcoming Board/ECIU Foundation Governing Body meetings.

### Summary of the workshop

During the September 2023 workshop, the ECIU University Board was asked what legal/regulatory/policy challenges they face for transnational university collaboration in teaching, research, innovation, societal engagement and hiring people. There were responses referring to national language policy (Finland); rules to invite visiting professors (Italy); difficulty to recognize learning outcomes (Poland); difficulty to recognize online mobility (Denmark); state-aid rules, e.g. when setting up a private company for lifelong learning, professors must be hired at full costs (Denmark); strict regulations on receiving funds from private sources (Portugal); the professor privilege: universities do not own the intellectual property rights (Sweden); the difficulty of using public funds for private/continuous education (Netherlands); the long process to have ECIU University (NL) recognized as an employer abroad to hire people (Italy); the need to hire intermediaries to pay the salary and advise on social and fiscal rules when hiring people from abroad (all counties); and the different way countries treat open learning resources were some of the challenges that were mentioned.

The ECIU University Board was also asked where Europe or (nation) states could make a policy change to help overcome the challenges of transnational cooperation. Mentioned were needed agreement amongst national accreditation agencies and the need for a European accreditation framework; more clarity about the different national and complex VAT regulations; and the need to build on national policies to find a common ground for 'best practice' European policies.



## Summary of bilateral talks

In the bilateral talks in November 2023, the ECIU Board members were asked what the key topics are related to the European Universities in their meetings with the Ministries. And what role the topic of the European Status play in these conversations. The Board members stated that the topic of the European status is addressed in meetings with representatives of Ministries and of other alliances. To summarize the discussions on the national level, there is diversity of positions and ambitions of the alliances towards the Ministries. The ECIU members universities that are based in Portugal, Spain, Lithuania and France indicated a high interest in the European Status Work of ECIU. Partners indicated that they were asked about the specific needs for a European Status, what are the obstacles with a national legal entity and what the ECIU University could achieve with a European Legal Status. In general, it was very much welcomed that ECIU is addressing the European legal status question at this stage in which the first limitations of a national legal entity are already arising (especially related to data, Continuous Education).