



**Maastricht University**

**Maastricht University Europe Strategy 2025-2030**

*Reaching new heights in Europe*

July 2025



**Authors: Jan Hupkens and Christine Neuhold**

Content:

1. UM's strategic vision on European engagement based on the Strategic Programme 2022-2026 ...	3
2. The purpose of UM's European engagement – why is it a priority? .....	3
3. UM's unique profile in European affairs - where do we stand now and what is missing? .....	4
4. Context of the UM Europe Strategy .....	6
5. Where we want to be in 2030 – strategic goals:.....	7
6. Actions .....	8
Annex 1: Implementation calendar for the UM Europe Strategy 2025-2030:.....	16
Annex 2: Inventory of UM's European portfolio as a living lab for Europe.....	19
Annex 3: Proposal for the development phase of the UM European 'Policy Powerhouse' .....	21

## 1. UM's strategic vision on European engagement based on the Strategic Programme 2022-2026

In its [Strategic Programme 2022-2026](#), Maastricht University (UM) positions itself as **the** European university of the Netherlands (see also UM's position paper '[for the Netherlands in Europe](#)'). Born out of/within the Euregion Maas-Rhein at the intersection of three borders, UM has developed a unique European profile in education, research and valorisation (for a complete overview of UM's Europe-focused activities please refer to annex 1) among the Dutch universities and beyond. Based on its vast array of Europe-oriented study programmes applying Problem-Based Learning (PBL), specialised research institutes and leading societal initiatives, UM regards itself as a unique knowledge hub, 'living lab', and expertise center for the Netherlands and beyond regarding Europe.

This UM Europe Strategy, developed with UM's key internal and external stakeholders in the domain of European affairs, builds on the wide array of our existing European activities. The point of departure is the **ambition** to further develop as the pre-eminent European university in the Netherlands, located in Maastricht as a distinct European and international knowledge city where everyone is welcome to study and experience Europe. Rooted in the Euregion, we take an active position within society and generate a positive impact as a motor for regional and European innovation and development. This implies that UM actively aims to facilitate better understanding about European affairs while at the same time from a variety of disciplines presenting concrete solutions to increasingly complex European challenges that do not stop at the border.

This UM Europe Strategy is structured in the following way: we first explain why European engagement is important and explain UM's unique profile in European affairs in the Netherlands and beyond. We proceed to contextualize this strategy. We then elaborate on four university-wide strategic goals regarding Europe that UM aims to achieve by 2030, the concrete verifiable and measurable actions that will be undertaken at both the UM central and faculty level, and the anticipated results within the set timeframe.

It is important to note that UM's European and global activities are mutually reinforcing, as we seek to align local, national, European and global policy. We critically reflect upon our own European perspectives, enriching those with knowledge and perspectives from elsewhere. This implies that this Europe Strategy 2025-2030 is complementary to UM's Global Engagement Strategy 2024-2030 and vice-versa.

## 2. The purpose of UM's European engagement – why is it a priority?

UM has been one of the early movers in the internationalisation of higher education in order to bring together sufficient critical mass following the closure of the Limburg mining industry. UM's roots in the Euregion Maas-Rhein, in the heart of Europe, have from the outset spurred it to play an active role in cross-border education and research. As European integration progressed, our Euregional focus has been complemented with a wider European focus. The vast majority of UM's students and staff come from Europe<sup>1</sup>, most of whom still from the Euregion. With Maastricht being the birthplace of the European Union, as a city we have become a hub for EU-oriented activities, attracting institutes such

---

<sup>1</sup> In the academic year 2023-2024 93% of UM students and 90% of UM staff hold an EU/EEA nationality

as the European Institute of Public Administration or the European Centre for Development Policy, alongside UM's own activities. UM's European engagement therewith has come about both naturally and on purpose.

Zooming in on the latter, it is important to explain why European engagement is a priority for UM. First, Europe has over the years become more tangible for citizens, impacting study, work, leisure and trade. European countries increasingly need the EU to tackle major problems of our time like climate change, migration and digitalization (Dutch Social and Economic Council, 2019). Also in the Netherlands, which earns almost 80% of its trade from Europe, a better understanding of EU policies from different disciplines is important. By actively engaging with Europe as an expertise center for the Netherlands and beyond, UM seeks to provide this knowledge and help inform knowledge-based decision-making at different levels. Based on our history as the founding place of the EU as we know it today, we also see it as our duty to bring Europe closer to its citizens, fostering public debate about what it means to operate in an EU-context. This also corresponds with the recommendation to make clearer choices and sharper differentiation in the missions and profiles of Dutch higher education institutions (Commissie Veerman, 2010).

Second, in line with UM's overall strategic vision on internationalisation, European engagement serves as an instrument to improve the quality of education, research and valorisation/societal outreach. Incorporating different European (and global) perspectives into our problem-based learning environment benefits in-class discussions, while active participation in European funding programmes such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe and the European Research Council, fosters teamwork and development opportunities aimed at improving European lives. This also encompasses our role to attract European and global talent that is needed for our regional economic ecosystem and supporting their retention. This for example via investments in language courses in Dutch and Euregional languages such as French and German for UM students, and stimulating work placements at companies in the region. Examples include [Knowledge Engineering at Work](#) and the [UM Brightlands Talent Scholarship](#)'s thesis-research programme.

Third, as also pointed out in the UM Global Engagement policy, throughout our activities *we engage based on a set of values and guiding principles*, which have become important in building up European societies after both World Wars. For UM, these values refer to dialogue, multilateralism, cooperation on equal terms, the rule of law (and not 'rule by law'), academic freedom, respecting human rights, understanding history, and creating a sustainable future that allows a good quality of life for everyone at local, European and global levels.

It is our mission to contribute to society at all levels through the pursuit of education, research and valorisation with a clear European focus. As such, this UM Europe Strategy 2025-2030 identifies a set of university-wide priorities that help enhance our impact in the coming years.

### 3. UM's unique profile in European affairs - where do we stand now and what is missing?

UM has early on made the deliberate choice to focus on Europe, as a means to enhance the quality of education, research and service to society. By now, European engagement has become part of UM's identity, contributing to a highly dynamic academic environment with many opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Some of UM's most important achievements in different domains within the realm of European engagement to date include:

*Education:*

- **Flourishing and large Bachelor and dedicated Master programmes that focus on European issues**, for example a Bachelor in European Public Health (EPH) and a European Law School, a Bachelor in European Affairs, as well as a Master in European Public Affairs that educate the Europeans of the future, focusing on competencies that the labour market needs. Over 6.000 UM alumni work in the Euregion and over 9.000 of whom work within a 100-kilometre radius of Maastricht, including Brussels. This network is invaluable for Limburg and the Netherlands. As the largest Erasmus+ Key Action 131 student mobility budget recipient in the Netherlands, we provide students and staff members with ample opportunities to develop a European mindset and stimulate their personal and professional development.
- **A leading UM role in the top-scoring European University alliance YUFE** and its individual projects
- The European Certificate for Quality Assurance in Internationalisation (CeQuInt) at the institutional as one of the few European universities and the only Dutch university.

*Research and Societal Outreach:*

- The establishment of the **UM Brussels Hub** and **a broad range of European oriented centres and institutes that deal with policy-specific EU issues**, such as the Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross border cooperation and Mobility (ITEM), Studio Europa Maastricht (SEM), the Centre for European Research in Maastricht (CERiM) and the Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development (MACIMIDE). UM's excellent research is closely aligned with European priorities, manifesting itself for example in UM's position as a Dutch frontrunner in Horizon Europe's pillar two "Global challenges and European industrial competitiveness" activities. UM has in the past years led a plethora of EU-funded projects that focus on local well-being (e.g. in the field of agriculture, cross-border mobility, diversity, education and (mental) health, diversity). We also organise **key European events** and public debates such as the Conference on the Future of Europe with EU institutions or the Maastricht Debate with the candidates to preside the European Commission;
- A leading role in **the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)** in Europe, and in the creation of **the Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN)** as the broad voice of young universities in Europe;
- The development of the **four Brightlands triple helix innovation [campuses](#)**, in which 30.000 cross-border entrepreneurs, researchers and students work every day on topics related to circularity, health, nutrition and data. Examples include the Aachen-Maastricht Institute for Biobased Materials and Regenerative Medicine Crossing Borders (RegMed XB). It is partly due to the four campuses that the province of Limburg has developed into an innovation leader (EU Regional Innovation Scoreboard, [2023](#)).

Building on this success story, UM has identified several priorities in the coming years to further enhance our European profile. These priorities focus on **achieving more policy impact** by translating research on pertinent social challenges, also with the academic hospital Maastricht (MUMC+), about and for Europe into policy and action, remain a **driver of ambitious educational innovation in our Euregion (e.g. via tri-national education programmes)** and beyond and allow the **UM community to reap further benefits of European activities** in line with their personal and professional development needs, both at home (i.e. on the UM campus) and abroad. The main new initiative will be **the ambition for UM to develop itself into a ‘powerhouse’ for European policy expertise**. This by bundling expertise prevalent within the UM on specific Europe-oriented policy fields, including those with high significance for the Euregion (e.g. sustainability, health, migration, digitalisation and cross border issues) and policies developed in The Hague and Brussels. UM’s combined research efforts are therewith increasingly translated into concrete policy input for different levels of governance: (EU/cross-border) regional, national and European policy makers, with UM further establishing itself as the point of expertise between and within the Hague and Brussels (see also annex 3 - proposition for the development of a UM European Policy Powerhouse). This also includes the active maintenance of relations with relevant policy makers at the executive, diplomatic and political level.

#### 4. Context of the UM Europe Strategy

Reflecting on the achievements listed below and elaborated in annex 2, UM has identified the **overarching priority to more effectively bundle and position the vast European expertise** present in the UM faculties to (see action point 1 on page 11 below) and translate this knowledge into policy advice. This as the UM Europe Strategy is developed in the context of important European and institutional developments. For example, amid discussions on safeguarding Europe’s global competitiveness (see also the Draghi, [2024](#) and Letta, [2024](#) reports) and several societal challenges, such as but limited to health, digitization, migration and sustainability. Universities like UM not only remain essential players in in the EU’s knowledge economy providing the skills needed for young people to launch their careers and develop transversal competencies, but also as one-stop-shop expertise centers for public and private local, regional, national and European stakeholders.

At the same time, universities provide lifelong learning opportunities, providing skills that remain relevant as our world evolves. By stimulating partnerships with industry and other sectors robust ecosystems, like the Brightlands campi, universities like UM benefit Europe’s economy and society.

The development of the Policy took place in a changing internal and external context, marked by the integration of the UM and the MUMC+ which provides new opportunities for a broad engagement with health-related European developments, national and European budget cuts for higher education, and proposed caps on the intake of international degree-seeking students in the Netherlands and restrictions for English-language study programmes. This has inspired the selection of some of the actions proposed. An example is the development of the UM Policy Powerhouse to aid fact-based policy-making about Europe and the successful continued participation in European networks and alliances. Amid these developments, UM stands firm for its European and international profile and remains hopeful that its important function in a European border region will allow for a tailored national approach in laws and regulations.

Finally, UM has initiated the launch of its UM International Office, as a means to enhance oversight over and tap into unused potential of all UM's internationalisation initiatives, including those focusing on Europe.

As indicated before, the UM Europe Strategy 2025-2030 is based on the UM Strategic Programme 2022-2026: 'The European university of the Netherlands'. It details the university-wide strategic goals in the field of European engagement that UM aims to achieve by 2030, the concrete verifiable and measurable actions that will be undertaken at both the UM central and faculty level, and the anticipated results within the set timeframe. In addition to these joint goals and actions regarding European engagement, UM faculties will pursue complementary objectives depending on their priorities.





Input for the UM Europe Strategy 2025-2030 was, among others, based on:

- Discussion sessions with key European initiatives represented in the UM Europe Board, such as ITEM, SEM, YUFE, the UM Brussels Hub.
- Discussions in the UM governance structure for internationalisation (i.e. in the Strategic Board for Internationalisation and the Operational Platform for Internationalisation), as well as the UM Research Platform, involving various representatives of UM faculties and service centers.
- Topical discussions in UM's strategic European networks (YERUN and YUFE).
- Input from key advisors at the municipality of Maastricht and the Province of Limburg.

## 5. Where we want to be in 2030 – strategic goals:

As apparent from the above, UM can look back on a multitude of success stories in all domains, reaching from education and research to societal engagement with a European dimension. Our ambition is to consolidate these endeavors in the coming years but also to take them further in our quest to function as a broad expertise center on issues of European relevance for the Netherlands and beyond. This by drawing on the academic expertise of all six UM faculties.

Four overarching strategic goals will guide our approach in the period 2025-2030:

	<b>1. Remain a leader in European research</b> to drive forward social innovation		<b>2. Educating Europeans of the future</b> as THE European university of the Netherlands
	3. Further develop UM into a 'powerhouse' for European policy expertise		4. Continue to be a <b>shaper of European collaborative networks</b>

The four strategic goals, which are anchored in UM's Strategic Programme 2022-2026 and outlined above, will be achieved via specific and measurable actions, which are listed below. In the selection of the actions, UM deliberately chooses quality over quantity, prioritising those actions that most directly

contribute to the set strategic goals. For each action, the target in 2026, at the end of the current strategic programme, is set, which serves as a stepping stone towards. The different targets will be measured via a mid-term evaluation in 2026 and a final evaluation at the end of this Europe Strategy 2025-2030.

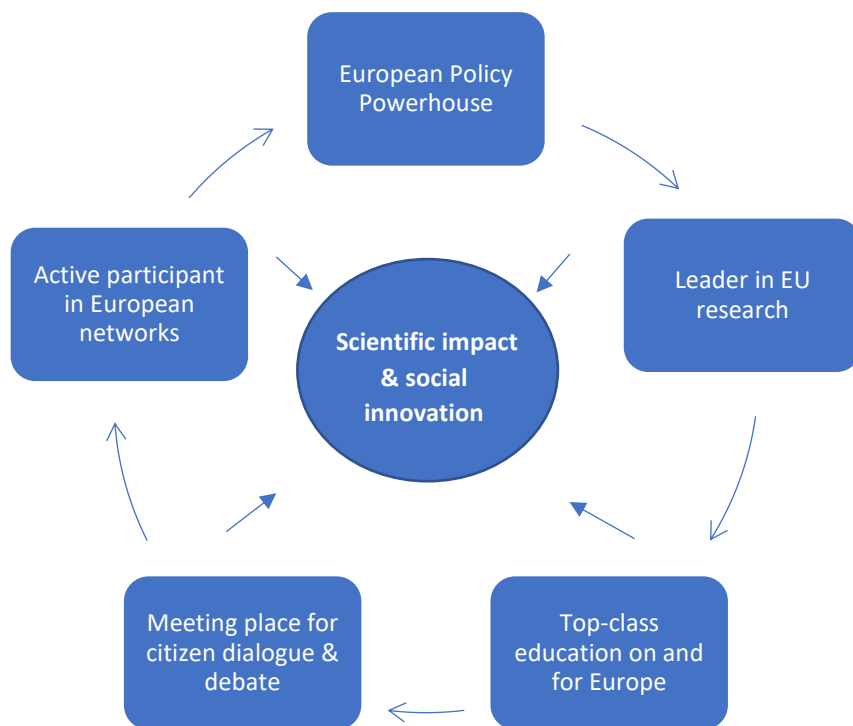


Figure 1: UM in 2030 within the European arena, at a glance

## 6. Actions

To achieve these goals, we will invest in expanding existing and setting up new activities that stimulate regional, national and international scientific impact and social innovation in the coming years, as outlined below.

### Strategic goal 1: Remain a leader in European research to drive forward social innovation

**Description:** UM seeks to further develop and position its research focused on and for Europe. This includes stimulating research projects with high levels of societal relevance aimed at solving (cross-border) challenges that Europe is facing.

#### Actions 2025-2030:

Action		Target 2026 (KPI-based):	Aim for 2030:
1.	Continue and optimize the mission of the UM-wide SEM strategic research agenda, combining cross-discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The strategic research agenda led by SEM continues to provides a unified framework for interdisciplinary research on Europe across UM, creating a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SEM research agenda continues to foster cross-discipline and cross-faculty and societal collaboration,</li> </ul>

	collaboration, academic innovation, and societal impact to address pressing challenges for Europe and the EU and the role of the Netherlands in Europe	<p>collaborative umbrella that brings together UM's expertise under the strategic research theme 'Europe and a globalising world'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Via the RSO, UM further improves its monitoring of and participation in European funding programmes</li> <li>• By fostering public engagement through an accessible and interactive year-round programme and aligning with the university's "third mission" of societal relevance, SEM strengthens UM's role as an academic leader in Europe and a trusted partner for policymakers and citizens alike.</li> <li>• Maintain and extend UM's network of Europe-focused societal collaboration partners spanning academia, society, politics, media, and businesses. These include institutes "at home" in Maastricht such as UNU-Merit, EIPA, ECDPM and EADTU.</li> </ul>	<p>supporting our experts and increasing the societal impact of top research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEM continues to invite a broad audience and societal stakeholder group to join in and examine, explore and engage with Europe.</li> <li>• UM continues to be the 'go to' place for multifaceted expertise and major high-level events and European debates such as the 'Maastricht Debate' with the lead candidates to preside the European Commission (i.e. the Spitzenkandidaten debate) and the Conference on the Future Europe.</li> </ul>
2.	Re-design the York-Maastricht Partnership with an emphasis on joint research in various disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The York-Maastricht Partnership has stimulated research collaborations at several faculties and the Brightlands campi in areas related to robotics and AI, culture and heritage, future farming and biodiversity</li> <li>• The number of double degree PhD candidates between UM and the University of York has increased</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the context of the York-Maastricht Partnership different faculties perform joint research, in close relation with the Brightlands campi</li> </ul>
3.	New research activities are encouraged with partners in EU widening- and accession countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New research partnerships and/or funding applications have been developed with universities in widening and accession countries, where possible within UM's European networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interfaculty cooperation on European issues within initiatives such as the Centre for European Research in Maastricht's Central and Eastern Europe hub (CERiM) and others leads to new research activities with a research focus EU widening and accession countries. This helps reduce the "knowledge divide" in Europe and results in the further positioning of UM as a European expertise centre</li> </ul>

**Strategic goal 2: Educating Europeans of the future as THE European university of the Netherlands**

**Description:** UM seeks to optimise its offer of Europe-oriented study programmes, while creating space for intra- and extracurricular activities that contribute to European society.

**Actions 2025-2030:**

Action		Target 2026 (KPI-based):	Aim for 2030:
1.	Further rollout the YUFE European University alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YUFE has developed fully-fledged and three-cycle YUFE Open Programmes, contributing to the developments of a European Degree (label)</li> <li>The joint YUFE bachelor with 10 European partners has started and is developed further at the master's level, in line with the future European Degree</li> <li>YUFE has ensured a long-term sustainable funding model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The European University Initiative YUFE has turned into a full-fledged European University with a legal statute, in which students from any degree programme can enrich or top-up their degree with courses and activities across Europe at different study levels. The joint YUFE bachelor with 10 European partners is to start in the academic year 2025-2026 and will be developed further, in line with the future European Degree</li> </ul>
2.	Enrich existing study programmes with a European dimension and facilitate a connection to the "world of work"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster closer cooperation with EU institutions and organisations based in Brussels, for example via study visits supported by the UM Brussels Hub</li> <li>Map opportunities to use European languages, in particular those spoken in the Euregion, in UM curricula (e.g. in terms of the literature used)</li> <li>Explore possibilities to facilitate access to the Brightlands campi for UM students, modeled on the UM Brightlands Talent Scholarship's Thesis Internship Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our Bachelor and Master programmes dedicated to European issues, continue to flourish. They are open and accessible to both non-Dutch and Dutch students and present a strong link to the world of work, as a means to stimulate careers in the knowledge-driven cross-border Euregional economy</li> </ul>
3.	Map the need to provide additional support for European project applications aimed at educational innovation (e.g. Erasmus+ Key Action 2 and 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the input of the UM faculties a needs assessment has been executed regarding (additional) support for European funding applications aimed at educational innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UM's ambition to be a frontrunner in educational innovation in Europe is anchored in an adequate support infrastructure</li> </ul>
4.	Explore the option of offering tri-national university education programmes/offers, in collaboration with regional authorities and academic partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map the added value of scalable tri-national education programmes and/or modules (e.g. following courses at different Euregional universities) in the Euregion, possible disciplines (e.g. cross border studies) and steps required to implement these</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-institutional educational collaboration in the Euregion is reinvigorated with a focus on cross-border issues</li> </ul>
5.	Implement the UM Erasmus+ 2021-2027 priority actions covering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore faculty needs to set up a point of expertise and applicant support for European funding projects in educational innovation (i.e. Erasmus+ KA2 + KA3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>European (but also global) mobility programmes such as Erasmus+ continue to be accessible for all UM students</li> </ul>

	the Erasmus+ KA1, KA2 and KA3 programmes	<p>within the structure of the RSO, resulting in a concrete proposal by 2026 that can be discussed in UM's decision-making bodies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue UM's participation in the Erasmus+ KA171 International Credit Mobility programme with a specific focus on EU accession countries in the Balkans and Caucasus</li> <li>• UM has implemented the UM Erasmus+ Staff Mobility Policy 2023-2026 with dedicated co-financing to allow for an accessible experience and prepared a proposal for the structural continuation beyond 2026</li> <li>• All UM students wanting to study within Europe should have access to an Erasmus+ KA131 exchange or internship</li> </ul>	and an increasing number of staff members. UM strives to remain the largest Erasmus+ student mobility budget recipient in the Netherlands. In this context UM looks with particular interest at strengthening and/or establishing its relations with universities in EU (potential) candidate countries in the eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and the Caucasus, taking into account the criteria developed under the UM Partnership Policy
6.	Obtain the CeQuInt label for the period 2025-2030 and implement recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UM is re-accredited with the CeQuInt label in May 2025</li> <li>• UM has implemented key recommendations from the CeQuInt panel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UM is widely recognised as a frontrunner in European quality assurance of internationalisation in higher education</li> </ul>
7.	Strengthen UM's engagement with Brussels based alumni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings with Brussels-based alumni are organised by the UM Brussels Hub. A list of VIP alumni working at EU institutions is regularly updated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UM alumni in Brussels remain connected and are aware of UM's policy priorities</li> </ul>

### Strategic goal 3: Further develop UM into a 'powerhouse' for European policy expertise

**Description:** UM seeks to ensure better access to and findability of UM's European expertise and a more coordinated approach to ensure research is translated into policy and action.

#### Actions 2025-2030:

	Action	Target 2026 (KPI-based):	Aim for 2030:
1.	A proposal is developed to further position UM as a <b>powerhouse for European policy expertise</b> , and as the meeting point between The Hague and Brussels. This powerhouse-ambition will be coordinated and based at SEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A first step is made to rollout the ambition to further develop into a powerhouse for European policy expertise by the Europe Coordinator in cooperation and consultation with UM's European centres of expertise (e.g. CERiM, ITEM, Brussels Hub, SEM, YUFE) and with input and support of UM faculties. The progress of the ambition is regularly discussed with the Executive Board and the Deans and monitored by the SEM Academic Board during the implementation phase, based on an annual workplan and based on national and European policy priorities.</li> <li>• UM has presented itself physically and virtually as a one-stop-shop for EU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholars from different faculties and disciplines are increasingly brought together on specific topics/policy issues resulting in better profiling of UM as European expertise center in the (EU)region, the Hague, Brussels. We connect experts, insights, and evidence to shape policy for the public good</li> <li>• UM remains a leader in the societal translation of research about the internal borders of Europe and the Benelux countries in particular. This via ITEM's role</li> </ul>

		<p>expertise with widespread societal collaborations and impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two (one in Brussels and one in Maastricht) symposia or conferences will be organised on important European policy themes annually, drawing on the experience of the societal dialogue event “Captains of Circularity”</li> <li>• ITEM prepares two cross-border impact analyses per year involving experts across UM faculties, in combination with respective events involving (regional) policy-makers, diplomatic representatives and politicians</li> <li>• Attempt to draw a meeting(s) of key European leaders to Maastricht by 2030</li> <li>• Specific events in the context of UM’s 50th anniversary. For example awarding a honorary doctorate to European statesmen/women</li> <li>• A communication strategy is developed to promote the UM Policy Powerhouse ambition in line with the UM strategic plan and the institutional brand and communication approach. We aim to distribute the results of the policy powerhouse towards a variety of relevant internal and external stakeholder groups</li> <li>• Regular contact is maintained with EU policy makers, representatives of the Province of Limburg and city of Maastricht &amp; UM’s VIP alumni in Brussels by the UM Brussels Hub</li> </ul>	<p>in the strategic agenda of the Policy Powerhouse</p>
2.	<p>The LLO units of the UM faculties have prepared a proposal to continue executive courses within the domain of EU affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UM executive courses are tailored based on market needs and offered in Brussels, facilitated by the UM Brussels Hub</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UM contributes to the up- and re-skilling of professionals with a specific focus on certain policy priorities</li> </ul>
3.	<p>Position UM and the Brightlands campi with European policy-makers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Brightlands campi are included as a best-practice during key European events and/or publications</li> <li>• We further increase the visibility of the Brightlands campi in Brussels through annual networking and public affairs activities, inspired by the Province of Limburg’s Einstein Telescope EMR Forum event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European policymakers are familiar with the Brightlands ecosystem</li> </ul>
4.	<p>Stimulate the participation of UM staff in EU expert groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calls for EU experts are shared with UM staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UM experts are increasingly represented in EU-level expert groups</li> </ul>

**Strategic goal 4: Continue to be a shaper of European collaborative networks**

**Description:** UM wants to continue its key role in European collaborative networks such as YERUN and YUFE, as a means to enhance impact.

**Actions 2025-2030:**

Action		Target 2026 (KPI-based):	Aim for 2030:
1.	Develop an action plan for UM's complementary participation in UM's European networks, detailing key objectives and instruments to achieve these	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UM is represented in the YERUN Executive Board and the Taskforce Future of YERUN</li> <li>An internal communication plan for UM's European networks is developed</li> <li>One YERUN General Assembly has been organised at UM</li> <li>An evaluation of UM's participation in its university-wide European networks is provided every three years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UM maintains an active position in its European networks YERUN, YUFE and EASSH based on documented and verifiable added value</li> </ul>
2.	Facilitate match-making between UM and European researchers in UM's strategic networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the findability of UM researchers via tools such as the Connect by YERUN platform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UM researchers increasingly collaborate with counterparts from UM's strategic European networks</li> </ul>
3.	Explore opportunities to enhance Euregional (research) university collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map promising existing and possible new research lines with Euregional partners and ways to stimulate these further</li> <li>Identify and reach out to direct counterparts at the level of key policy advisors internationalisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Euregional universities know where to find each other at the level of administrative and academic staff and are aware of opportunities that exist</li> </ul>

**7. Implementation:**

The UM Europe Coordinator will be responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring of the Europe Strategy and the policy actions (with a specific focus on setting up and coordinating the European Policy Powerhouse together with UM's European research institutes and the SEM Academic Board) for the period 2025-2030. The Europe Coordinator is based at Studio Europa Maastricht and is also part of the UM Europe Board, which oversees and advises on the implementation of the UM Europe Strategy. The UM Europe Board consists of representatives of all faculties, as represented in the SEM Academic Board. The Coordinator acts as the secretary of the group, supporting cooperation to achieve the common agenda. The role of the Chair - which also represents the Europe Board in the Strategic Board for Internationalisation - of the group will be taken up by one of the (faculty) members on a bi-annual basis. The Europe Board meets twice a year and has the following tasks: Ensuring and monitoring the implementation of the UM Europe Strategy Policy, including activities and budget.

The UM Europe Strategy 2025-2030 will be broadly communicated within the UM to the key internationalisation stakeholders in the Management Team, Board of Directors, SBI, OPI and Education and Research Platform. To ensure a successful implementation of the actions listed above within the set timeframe, each action will be assigned to the relevant institutional experts, as detailed in an implementation plan.

Other requirements for the successful implementation of the UM Europe Strategy 2025-2030 include:

- The required financial investment from dedicated budget lines (see below);
- Sufficient time allocation and a mandate for lead units to ensure complete rollout across central and faculty departments

### Annual budget

To execute the UM Europe Strategy 2025-2030, an annual budget of € 390.000 (Panel 3) is requested, to be administered at the level of the International Office. This budget also covers the financial investment required for the above mentioned developmental and start-up phase of the Policy Powerhouse-ambition. Subsequently, for the structural phase the same annual investment is requested for which it is proposed to apply an annual indexation to account for wage/price adjustments.

The budget requested consists of:

	<b>Requested budget/year:</b>
<b>Policy Powerhouse ambition</b>	
<b>Staff cost:</b>	
UM Europe Strategy Coordinator (1 fte)	€ 125.000
<b>Direct costs</b>	
Work budget coordinator	€ 5.000
Facilitation, communication, promotion, design, meet ups, expert exchange	€ 38.000
Policy impact and exchange via annual Maastricht Expert Forum, high-level policy dialogues and/or advocacy events	€ 20.000
<b>Seed funding <sup>a</sup></b>	
Seed funding for themed and interdisciplinary policy brief collections by faculty experts <sup>b</sup>	€ 50.000
Annual Brussel-based symposia/events showcasing UM-wide expertise on important European policy themes <sup>c</sup>	€ 35.000
Euregional cross-border policy advice and impact, including annual cross border impact assessment and promotion <sup>d</sup>	€ 32.000
<b>Other</b>	
UM affiliate Euregion (0.2fte) to further develop and consolidate the expert centre ITEM and contribute to UM's wider focus on Euregional collaboration, networks and impact	€ 35.000
Erasmus + Staff Mobility Policy (2025-2030)	€ 30.000
Miscellaneous activities (e.g. conference preparation, public affairs activities, promotion of Brightlands campi)	€ 20.000
<b>Total: <sup>e</sup></b>	<b>€ 390.000</b>

- a** *As coordinator of the PPH ambition, SEM will be responsible for the adequate allocation of seed funding. Allocation will be overseen by the Academic Board of SEM in which all six faculties are represented.*
- b** *Organisation (coordination, promotion, and event) by SEM; each collection invites a UM expert as Editor in Chief.*
- c** *Alignment of content and organisation ensured via a joint workplan between the Brussel Hub and SEM*
- d** *ITEM in collaboration with experts from various faculties develop two yearly assessments. Allocation of seed funding for dedicated proposals will be overseen by the Academic Board of SEM.*
- e** *The requested annual Panel 3 investment is subject to the standard annual indexation (cf. wage/price adjustment).*

Separate budget requests for activities that are foreseen (e.g. the LLO offer in Brussels, development of tri-national education programmes etc.) but not yet worked out will be developed and presented to the Executive Board for decision-making.

In case the allocated budget per year is not used in full, it will automatically be returned to Panel 3 unless important considerations, such as higher expected costs in the following years, merit otherwise. Especially in the setup phase of the Policy Powerhouse ambition it is crucial to be allowed to maintain a reserve position and invest budget strategically and timely.

*It is strongly advised and requested to allow the retention of a reserve in cases where the allocated annual budget is not fully used, as this is particularly crucial during the setup and initial phase of the PPH ambition to ensure strategic and timely investment.*

## **8. Monitoring:**

The Europe Strategy Coordinator in close liaison with MUO-AA internationalisation team will actively monitor progress made regarding the implementation of the actions detailed in the Europe Strategy throughout the set timeframe. This includes preparing a mid-term and a final evaluation by the end of the academic year 2025-2026, which identifies new priority action points, also in line with the new UM strategic programme, that need to be included. This implies that the implementation calendar below only runs until quarter 4 2026, after which a new calendar will be proposed.

A final evaluation will be executed before the end of the academic year 2029-2030 encompassing a full overview of the achievement and realisation of all strategic goals and corresponding actions. Both evaluations will be presented with advice to the UM Executive Board and Management Team and will, where possible, including external benchmarking.

Annex 1: Implementation calendar for the UM Europe Strategy 2025-2030:

		Timeframe								
Actions:		UM Lead:	Q1 '25	Q2 '25	Q3 '25	Q4 '25	Q1 '26	Q2 '26	Q3 '26	Q4 '26
<b>Strategic goal 1: Remain a leader in European research to drive forward social innovation</b>	Continue and optimize the mission of the UM-wide SEM strategic research agenda, combining cross-discipline collaboration, academic innovation, and societal impact to address pressing challenges for Europe and the EU and the role of the Netherlands in Europe	SEM Director	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Re-design the York-Maastricht Partnership with an with an emphasis on joint research in various disciplines	YMP Director	X	X	X	X				
	New research activities are developed with a focus on EU widening and accession countries	(Inter)faculty research institutes such as CERiM and others	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Strategic goal 2: Educating Europeans of the future as THE European university of the Netherlands</b>	Further rollout the YUFE European University alliance	UM YUFE Institutional Coordinator	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Enrich existing study programmes with a European dimension and facilitate a connection to the world of work	Study programme coordinators at UM faculties/UM Europe Coordinator				X	X	X	X	X

	Prepare a proposal to launch tri-national university education programmes, in collaboration with regional authorities and academic partners	MUO-AA Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Map the need to provide additional support for European project applications aimed at educational innovation (e.g. Erasmus+ Key Action 2 and 3)	RSO			X	X	X	X		
	Implement the UM Erasmus+ 2021-2027 priority actions covering the Erasmus+ KA1, KA2 and KA3 programmes	MUO-AA Internationalisation (later ISO)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Obtain the CeQuInt label for the period 2025-2030 and implement recommendations	MUO-AA Internationalisation (later ISO)	X	X	X	X				
	Strengthen UM's engagement with Brussels based alumni	Director PA support by the Alumni Office & Brussels Hub	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Strategic goal 3: Further develop UM as a European policy powerhouse by pooling policy expertise throughout the UM</b>	A proposal is developed to launch the UM European Policy Powerhouse, as the meeting point between The Hague and Brussels based on a development phase between December 2024-May 2025. This powerhouse will be coordinated and based at SEM	Europe Strategy Coordinator	X	X						

	Structurally roll-out the Policy Powerhouse	Europe Strategy Coordinator			X	X	X	X	X	X
	The LLO units of the UM faculties have prepared a proposal to continue executive courses within the domain of EU affairs	Faculty LLO units					X	X	X	X
	Position UM (incl. the Policy Powerhouse) and the Brightlands campi with European policy-makers	UM Brussels Hub, Director PA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Stimulate the participation of UM staff in EU expert groups	UM Brussels Hub, MUO-AA (later ISO)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Strategic goal 4: Continue to be a shaper of European collaborative networks</b>	Develop an action plan for participation in UM's European networks	MUO-AA internationalisation (later ISO)			X	X	X			
	Facilitate match-making between UM and European researchers in the YERUN network, for example via the Connect by YERUN platform	UM YERUN Coordinator	X	X	X	X				
	Explore opportunities to enhance Euregional (research) university collaboration	MUO-AA research			X	X	X	X		

## Annex 2: Inventory of UM's European portfolio as a living lab for Europe

### Research

We conduct advanced research on European matters and contribute to solving the challenges that Europe currently faces<sup>2</sup>. Bundling the expertise between faculties and dedicated expertise centres, UM is increasingly developing into the independent, scientific think tank for the Netherlands in the European Union (EU). The [Maastricht Centre for European law \(MCEL\)](#) - which is part of our [Faculty of Law](#) - is committed to the study of European law from an interdisciplinary, transnational, and multilingual perspective. Based at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences ([FASoS](#)), [Politics and Culture in Europe \(PCE\)](#) researchers study the European Union and Europeanisation and also contribute to debates on multilateralism and the global order, and take an interest in transnational history. Maastricht University leads an expertise centre in the domain of cross-border mobility and cooperation: [Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross border cooperation and Mobility \(ITEM\)](#). ITEM operates at the convergence of research, counselling, knowledge exchange, and training activities in the domain of cross-border mobility and cooperation. Accredited as Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, the [European Research Centre in Maastricht \(CERiM\)](#) is an interdisciplinary [research venue stimulating joint projects](#) and events in the fields of European law, governance, and their respective history. [Studio Europa Maastricht \(SEM\)](#) pursues a [research agenda](#) that brings together UM faculties and as such reaches from Democracy, Politics, Security and Rule of Law to Knowledge, Technology and Digitalisation. SEM postdoctoral researchers also drive forward research and public debate on European issues. Cutting edge research on policy specific issues is also [conducted within the Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration & Development \(MACIMIDE\)](#), [Maastricht Centre for Taxation \(MCT\)](#) and the [Maastricht Centre for Arts and Culture, Conservation and Heritage \(MACCH\)](#). Our research expertise on European issues is then in turn reflected in that we are highly successful in bringing in European grants such as Horizon Europe grants and ERC grants.

---

<sup>2</sup> The European Commission (2019-2024) distilled these challenges into six priorities: i) A European Green Deal, ii) An economy that works for people, iii) A Europe Fit for the Digital Age, iv) Promoting our European way of life, v) A stronger Europe in the world, and vi) A new push for European democracy.

## Education

Education on European issues is firmly rooted within Maastricht University. The examples are plentiful: Within the Bachelor in [European Public Health \(EPH\)](#) students are introduced to how prevent disease and promote healthy lifestyles for all Europeans with clear European policy. The [European Law School](#) studies legal problems from a comparative and European perspective. The [Bachelor European Studies](#) trains students to become a critical thinkers who can understand, analyse and explain complex current problems at the European level from various disciplinary perspectives. The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) offers a range of [Master Programmes](#) in the field of European affairs, for example the [Master European Studies](#) which is among the largest, and certainly the most international, in Europe. At the [School of Business and Economics](#) students can for example take a [Curricular Internship in \(Eastern\) Europe on Emerging Markets](#). We lead one of the first European University Alliances, the [Young Universities for the Future of Europe \(YUFE\)](#). [YUFE partners](#) share the dedication to the European spirit, have the common aim to contribute to a more competitive, innovative and united Europe and have the ambition to help address today's challenges. For example, a joint YUFE Bachelor programme with 10 partners is expected to start in the academic year 2025-2026, developed in line with the future European degree.

## Societal engagement and public debate

Building on its insights generated by way of its educational and in-depth research Maastricht University contributes to public debate on European issues. We do this by way of joining forces between [our faculties](#), our European expertise centres and initiatives: [Studio Europa Maastricht \(SEM\)](#), the UM Hub in Brussels, the [Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross border cooperation and Mobility \(ITEM\)](#), [European Research Centre in Maastricht \(CERiM\)](#), the [Young Universities for the Future of Europe \(YUFE\)](#). To name just some examples in this domain: SEM takes the lead in organizing the [Maastricht debates](#) for the President of the European Commission, CERiM conducts a [Jean Monnet Lecture Series](#) given by prominent scholars or experts in the field, YUFE set up the [YUFE Academy](#). This is a sequence of lectures and workshops travelling along the YUFE campi. Maastricht University is the only Dutch University that has a dedicated representation in Brussels, in the capital of the European Union: the UM Brussels Hub. This venue is an inter-faculty community hub for networking/collaboration, Public Affairs and outreach. As such it brings UM students, UM researchers and policy-makers and stakeholders active within the EU system of governance together. The hub also offers education by way of a part-time Ph.D. programme in European Studies for UM alumni and Brussels-based practitioners.

### European networks/collaboration

Our strengths and ambitions in European affairs are also reflected in our key role in European networks and collaboration. To give some examples: UM is one of the founding members of the [Young European Research Universities Network \(YERUN\)](#). This network, which was founded in 2015, brings together young research universities in Europe, with the primary objective of raising the ‘voice of young universities in Europe via a dedicated strategic representation and lobbying action’. This is achieved strengthening the cooperation between Universities, maximising opportunities to collaborate in areas of mutual interest. UM also plays an important role in the [UnILiON network](#), via its Brussels Hub. UnILiON is an **informal network of Brussels liaison offices** representing excellent universities based in Europe and Japan. The network represents an arena of exchange where the participants share information, nurture collaboration and act as information multipliers towards the represented organisations. Our efforts to drive forward collaboration within specific domains is also reflected in our membership of the European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities (<https://eassh.eu/>) With 70 member organisations, EASSH is the largest advocacy and science policy organisation for the social sciences and humanities.

### Annex 3: Proposal for the development phase of the UM European ‘Policy Powerhouse’

#### Positioning UM as a centre for European policy expertise

##### *Executive Summary*

This report provides recommendations for the concrete realization of UM’s policy powerhouse ambition — a key component of the Europe Strategy 2025–2030. By bundling UM’s broad expertise on European issues, the aim is to enhance UM’s impact on evidence based policy making, increase the visibility of its expertise, and foster stronger ties with policy stakeholders. In this way, the development of this ambition should position UM as a hub for European expertise in the Netherlands.

Key recommendations are:



**A central, interfaculty platform:** establish a central platform that coordinates policy related activities, facilitates interfaculty collaboration, and supports outreach to stakeholders, thus addressing current fragmentation of initiatives.



**A phased development model:** adopt a phased approach, starting with capacity building and targeted activities (Phase 1: 2026–2028), followed by more structured and focused engagement with policymakers and expansion of institutional capacity (Phase 2: 2028–2030).



**A focused stakeholder strategy:** while continuing to engage with Brussels and the Euregion, the advice is to prioritize strengthening existing and establishing new, strategic relationships in The Hague.



**Expanded activity formats:** these include interdisciplinary policy brief series, expert sessions, policy retreats, and training programs for civil servants on the one hand and UM researchers on the other.



**Position SEM as UM's label for EU policy expertise:** use Studio Europa Maastricht as an umbrella brand for presenting UM's policy-relevant EU expertise, building on its established reputation and societal network. This entails in turn that SEM will be repositioned by further strengthening the link with Maastricht University. It will:

- Continue to operate as a **UM-wide facilitating platform for knowledge sharing**. In addition to the two existing pillars Research and Public Debate, the new Policy focus naturally complements its framework.
- Act as a **one-stop shop** for accessing UM's European expertise for non-academic audiences, like policymakers, journalists, and civil society.
- It **will not replace** any of the existing EU related initiatives and labels, such as CERIM, ITEM, or the Brussels Hub. In contrast, SEM will only operate as **an addition to these initiatives** by functioning as a platform and umbrella, enabling additional visibility and impact of their activities.

Positioning the initiative in this way allows it to leverage the established reputation and recognition of the SEM brand with external audiences, which should enable UM to significantly enhance its visibility and impact in the European policy arena.

## **Introduction**

Maastricht University (UM) possesses unique expertise on European affairs and has cultivated a distinctive European profile in education, research, and valorisation. With a diverse portfolio of Europe-oriented study programmes and research institutes, UM positions itself as a knowledge hub with multidisciplinary expertise on European issues. This European profile is explicitly outlined in UM's Strategic Programme 2022-2026, where UM positions itself as the European university of the Netherlands.

Given this strong European focus, UM is well placed to extend its impact beyond academia and further its engagement with policy stakeholders. By amplifying its existing EU-related academic expertise, UM has the potential to inspire evidence-based policymaking, increase its visibility in policy circles and deepen connections with policymakers. This is both an opportunity and a strategic necessity, as ties with the policy world have become increasingly relevant in light of ongoing political debates on internationalization, the role of universities in society and the growing importance of the EU to the Netherlands in a rapidly changing international context.

In the renewed UM Europe Strategy 2025-2030, a central objective is therefore to increase the visibility of UM's expertise and enhance policy impact. To achieve this, UM puts forward the ambition to develop itself into a 'powerhouse' for European policy expertise. Through 'bundling expertise within UM on specific Europe-oriented policy fields', the aim is to empower policy-relevant research and strengthen UM's connections with policymakers. As one of four strategic goals outlined in its Europe Strategy, the development of this ambition is also a key element in the advice on the set-up of the UM International Office (IO).

In response to the ambition laid out in the UM Europe Strategy, this document provides strategic advice on the development of this European policy powerhouse ambition (which this report refers to as PPH)<sup>3</sup>. This advice builds on desk research and interviews with 35 respondents, representing the six faculties, relevant UM departments, as well as external stakeholders. On this basis, the advice supports the upcoming executive decision making process on the Europe Strategy and budget.

## **Purpose of the policy powerhouse ambition**

Across UM's six faculties, a wealth of policy-relevant research and expertise on European themes exists, ranging from digital governance to migration, from circularity to EU law, and from healthcare to Euregional cross border cooperation. Many researchers and projects are actively

---

<sup>3</sup> By referring to the policy powerhouse ambition or initiative (PPH), the terminology used in this report aligns with that of the UM Europe strategy. Please note that the current advice is to develop this ambition by embedding it within SEM (as section 6 discusses in more detail), and *not* to create a separate organizational entity or a new brand identity carrying the name powerhouse. This approach has been discussed and provisionally agreed upon with the relevant executives.

engaged in valorisation, translating their expertise into policy-relevant outputs and connecting with societal stakeholders and policymakers, either through personal networks or as part of research grants<sup>4</sup>.

However, there is a widely shared sentiment within faculties that this potential remains underutilized. Existing efforts are often fragmented, some researchers miss institutional support, while others are lacking access to policy circles. Operating in isolation, initiatives do not realize their full potential in terms of impact or visibility, miss opportunities for interdisciplinarity, and often remain a one-off rather than leading to durable institutional cooperation.

Across faculties, there is the perception that policy engagement could be significantly strengthened through greater coordination, cross-fertilisation and support at UM level. A central point of coordination could consolidate efforts and thus increase visibility, stimulate interfaculty cooperation, facilitate the creation of networks with stakeholders, and make it easier to sustain the activities in a durable way.

The PPH ambition seeks to do this by bundling UM's policy relevant expertise. Its rationale is to establish a pooling mechanism, enabling experts across faculties to access the public policy arena in a meaningful way. As such, the ambition should give rise to the creation of an organizational unit that serves the following key purposes:

**Enhance policy impact**



**Increase visibility**



**Expand UM's strategic network**



---

<sup>4</sup> Without aiming to be comprehensive, one can think of the work of EU funded projects like REMIT or RELAY, interfaculty research institutes such as ITEM, MACIMIDE, SEM and CERiM, faculty research groups engaging with policymakers on the basis of research grants or assignments, individual researchers that are part of advisory councils, and events with stakeholders at Brightlands or the Brussels HUB, or the Captains of Circularity event organized by SEM and MSI.

Simultaneously, the policy related activities should also feed back into UM's work, by:



**Strengthening policy relevant research:** knowledge exchange between UM researchers and policymakers should improve research quality.



**Enriching education:** bringing policymakers closer to UM has the potential to facilitate practice-oriented teaching to which policymakers contribute.



**(Potentially) Leveraging funding opportunities:** strengthening UM's positioning for policy-driven funding schemes or assignments.

Essentially, the PPH ambition should be seen as fulfilling a 'knowledge broker function', working in two directions. On the one hand, it gathers interdisciplinary expertise from faculties and facilitates researchers with translating it into actionable, evidence-based policy input. On the other hand, it maintains and grows relations with external stakeholders, focusing on stakeholders in Brussels and the (EU-)regional context and particularly the Hague (section 4 will go into stakeholders more in detail).

The Policy Brief collections<sup>5</sup> coordinated by SEM served as a pilot initiative in this regard. By bringing together experts from different faculties around a particular theme (in this case circular economy and digitalization), it enhanced the policy relevance of academic output by bringing together multidisciplinary expertise. Simultaneously, it increased the visibility of researchers' work to relevant stakeholders by presenting it at a dedicated event bringing together academics, decision-makers and representatives from business and society. Besides showcasing the interest for such initiatives among researchers, this pilot underlined how the pooling of policy-related efforts and active support for valorisation efforts can produce added value on an organisational scale.

At the same time, the PPH ambition should be realistic and well-scoped. Rather than creating an independent policy research unit, the goal is to bundle and amplify existing efforts. Focus is therefore key: priority should be given to making a selection of concrete activities where value can

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://studioeuropamaastricht.nl/research/special-policy-brief-collections/>

be added, rather than directly doing everything all at once. In this light, the advice is to work with a growth model that develops in two phases – as will be elaborated on in section 7.

The initiative will operate as an interfaculty and interdisciplinary platform focused on European policy themes in a broad sense, that should add value to the work of all six faculties. It will complement rather than replace current efforts, and close cooperation with faculties and faculty experts will be crucial to its success.

### **Benchmarking the ambitions against other initiatives**

To guide thinking about the PPH ambition, it is useful to begin by mapping similar initiatives. How do other universities seek to create policy impact, particularly in the realm of European issues? Across the Netherlands and Europe, a wide variety of initiatives exist that aim to bridge academia and policymaking. These initiatives vary significantly in size, scope, and focus, offering valuable sources of inspiration. While a more comprehensive overview can be found in Annex B, this section highlights key orientations and comparative models.

The archetypical model of a policy advisory function is the dedicated think tank, exemplified by Brussels institutions like Bruegel, CER and CEPS. These organizations operate with substantial resources, generally employing a core team of in-house fellows dedicated full time to policy-relevant research and reports, a substantial amount of staff members, as well as maintaining a network of affiliated researchers. Being the pinnacle of policy advisory work, their primary focus is on serving stakeholders, rather than on academic research or education.

Some European universities have developed large-scale initiatives that resemble these Brussels-based think tanks, often supported by public funds. The UK, where valorisation and policy impact have been high on the academic agenda for a longer time, offers several relevant examples. Institutions such as The King's Policy Institute, the Imperial Policy Forum, the UCL Policy Lab stand out as leading institutions – even if having a broader focus than European topics. Outside of the UK, there are institutions with a more explicit EU focus, such as the Institute for European Policy Making at Bocconi University and the Robert Schuman Centre at the EUI in Florence.

These are all prominent organizations with excellent ties to policymakers and high profile events, and as such could serve as long-term example for the ambition of UM. At the same time, while serving as sources of inspiration, their scale is beyond what is currently attainable for UM's PPH. For example, these institutions typically have large scale dedicated teams and capacities to attract external funding, a factor that significantly contributes to their reach and impact.

Next to these institutions, there are initiatives of a more modest scale. Examples are the UCL Europe Institute, as well as EU-related initiatives in the Netherlands such as the Europe Hub in Leiden and the UvA's ACES (Amsterdam Centre for European Studies). ACES has a relatively broad scope, functioning primarily as a centre for research and education but also including a policy advisory function, while the Europe Hub is much more narrow as it primarily serves as a link with Brussels by hosting occasional events. The model of UCL's Europe Institute thirdly is placed in

between these two models, as it is also engaged in education and research projects, but still is a policy focused institute with no direct teaching or research obligations.

Finally, there is a growing amount of universities offering training and executive courses to policy makers about European topics. An established example in the Netherlands is the Clingendael Academy, but recently more universities have started to develop similar initiatives. Examples are the UU which has recently launched a hands-on training course 'Grip op Europa', Universiteit Leiden which has started to develop professional training under the Universiteit Leiden Academy (ULA) with an online course in EU Policy & Implementation, while ACES (UvA) is also considering the development of executive training.

Altogether, the landscape analysis shows there is a growing scene of academic institutions trying to valorise their European expertise through policy engagement and the development of training for policy makers, which in the Netherlands is a development of recent years. It is in this environment that the PPH initiative is to position itself.

It should be clear that UM has solid foundations for doing so, and already has a strong position in this landscape. After all, UM has a comparative advantage with the breadth of its European expertise, as well with its distinctive European profile. It already has a set of strong European brands, and SEM (as a UM-wide platform strengthening the link between academic insight and societal relevance) for example has established a public recognizability and reach that is beyond other initiatives currently existing at Dutch universities. Indeed, the advice is to capitalize on this (as elaborated on further in section 7).

At the same time, compared to more developed initiatives like the UK examples, the focus on and dedication to policy valorisation are still emerging. Achieving the PPH ambition and the envisioned growth model will require a shift in mindset and the development of more capacity. For example, translating academic expertise into policy solutions for societal issues requires capabilities that need to be developed among researchers, and establishing structural ties with policy makers is a substantial undertaking that requires sustained efforts.

In contextualizing UM's PPH ambition then, it is useful to think of it as in line with initiatives having a 'broker' function (such initiatives like UCL's Europe Institute) rather than those with independent research capacity, in the sense that it will draw upon a broad base of expertise and mobilize existing resources within the faculties, rather than developing its own capacity for research or the acquisition of external funding. While it can draw inspiration from larger-scale institutions for forming visions on growth models, it is this mobilization of existing expertise which is at the core of the PPH ambition – at least in the initial phase. What sets the PPH ambition apart from this latter category of university initiatives however is that rather than giving rise to a separate institution, it will be embedded in the existing organisational structure where it will join forces with other initiatives aimed at valorising academic expertise.

## **Focus and scope**

To determine the focus and scope of the PPH, key strategic choices must be made across several domains, such as definition of stakeholders, demarcation of themes, and decisions regarding activities.

### *External stakeholders*

A crucial element in ensuring focus is a clear definition of stakeholders, as well as of an effective strategy for engagement. The objective should not be limited to disseminating and transmitting ongoing research, but instead should also be to actively connect with stakeholders' needs in order to ensure that academic expertise is both relevant and impactful. Ideally, output is also generated in collaboration with societal stakeholders.

Regarding the policy level, relevant stakeholders exist at three levels: Brussels, The Hague, and the (EU-)regional context. In principle, all these three levels are relevant for the PPH ambition. After all, as a Dutch university that is geographically located in a Euregion not far from Brussels, UM has the potential to be a 'meeting point' for these three levels.

In light of the ambition to especially unlock untapped potential however, the interviews suggest that a focus on The Hague is likely to have particular added value. While ties in Brussels as well as Euregional ties are already more established through the Brussel Hub, ITEM and other faculty institutes, there is room for focused expansion in The Hague as a level where connections are relatively underdeveloped. In addition, since many of the decisions that are relevant for the UM's strategic agenda are currently being made in The Hague, it is particularly in The Hague that it wants to increase its clout. This aligns well with UM's ambition to be a centre for expertise on Europe, in the Netherlands.

It is also relevant in this regard that recent studies indicate a substantial deficit in EU knowledge and capacities within the Dutch central government. The Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently concluded that this deficit exists at all levels of the civil service, from entry-level positions to top civil servants and ministers (IOB, 2024: 41). The report strongly recommends enhancing EU knowledge within ministries and regional government bodies.

In other words, there is a knowledge deficit that UM is rather equipped to tap into, which would in turn allow UM to take a stronger position as a European expertise centre in and for the Netherlands. On this basis, this report advises that the PPH's new network efforts prioritize The Hague.

Simultaneously however, it is important to take into account that expanding and strengthening relations with policymakers in The Hague requires substantial investments. In order for such relations to produce more structural cooperation, contacts need to be at higher departmental levels, and communication should be systematic in order to be able to identify demand for expertise and match it with supply. Also, whereas

engagement with academic partners is a more established practice in Brussels institutions, this applies less to the governmental institutions working on European issues in the Hague. It is therefore only when there is sufficient institutional capacity that the PPH is in the position to play an active role in network building.

Therefore, the recommendation is to adopt a phased approach towards stakeholder engagement. In the primary phase, focus is on bringing together expertise within the UM, and on that basis decide which policymaking level is most relevant to reach out to. Rather than having an exclusive focus on The Hague, initiatives targeting Brussels or the regional level should also be supported. Emphasis in this phase should be on facilitating relations, rather than active network building by the PPH initiative itself. Connections with policymakers will in principle be based on the networks of faculties and researchers themselves, with the PPH functioning as the hub where networks come together.

To give a first impetus to enhancing the link with the Hague also in this primary phase, the advice is to include a flagship event in The Hague as part of the activities in this phase – which is further elaborated in section 8.

Building on the outcomes of this first phase (see section 7 for the timeline), the second phase is when the PPH initiative develops a more active role the building and maintaining of networks, and establishes regular presence in The Hague. An important consideration here is that effective engagement requires interaction with stakeholders at an early stage. Identifying policy questions early on ensures that academic output can be tailored to policy needs, increasing its impact and value for decision-makers. In a longer term perspective, UM should not only serve as a resource for policymakers but also be recognized as a ‘vehicle’ for their interests as a platform that gives them access to necessary expertise.

In this second phase therefore, the PPH ideally facilitates researchers by supporting them in identifying demand for academic expertise in The Hague. Most ministries operate a ‘knowledge agenda,’ managed by a designated department responsible for coordinating expertise. For example, at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK), the KIEM (‘Kennis, Internationaal, Europa, Macro-economie’) department oversees the ministry’s knowledge function. Other ministries have similar structures, such as SZW and VWS (which have a Team Chief Science Officer) and the OCW (which has a Directie Kennis). An ambition of the second phase should be that the PPH actively establishes and maintains relationships with these bodies.

### *Thematic focus*

The PPH will engage with European policy issues in a broad sense. Maastricht University has extensive expertise in ‘classic’ EU topics, such as EU public policy, European foreign policy, law, security, and migration. These remain highly significant in the policy landscape and play an essential role in European governance. However, a distinct strength of Maastricht lies in its broader EU expertise, which extends beyond the traditional social sciences and humanities. The university has well established research capacities in areas such as (mental) health, circularity, digitalization

and border regions – topics that are not exclusively European but have a strong European dimension. This interdisciplinary approach offers an opportunity for UM to differentiate itself from other universities and more specialized policy initiatives.

While all these topics fit with the ambitions of the PPH, a degree of focus is essential. Prioritizing specific policy themes allows for clearer positioning and sharper engagement with key stakeholders. At the same time, insights from consultations with other policy centres suggest that an overly rigid thematic framework can reduce flexibility and limit responsiveness to emerging issues.

To balance these considerations, a two-layered approach is recommended. The initiative should work with broad, overarching themes that provide long-term strategic direction while simultaneously developing more targeted thematic projects on a shorter time scale. These projects should translate into concrete activities, ensuring both continuity and adaptability.

For the general themes, the advice is to align with the UM-wide interdisciplinary research agenda on European issues that was jointly developed by the faculties and coordinated by SEM, and is currently being updated. This agenda aligns the UM-wide research theme on Europe and a Globalising World, one of the four overarching research themes of UM. The research agenda was drafted in 2018 based on an advisory report by Prof André Knottnerus (Emeritus Professor) and an extensive consultation round at all UM faculties. This agenda is periodically updated by the interfaculty Academic Board (AB); in 2022 under the lead of the late Prof Mathieu Segers, scientific director of SEM, and recently for the purpose of this advice and the renewal of the Europe strategy (2025-2030) under the lead of Prof Sophie Vanhoonacker, chair of the AB. While this renewal is still taking place, the previous version was structured around four key areas (for a detailed description see Annex C):

- **Democracy, Politics, Security, and Rule of Law:** Investigates European governance, democratic participation, EU external relations and legal frameworks, with a focus on legitimacy, governance structures, and citizen engagement.
- **Identity, Heritage, and the Citizens' Perspective:** Examines Europe's cultural heritage, collective identity, and citizen-driven perspectives on European integration, exploring historical roots and identity formation.
- **Prosperity, Welfare, and Inequality:** Explores economic integration, welfare systems, and inequalities within the EU, seeking to understand and propose solutions for social and economic disparities in the EU / Europe.
- **Knowledge, Technology, and Digitalization:** Studies the societal and policy impacts of digitalisation, emphasising how technological advancements are reshaping public engagement and policy landscapes.

Within this agenda, the advice is for the PPH to (in consultation with the faculty representatives in the AB) define two or three priority topics annually around which activities should revolve.

## *Activities*

The *type* of activities the PPH initiative will engage in requires strategic choices. While section 8 will provide a more comprehensive overview of possible activities, this section is meant to outline the considerations regarding these strategic choices.

In fulfilling its role as a ‘knowledge broker’, the PPH operates in two directions: ‘inside-out’ dissemination of expertise and ‘outside-in’ engagement with policymakers. On the one hand, it aims to initiate the pooling of expertise and to share resulting insights through policy briefs, roundtables, workshops, strategic dialogues, and other events. On the other hand, it seeks to strengthen relationships with policymakers by facilitating their involvement in academic activities, aimed at enhancing their knowledge and expertise on European themes. Here, one can think of training programmes for civil servants, policy fellowships, or direct engagement with students and faculty in educational settings.

Ideally, these two functions should reinforce each other. Dissemination should go beyond merely sharing expertise; it should actively connect with policymakers' demand for knowledge. At the same time, initiatives aimed at bringing policymakers to Maastricht should not only serve outreach objectives but also provide added value to academic research and education, while in addition contributing to UM’s profile as a centre for European expertise<sup>6</sup>.

This synergy can be enhanced by structuring activities around key policy moments. For instance, initiatives could be strategically timed around milestones such as ‘Prinsjesdag’ (when the Dutch government usually also presents a Dutch State of the European Union presenting the Dutch vision on the EU) or in the run up to certain events (one can think of the 2029 Dutch presidency of the Council of the EU), where policymakers seek expert input. These moments present an opportunity to align academic expertise with policy needs, increasing both relevance and impact.

It is important to see these activities in light of the recommended phased approach. In the first phase, focus will especially be on connecting different types of expertise within the faculties, and therefore relatively more attention will go to the ‘inside-out’ element of activities. As the PPH initiative becomes more established however, the ‘outside-in’ element can be developed more substantially in the second phase. Several formats could be relevant here.

---

<sup>6</sup> It is recommendable in this respect that dissemination activities such as policy briefs in some cases are also open to non-UM researchers. This can be necessary in order to bring the most relevant expertise together, but can also help create networks and establish UM as a centre where expertise comes together, thus strengthening the brand.

- Expert sessions with policymakers, tailored to specific policy challenges. Ideally, such sessions would be timed ahead of major policy moments (as an example, think of upcoming international negotiations, or the drafting of new legislation) where civil servants are actively looking for expertise.
- Policy retreats (e.g., ‘Maastricht Meetings’) designed for senior policymakers to engage with academic insights in a focused setting.
- Educational formats where policymakers contribute directly to courses; or ‘mixed-format classes’ where students and mid-level policymakers collaborate on practical policy issues<sup>7</sup>
- The development of training for policymakers (or even journalists) in key European policy areas
- The establishment of more structural formats for connecting policymakers to UM. One can think of the appointment of high level civil servants in advisory boards, or the creation of a fellowship for policymakers<sup>8</sup>

While some of these activities already take place, the PPH could in a second phase play a pivotal role in expanding them.

The other way around, it is recommendable to develop policy training for UM researchers. Interviews with external interlocutors indicate that academics are often perceived as lacking awareness of how policymaking processes function. Internal training sessions could be organized to build capacity within UM, while also functioning as a way to increase familiarity with the PPH initiative and put its activities on the radar within faculties. Along the same lines, an option that should be considered is to organize regular events (such as monthly lunches) with faculty scholars who want to contribute to PPH activities, which could potentially be formalized with a ‘policy fellowship’, through which researchers are more structurally involved with the PPH initiative. (Again, this would be an ambition for the second phase.)

Finally, it is conceivable that the activities running through the PPH initiative will lead to increased demand for UM expertise, which can take the form of contract research, benefitting the researcher and faculty. This should be seen as a welcome by-product of PPH activities, but at least in the first phase not be part of the mandate of the coordinating body.

## Organization

---

<sup>7</sup> The Mixed Classrooms of UU’s Future Studios, where students and policymakers collaborate on practical policy issues, could serve as an example: <https://www.uu.nl/en/research/urban-futures-studio/initiatives/mixed-classroom-techniques-of-futuring>

<sup>8</sup> The model of the VUB can serve as an example here: <https://www.vub.be/nl/over-de-vub/partners-netwerken/fellowship-van-de-vrije-universiteit-brussel>

The PPH ambition is anticipated to be coordinated by a dedicated Europe coordinator<sup>9</sup>, a position of 1fte that is foreseen in the budget of the Europe Strategy, and will be placed under the UM International Office (IO). Here, the coordinator will also have responsibilities for the general alignment with the overall Europe strategy and with agendas focused on Europe-related science valorisation, outreach and societal impact. This coordinator will be responsible for developing, coordinating and evaluating the activities related to the PPH ambition.

The coordinator will work closely with professional staff of the UM 'Europe' initiatives such as SEM, the Brussels Hub, YUFE and the policy team Internationalisation of UM – all embedded in the IO – as well as faculty experts and institutes such as ITEM, CERiM, MACIMIDE. In addition, the anticipated functions of the Europe chair and two postdocs (who will be rooted at SEM and function as ambassadors and networkers across the faculties) are explicitly tailored to have a policy component. Embedding the coordinator in this way should function as a way to streamline the working plans of the different actors working on the Europe Strategy, and produce synergistic effects.

Working on the basis of the UM-wide Europe research agenda led by SEM, this positioning should make sure that the initiative is not bound to the research agenda of one faculty, but can be inter-faculty and interdisciplinary. After all, the PPH being a multidisciplinary, inter-faculty initiative, it is important that all six faculties should feel welcome to contribute to it and utilize it.

At the same time, successful outcomes and implementation will rely on close faculty and expert involvement. Building broad support across UM and within faculties is therefore essential. Strengthening UM's profile as a European expertise centre and enhancing its societal engagement mission is a strategic choice that requires backing from the entire institution. While the PPH functions as the initiator that brings together research agendas, its role is that of a facilitator with activities relying on the input of faculties. Enabling the participation of our research community is therefore necessary in order to ensure the sustainable implementation of the PPH vision.

#### In-kind contributions by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and faculty of law:

As initiators of the PPH ambition, the faculties of Law and FASoS have committed to substantial in-kind support, particularly through researcher capacity, leveraging networks and connections and academic leadership, empowering staff to engage with policy and ensuring they are supported and recognised in line with R&R values of recognition, team science, and societal impact. The PPH ambition functions as a strategic extension of both faculties' research agenda. Both faculties will actively promote the writing of policy briefs and will actively put their networks in (local) government, companies and professional organisations at the disposal of the PPH ambition.

---

<sup>9</sup> Note that this is a preliminary title for the position, as announced in the Europe Strategy. Since the coordinator will likely not coordinate the whole Europe Strategy but especially focus on the policy element, alternative titles could be 'European policy coordinator' or 'Coordinator EU policy advice'

The faculty of Law will allocate 6.8 FTE research capacity specifically to the PPH, divided as follows:

- Cross-border legal issues and EU-region:	3,5 FTE
- European law (including EU external relations law, consumer law, competition law, etc.):	1,0 FTE
- Data protection and cybersecurity:	1 FTE
- Migration law:	0,2 FTE
- Environmental law and sustainability:	0,2 FTE
- IP law:	0,1 FTE
- Security:	0,4 FTE
- Constitutional law:	0,2 FTE
- Company law:	0,2 FTE
	-----
	6,8 FTE

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences will enable its (co-)chairs to contribute to the PPH ambition via cross faculty initiatives such as MACIMIDE that focus on specific policy domains (in this case migration). Centres such as these are well fit to pool expertise and contribute events/publish policy briefs on specific issues. As the PPH will be led by SEM, MACIMIDE suggests to again have a SEM representative to be part of all MACIMIDE Board meetings and in this way align initiatives.

Another cross-faculty research initiative that will support the PPH ambition is CERiM. The FASoS co-chair commits to get CERiM researchers to contribute to the PPH initiatives and to also try to align CERiM initiatives with PPH endeavours, i.e. bundle resources for example when it comes to the organisation of specific events. In addition, there are around 50 FASoS researchers working on European (policy) issues, especially within the Research programme Europe: Society, Politics and Global Order (former PCE). The Director of the programme has signalled the interest for the programme to contribute to the PPH.

#### Other UM faculties:

The other faculties are expressly invited to contribute and take part in the initiative as well. Although the focus on European policy themes is less central in their research focus, FHML, FPN and FSE also have a large amount of expertise and ongoing research through which they can provide welcome input to the PPH initiative. This in terms of an interdisciplinary approach to policy output on various European challenges (e.g. Digitalization and AI regulations, European Green Deal and the Circular Economy, EU Fiscal and Monetary affairs, EU Health Union).

The SEM interfaculty AB, currently responsible for safeguarding the academic quality of the UM-wide research agenda on Europe, is set to take on a broader strategic role within the IO governance model for renewed Europe strategy<sup>10</sup>, in particular the academic valorisation focused activities such as the PPH (a recommendation adopted with the establishment of the IO under MUO). It will provide academic guidance on the implementation of the UM Europe Strategy, and the PPH specifically, and contribute significantly to its coordination and monitoring. Besides ensuring the academic quality of the PPH, its responsibility is to facilitate the faculties' contribution to the PPH. Consisting of representatives of all faculties, the board members are responsible for assisting the coordinator in identifying ongoing policy-relevant work, and establishing the coordinator's contact with faculty members doing this work.

To ensure faculty contributions, it is crucial that the PPH is visible and accessible to academic staff. Equally important is raising awareness among faculty members about its activities. One possibility in this respect is, as previously mentioned, to organize 'crash courses' in policy advice training for interested researchers, another to establish a 'policy fellow' function. Additionally, setting up adequate internal communication is key.

For implementation, the recommendation is that the coordinator establishes a clear overview of existing policy-relevant projects within the faculties. While most faculties already provide some insight into (European) policy activities in their annual review reports, the coordinator should maintain an up-to-date and forward-looking overview that allows for strategic guidance and foresight. For this the coordinator would be dependent on faculties providing these overviews, which is to be mediated by the AB members.

Cooperation with faculties and other inter-faculty UM institutes working on Europe-related research – such as CERiM, ITEM, MACIMIDE, and the Brussels Hub – can take two forms. On the one hand, there are activities where the PPH functions as the coordinator initiating and facilitating activities, such as policy briefs, roundtables, strategic dialogues, and other events. On the other hand, aiming to function as a one-stop-shop for EU expertise, it is the platform where faculties can present ongoing policy-relevant work. The PPH provides a suitable umbrella framework that supports the IO's ambition to foster stronger synergy and develop a more integrated and collective work plan amongst the UM Europe initiatives.

Finally, it is also recommended to involve external stakeholders, such as policymakers, in the organizational structure. This will help embed the initiative within relevant networks and strengthen long-term connections. One suggested approach is to establish a Europe Advisory Board composed of external prominents from the policy world (which might be UM alumni or people who have been part of PPH activities), over which the Europe Chair or the dean of FASoS or Law might preside. A second possibility which has emerged in discussions is to appoint a position (such

---

<sup>10</sup> The elaboration of this expanded assignment for the Academic Board is currently being prepared as part of the implementation phase of the IO, led by Gonny Willems. This process is being streamlined with the platform proposal for optimising UM policy development and decision-making under the leadership of Nieke Guillory.

as an honorary professorship) for a policymaker with relevant expertise. This would be a relatively low-cost initiative that could contribute to strengthening institutional links. Again, this would be an initiative that could be explored for the second phase.

### **Positioning and Communication**

For the positioning of the PPH initiative, the key consideration is that it should enable increased visibility and recognizability of UM's overall policy-related output—particularly for external stakeholders such as policymakers, NGO's and media. After all, it is precisely by acting as a central platform that the initiative has the potential to amplify and add to the impact of individual researchers and research units. To facilitate external audiences' engagement with UM's European expertise, presenting it in a unified and accessible way is crucial, especially in light of the ambition to position UM collectively as *the* 'powerhouse' for expertise on European affairs and policy.

It is precisely such a central presentation that is currently lacking. In the current situation audiences are confronted with a fragmented and incoherent landscape. Information and expertise are spread across various smaller, sometimes lesser-known platforms, leading to confusion and missed opportunities for engagement.

At the same time, much is expected from the dedication of individual academics: from investing in translating their research into policy recommendations, identifying the right contact points, building relevant networks and audiences, to finally communicate in an efficient way and to position these recommendations with impact. Often, this is done next to demanding schedules, without dedicated support a structural platform to benefit from, or evident opportunity to join forces with fellow experts, to help turn individual efforts into collective strength.

For these reasons, both internal and external interviewees have repeatedly emphasized the need for a single, recognizable space where UM communicates activities and outputs related to societal engagement and policy-relevant European themes.

In this context, this report sees three possible strategies for positioning the PPH initiative as an entity<sup>11</sup>:

- Using the corporate brand (directly under UM)
- Developing a new brand identity
- Building on existing brands

---

<sup>11</sup> Based on discussion with an advisory group of communication experts, consisting of the director M&C, director IO, and managers of SEM and M&C. These discussions are still ongoing, so this advice should be seen as provisional. But it is important to note that this advice has been jointly developed and agreed upon with M&C.

This report strongly advises for the third option, in which the coordination of the PPH initiative will be placed under SEM. In this scenario, established structures are already in place to support the coordination of this new ambition – something lacking in the other two scenarios – and there is also a wide network to build on and a reputable and recognizable label available to communicate outcomes to a non-academic audience.

Presenting the policy efforts and output directly under the corporate UM brand firstly currently does not appear realistic, as it currently poses several organisational and strategic challenges. While UM's institutional image builds on its profile of *the* European university of the Netherlands, UM's expertise and brand proposition is vastly broader than Europe, and UM does not want to position itself as a policy hub on European affairs only. Moreover, the strategy of the institutional brand story is currently under revision and managed by UM's corporate M&C department, balancing all strategic elements that make up the UM-brand (so in addition to the Europe focus also the wider strategy on internationalisation, and other institutional, strategic focal points such as diversity and inclusion, and sustainability).

Creating a new brand for the PPH initiative secondly comes with the risk to increase confusion, as creating yet another Europe-related UM label – next to existing ones like CERiM, YUFE, ITEM, SEM, PCE, CES, and the Brussels Hub – risks further diluting UM's European brand identity and does not result in the desired joint positioning of UM policy impact. Establishing a trusted and recognized new brand is also both resource intensive and time consuming, and the efforts needed for this will take years to pay off as efforts like YUFE, ITEM and SEM have showcased.

The recommendation is therefore to instead build on the strength of UM's existing brands. More in particular, the advice is to use SEM, a successful UM-wide platform linking academic expertise to societal relevance, as a coordinator and central platform for presentation of policy-related results.

After all, SEM has already developed considerable brand power, and through its activities is broadly recognized in The Hague, Amsterdam and Brussels. Through the events it has organized over the past years, it has an established capacity in bringing together stakeholders from different non-academic audiences. Thus, as a 'Studio' where UM's interfaculty expertise on European affairs is translated into societal and policy impact and engagement with larger audiences, it is well placed to function as a platform showcasing UM's policy-related activities, and function as a hub where existing and new networks come together. In addition, policy is a natural fit as a linking pin between the two existing pillars of SEM (Research and Public Debate).

SEM will in this scenario be the main point of access for external audiences (i.e. non-academic audiences) looking to find out more on the policy impact efforts of UM (for example by providing information about EU-related publications, events and workshops, and offering a directory of Europe-focused academic experts).

Crucially, SEM **will not replace any of the other EU related initiatives**, such as CERiM, ITEM or the Brussels Hub. In contrast, SEM will only function as a potential platform for such initiatives, who will simultaneously continue to use their own labels. SEM only operates as an *addition*

to the existing initiatives, serving as an *opportunity* for them to increase the visibility of their policy activities through showcasing them collectively, on a central platform.

This will require further development of the SEM label, with an increased emphasis on its connection to UM and a clearer positioning as part of UM, while maintaining the current brand identity and its flexibility. With the scaling down of the MWoE-partnership with the Province of Limburg and the City of Maastricht, SEM can more easily be positioned as a UM-wide 'household' brand entity, allowing it to operate more clearly as an integral part of the university.

The strategy for doing so involves the following:

- As a **first step**, place the coordination of the PPH ambition under SEM, and explore a refresh of the existing SEM brand to support the implementation of this ambition and add to the successful execution of the renewed Europe Strategy. This repositioning exploration is already ongoing and will be led by the head of SEM, in close consultation with the directors IO and M&C.
- As a **second step**, further explore how UM can optimise its presentation as a European expertise centre, also in combination with non-policy outreach activities. Specifically, this could involve developing a central platform for presenting UM's achievements of societal impact, valorisation, public debate and science communication. This platform would bring together the collective efforts of faculty experts, research centres, strategic Europe initiatives, and public engagement activities (e.g. lectures or public debates by SG), and present them in the most impactful way possible. Importantly, the platform would act as a central communication and visibility enhancer.

The rationale for creating such a central 'valorisation' platform aligns with current strategic thinking. To fulfil UM's mission as a societal and engaged university that helps find solutions to real-life challenges, a key strategic consideration is the need to strengthen our communication of societal impact across various themes, including Europe (which some also refer to as science communication). Before taking this step, the M&C director advises the following approach and timeline:

- First focus on rolling out the overarching corporate brand narrative for UM, ongoing and expected by the end of 2025.
- Subsequently, align and harmonize outreach, valorisation, and science communication efforts under the UM brand across selective, key topics<sup>12</sup>.
- While primarily anchoring under the UM brand, explore the potential of SEM as key concrete example and/or 'umbrella' of UM's societal impact within the Europe theme.

---

<sup>12</sup> For inspiration see the recent UM-campaign <https://answers.maastrichtuniversity.nl/en>

## Implementation and Planning

Regarding implementation, the foregoing has already made clear that the advice is to work with a growth model that develops in two phases. This model could be captured as *moving from research valorisation to policy impact*.

The rationale behind this phased approach is multifaceted.

- Firstly, a phased growth model allows for the testing of new activities and formats, and introduces flexibility. By evaluating outcomes and refining approaches at each stage, the model can adapt to new insights, changing policy environments and emerging opportunities.
- Secondly, success of the PPH ambition is dependent on the commitments of faculties. Functioning as a facilitator, it is only when faculty researchers are allocated time, and their efforts are recognized and appreciated that the PPH initiative can make impact.
- Thirdly, it enables the gradual build-up of institutional capacity. After all, the PPH initiative takes place within the implementation phase of the anticipated IO. This organizational restructuring requires time, as new working formats must be established while new staff needs to be inducted.

Concretely then, the first phase revolves around interweaving policy relevant initiatives, mapping existing efforts, establishing links between faculties and researchers, and on this basis reaching out to stakeholders and increasing visibility. In other words, it is about organizing what is already there, initiating new activities with a strategic focus (also through the deployment of seed money), and growing a central platform that increases visibility. This phase is suggested to last two years.

Building on the outcomes of this first phase (and depending on its success), the second phase would focus more on creating policy impact, enabled by engaging with policymakers in an earlier stage. For this, more networking efforts would be needed, of which the 'outside-in' type of activities mentioned earlier are a part. As this would entail a scaling up of the activities, this would likely involve the need for more in kind contributions from faculties, and perhaps more funding. At the same time, this phase is also more likely to generate contract research.

Moving from phase 1 to phase 2 would depend on the evaluation of phase 1, and could only come into place after commitment of the EB.

Regarding the time frame, it seems advisable to aim at early 2026 for a launch of the initiative. Some interlocutors express the desire to move quickly. At the same time, for the actual launch of the initiative it is important that it only takes place when the fundamentals are solid. The launch can only be done once and needs to be done properly. Therefore, early 2026 seems more likely than 2025. This would also allow for a link between its launch and UM's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

A way to embed a potential launch in the calendar would be to organize it around a milestone or other high profile event (Princess Beatrix Lecture, Honorary doctorate, Prinsjesdag).

## Timeline and Actions

In line with the above, the advice is to aim for the following actions in the two phases.

These phases are preceded by a preparatory developmental phase (which started in December 2024), in which this advisory report on the operationalisation of the PPH ambition is prepared by the coordinator of the phase (Joris Melman), working on behalf of EB president and the deans of FASoS and Law, based on desk research as well as interviews with relevant stakeholders within as well as outside of UM. The coordinator works under the supervision of Gonny Willems (director IO) with Sophie Vanhoonacker (professor at FASoS and chair of SEM's AB) in an advisory role. Based on this report, an implementation phase follows revolving around general capacity building, aligning with the implementation phase of the anticipated IO, for which a Europe chair and two postdocs need to be recruited. A working budget is included for this phase (referred to as the development phase in previous documents).

For phase 1 and 2, the following actions can be distinguished:

*Phase 1 (2026-2028). KPI-based targets are:*

- UM presents itself physically and virtually as a one-stop-shop for EU expertise
  - EU expertise is presented centrally through the UM website, giving an overview of Europe-related activities relevant for external audiences, and of the different institutions at the UM with Europe-related expertise
  - SEM is repositioned as UM's EU societal impact hub, moving it more closely to UM. This includes new branding and a renewed website
  - An expert directory listing scholars with expertise in European affairs and specifying the types of outreach they are available for is established. (Possible additions include an online 'book table' showcasing recently published academic work relevant to European policy debates.)
- Through a range of activities, the PPH initiative pools together policy relevant expertise at different faculties and facilitates researchers in connecting with stakeholders from the policymaking world. These activities include:
  - Two yearly interdisciplinary, themed policy brief collections with faculty experts facilitated by SEM
  - Two (one in Brussels led by the Brussels Hub and one in Maastricht) large scale conferences linked with these policy brief collections annually, drawing on the experience of the Captains of Circularity event
  - Specific events in the context of UM's 50th anniversary

- One flagship event in The Hague, which could be strategically timed around milestones such as Prinsjesdag, combined with the presentation of a report in order to showcase UM's expertise
- Development of two border effect reports (including event), facilitated by ITEM in collaboration with experts from various faculties
- Through internal and external communication and networking efforts, PPH functions as a hub bundling networks together
  - On various levels and across available communication channels the PPH initiative has been disseminated towards the different stakeholders
  - Structures and regular meetings are established with relevant stakeholders within UM in order to structure and align the internal collaboration
  - Regular contact is maintained with EU policymakers & UM's VIP alumni in Brussels by the UM Brussels Hub
  - A database of ongoing policy relevant activities within faculties is created (policy briefs produced within faculties, research projects such as Horizon projects with valorisation obligations), in order to create continuity as project websites usually go offline after some time
  - Grants related to EU matters are mapped, including ongoing grant proposals, and project leaders are consulted on how they can be supported in their outreach efforts
  - The Europe coordinator establishes first contact with departments operating ministerial 'knowledge agendas' in the Hague (such as CSO departments and KIEM at BZK) in order to identify demand for academic expertise
  - A policy training for UM researchers ('how to get your research to policymakers') is piloted
  - Recurring regular events (such as monthly lunches) are organized with faculty scholars who want to contribute to policy brief series
  - The possibility to formalize such connections through a PPH fellow program is explored

*Phase 2 (2028-2030). Targets are:*

- PPH's focus shifts to increasing policy impact through more active and structural engagement with policymakers. This allows for earlier identification of policy challenges where academic expertise is desired, in turn enabling output to be generated more in collaboration with societal stakeholders.
- The PPH initiative takes a more active role in building networks in The Hague. Moving beyond being a meeting point of existing networks, it actively reaches out to relevant ministerial organizations and policymakers
- The PPH initiative establishes the organization of more 'outside-in' activities with policymakers. Such activities could include:
  - Policy retreats (e.g., 'Maastricht Meetings') designed for senior policymakers to engage with academic insights in a focused setting.
  - Educational formats where policymakers contribute directly to courses, or
  - 'Mixed-format classes' where students and mid-level policymakers collaborate on practical policy issues
  - The development of training for policymakers (or even journalists) in key European policy areas
- More structurally, the PPH looks for format allowing for more systematically connecting policymakers to UM. One can think of:
  - The appointment of high level civil servants in advisory boards
  - The creation of a Policy Fellowship programme for policymakers, potentially in collaboration with the alumni office
  - The creation of a 'policy alumni club' for policymakers who have been part of the activities outlines above
  - The appointment of an honorary professor or 'practice professor' for a policymaker with relevant expertise and network
- Depending on the outcome of the pilots of phase 1, PPH:
  - Increases its number of dissemination activities
  - Has established policy training for UM researchers
  - Attempt to draw a meeting of key European leaders to Maastricht by 2030
- As a result of the above. PPH's activities and increased recognizability lead to increased contract research. This would also involve a (financial) reorientation on the role and contributions of faculties.

## Annex – Overview of interviewees

UM:

- Jan Smits (Law)
- Ellen Vos (Law)
- Christine Neuhold (FASoS)
- Jan Hupkens (FASoS and AA)
- Sophie Vanhoonacker (FASoS and chair AB SEM)
- Kai Jonas (FPN)
- Gaby Odekerken (SBE)
- Sebastian Rohde (FHML)
- Dieudonnee van de Willige (FSE)
- Tim Hiert (FSE)
- Gonny Willems (Quartermaster IO and SEM)
- Valentino Vondenhoff (SEM)
- Job Zomerplaag (SEM)
- Luana Russo (CERiM)
- Jenny Schell-Leugers (UCM)
- Anouk Bollen (ITEM)
- Martin Unfried (ITEM)
- Pim Mertens (ITEM)
- Susanne Sivonen (ITEM)
- Melissa Beltgens (Brussels Hub)

- Fèlix Ruiz Cabre (Brussels Hub)
- Ebru Işgüzarer-Önder (YUFE)
- Vivienne Curvers (BISS)
- Michael Shackleton (UM)
- Roel van Herpt (Marketing & Communications)
- Monique Merckx (Marketing & Communications)
- Josephine Knegtering (Marketing & Communications)

External:

- Milou van Mourik (Gemeente Maastricht)
- Maarten Hajer (Urban Futures Studio, UU)
- Sophie Pornschlegel (Jacques Delors Institute)
- Lucy Shackleton (UCL Europe Institute)
- Theresa Kuhn (ACES)
- Emmy Ruitter (Pathways for Sustainability, UU)
- Tom de Bruijn (Former Minister for Foreign Trade, and former Dutch permanent representative to the EU)
- Sophia Russack (CEPS)

*Examples of policy initiatives*

	<b><i>Focus and scope</i></b>	<b><i>Organization and governance</i></b>	<b><i>Themes</i></b>
<b>NL</b>			
<i>Europe focus</i>			
Europe Hub Leiden (UL)	'An interdisciplinary platform that showcases the university's research and	- 15 Steering Committee - 60+ 'affiliated researchers'	4 broad themes:

	<p>teaching expertise and capacities on the challenges that Europe faces'</p> <p>Broader than policy because of educational component.</p> <p>Rather modest in terms of events and content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No mention of staff</li> </ul> <p>4 faculties involved (soc, human, law, governance), but is 'an open initiative'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Europe in the world</li> <li>- Markets, trade and digit</li> <li>- Energy, environ, health</li> <li>- Foundations of integration (legitimacy etc)</li> </ul>
ACES (Uva)	<p>'Centre of Excellence for research, education and public debate '</p> <p>Jean Monnet Center of Excellence, policy only one (minor) elements.</p> <p>Is looking to increase funding through executive courses, policy advice etc., as it needs to increase its funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 governing board,</li> <li>- 9 advisory board (including external prominents)</li> <li>- No mention of staff</li> <li>- Partnership between 4 UvA faculties (Economics, Humanities, Law and Social Sciences)</li> <li>- 5 themes have 'team group leaders' at faculties</li> </ul>	<p>5 Core themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Governing Europe</li> <li>- Socio-Economic Challenges</li> <li>- Politics and Publics</li> <li>- Europe in the World</li> <li>- Diverse Europe</li> </ul> <p>While saying that focus 'ranges from sustainability to economic growth and from migration to privacy and surveillance', focus is quite soc science</p>
Europe platform (Utrecht University)	<p>Part of UU's IoS (see below). 'Shapes academic and public agendas on European integration, focusing on sustainable network building'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 platform coordinators (academic)</li> <li>- 25 platform members</li> </ul>	<p>(Not-exclusive) list of themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Legitimacy of the EU</li> <li>- The EU as a Global Power</li> <li>- Better EU Law-Making</li> <li>- Democracy &amp; Rule of Law</li> </ul>

	Rather modest in terms of activities and content		- The Role of the EU in Promoting Sustainability
<i>Non-Europe focus</i>			
Drift (Erasmus Rotterdam)	A social enterprise (BV) of Erasmus University specializing in transition science. 'Action institution' aiming to accelerate sustainable transitions. Offers education, research and advice	- 20+ researchers and advisors (full time) - 10+ staff  Founded: 2004	No pre-defined focal themes, but working on a broad range of transition related topics on a project basis
Design impact transition platform (Erasmus Rotterdam)	'Empowers radically new ways to do research, education and engagement for a just and sustainable future'	- ±9 staff (Academic lead, organisational lead, 2 communications, office manager, 3p project management, assistant. Plus affiliated academics)  - Experimental, also in set-up, transforming uni system, 'getting out of academic silo's'.  - No clear relation to faculties	N.A.
Pathways to Sustainability (Utrecht University)	One of four 'horizontal' cross-faculty programs of UU. An interdisciplinary institution which in this capacity also functions as a policy incubator.	-6 Office staff -Program board -Advisory board	Divided in 9 'thematic communities' (energy in transition, future food, transforming cities, etc)

	Substantial, almost activist vision&mission: 'Joining forces within the university and with society to discover, explore and validate pathways to just and sustainable futures for all'. 'Propel radical innovation in our university practices'.	-Communities board -Deans of 3 faculties (Geosciences, Science and Law, Economics & Governance) responsible for integrating PoS in faculties	
Institutions for Open Societies (Utrecht University)	Socio-political variant of Pathways – also 1 of 4 UU strategic themes.	- 8 Office staff - 7 Program team (profs; incl. 2 academic directors) - Advisory committee	3 themes: - Democracy and good governance - Transitions and well-being - Equality and diversity  15 platforms (EU platform is 1, others like future of work, open cities, gender, futures of democracy, etc)
<b>Abroad</b>			
<i>Europe focus:</i>			
UCL European Institute (UCL)	Focus on 4 themes: - Institutional leadership - Teaching/student experience - Research environment - External engagement	- 4 staff, 3 interns - 20p advisory board  Involvement: 1 faculty (law), 2 departments (polsci & eco), 3 schools	Different depending on Jean Monnet funding period: - 2016-19: The EU's Present Discontents - 2019-23: Passionate Politics and the Future of Europe - 2023-26: European Identity, Diversity, Energy, Security

	Generally, has a relatively broad focus. Not just policy, also education, non-policy outreach. 'Bringing everything EU together'. Event calendar comparable/more substantive than SEM's	Founded: 2010	
UCL Policy Lab (UCL)	More 'glamorous' cousin to EU Institute, more directly connected to politics, high level events. But: perceived as circling around superstar indiv.  Focus not on EU per se, rather as part of British politics	- 6 staff - 2 external co-directors  Founded: 2022	Currently 7 programmes - Democracy and peace - Economic policy - Challenging inequalities - Ordinary hope - Citizen portraits - Etc
The Policy Institute (Kings)	Well established institute with strong organization.  Mission: 'Combines the rigour of academia with the agility of a consultancy and the connectedness of a think tank.'  Thematic focus is broader than EU, societal themes more generally	- 17 'prof. services staff' - 8 fulltime research fellows - 14 research associates - many affiliates, etc  Also has own research capacity incl. professors  With 'Policy Park', it provides space for several initiatives outside of KCL	7 Research Themes: - Trust, facts and democracy - Communities & opportunity - Health systems and delivery - The value of evidence - Cities, growth & innovation - Children and young people - Defence and security policy

		Founded: 2012	
LSE IDEAS (LSE)	<p>LSE's foreign policy think tank.</p> <p>Provides a forum that informs policy debate and connects academic research with the practice of diplomacy and strategy.</p> <p>Focus is broader than EU, Europe being only one of foreign policy themes</p>	<p>- 13 staff</p> <p>- 5 academic management</p> <p>- 18 Advisory board</p> <p>- Large number of fellows, associates, visiting fellows, visiting PhDs, etc</p> <p>Founded: 2008</p>	<p>No pre-defined themes, but works with 17 projects on global issues, one of them being 'Europe Initiative'.</p> <p>Also runs an Executive MSc (International Strategy and Diplomacy)</p>
Policy Lab (Hertie)	<p>Focused on bringing policy to education, 'focusing on hands-on practice-oriented teaching and bringing together students, faculty, and practitioners to tackle real-world policy challenges'</p>	<p>- 1 staff?</p> <p>Founded: 2024</p> <p>Supported by PD (consultancy)</p>	<p>No core themes.</p> <p>'Flagship event' is the Festival of Ideas in which students from the Master of Public Policy present policy solutions</p>
IEP – Institute for European Policy Making (Bocconi)	<p>Bocconi's policy institute, aiming to produce and disseminate 'research on the major policy issues facing Europe, and the EU in particular'.</p> <p>Modelled like a think tank, with corporates such as BNP Paribas and Allianz as founders</p>	<p>- 4 staff</p> <p>- 7 'media fellows'</p> <p>- 7 Management Council</p> <p>- 120+ Bocconi academics as 'researchers'</p>	<p>10 themes: Green Transition, Innovation and digital, EU Single Market, Competitiveness, Defense Policies, Social Inclusion, EU governance, Financial Markets, Demography, European policies</p>
Robert Schuman Centre (EUI)	<p>EUI's multidisciplinary centre to engage with stakeholders in the public and private sector. Core aim is to create policy output</p>	<p>- 400+ staff</p> <p>Founded: 1993</p>	<p>- 9 research programs (global governance, EU governance, migration, regulation, Middle East, banking &amp; finance, digital society,</p>

	Draws 2/3 of funding from external grants.		media pluralism and judicial cooperation)
EMU Lab (EUI)	A multidisciplinary institute aiming 'to dissect and rethink the EMU's architecture in the light of present-day conditions in Europe', in order 'to identify avenues for research and policy innovation'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 staff</li> <li>- 2 chairs</li> <li>- 6p steering board</li> </ul> <p>All based at other EUI institutions</p> <p>Founded: 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All EMU topics (such as Banking Union, CMU, the Single Market, Fiscal Union, industrial policy)</li> <li>- Has the bi-annual Florence Report as a flagship event</li> </ul>
CAP – Center for Applied Policy Research (Munich)	<p>'The largest university policy research institute on European and international questions in Germany.'</p> <p>Website is rather outdated however, hardly any activity after 2020.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10+ staff</li> <li>- 10+ associated researchers</li> </ul> <p>5 units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research Group on European Affairs</li> <li>- RG Youth and Europe</li> <li>- RG on German Affairs</li> <li>- RG on the Global Future</li> <li>- Academy Leadership &amp; Competence</li> </ul> <p>Founded: 1995</p>	<p>6 topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- European integration</li> <li>- Modern governance</li> <li>- Transformation Processes</li> <li>- The Global Future</li> <li>- Political Culture</li> <li>- Civic education</li> </ul>

<i>Non-Europe focus</i>			
Imperial Policy Forum (Imperial)	<p>Well established like Kings.</p> <p>Mission: 'to use the latest evidence from Imperial's world-leading academics to inform the policy conversations that really matter'</p> <p>More beta focused.</p> <p>Still useful example in terms of presentation, policy fellowships</p>	<p>- 5 staff</p> <p>- 10 advisory board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founded: 2017</li> </ul>	<p>4 Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emerging Technologies</li> <li>- Zero Pollution</li> <li>- Health</li> <li>- Science Policy Interface</li> </ul>
Geneva Science-Policy Interface (University of Geneva)	<p>'A platform with the mission to foster and promote science-informed policymaking'.</p> <p>Should make Geneva Uni 'a hub for global governance', positioning itself as a knowledge broker.</p> <p>Supported by Swiss Foreign Affairs ministry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• - 4 Staff</li> <li>• - 7 Executive board</li> <li>• - 7 Steering committee</li> </ul> <p>Has board members from other Swiss universities</p> <p>Founded: 2018</p>	<p>No clearly defined themes, but focuses on 'human rights, global health, environmental sustainability, and more'</p> <p>Core pillars in terms of activities are Collaboration and Learning/Capacity building</p>

<p>The York Policy Engine (University of York)</p>	<p>Policy platform with a regional focus.</p> <p>Has 3 functions: Offer training and capacity building; Make research relevant to policy makers; Build a network of external partnerships and professionals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• - 8 staff</li> </ul> <p>- Supports all disciplines in University of York</p> <p>- Lacks strong profile</p>	<p>- Research areas defined as regional partnerships in Yorkshire, 4 atm.</p> <p>- Also, cost of living research group</p>
<p>Other UK initiatives (less relevant examples for PPH):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy@Manchester</li> <li>- City-REDI</li> <li>- Heseltine Institute</li> <li>- Insights North East</li> <li>- London Research and Policy</li> <li>- SPRE (Scotland)</li> <li>-Wales Centre for pub. policy</li> </ul>		

*Updated UM Research Agenda on Europe*

In progress.