

# EUR & Europe

A Partnership for the Future

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## Foreword

# EU engagement for global impact

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For over a century, Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) has embodied a spirit of curiosity, entrepreneurship, collaboration, and societal impact. As our world grapples with unprecedented challenges - from climate change to digital disruptions - EUR has embraced its role as a bridge between academia and society, between science and policy makers, fostering solutions that resonate far beyond our campus.

Since 2019 our EU engagement has been guided by the belief that research and education transcend borders to shape a more inclusive, sustainable, and innovative Europe. This booklet celebrates five years of EU engagement highlighting some of our major milestones: from pioneering pan-European university cooperation like our UNIC alliance, to actively working with umbrella organisations and university networks, to hosting EU R&I and education policymakers, and from advising the European Commission to securing transformative Horizon Europe grants.

These achievements reflect the dedication of EUR's researchers, educators, and professional staff, as well as our partnerships with EU institutions, industry, and civil society. While we celebrate progress, we also recognize the work ahead. Europe's societal, green and digital transitions demand bold ideas, transdisciplinary collaboration, and a commitment to inclusive and sustainable growth. As you explore these pages, we invite you to join us in reimagining the role of universities in shaping Europe's future.

**Together, let's build a continent where knowledge drives progress for everyone.**

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## Colophon

**Issued by**  
Engagement & Research Services  
Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Creative Desk

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Technical and social innovation go hand in hand. Europe's societal competitiveness is the foundation of its industrial competitiveness.

**Prof. Annelien Bredenoord**





# What is European Engagement?

**I**magine a university that doesn't just exist within its campus limits but extends its engagement and impact across an entire continent. That's Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR). European engagement at EUR is about more than participating in EU-funded projects. It's about connecting Rotterdam to Europe and the world, ensuring that our research, education, and social innovation resonate where they matter most: tackling the world's wicked challenges, shaping sustainable and inclusive, human- and planet-centric policies, educating global citizens, and shaping Europe's future.

European engagement is about EUR researchers advising European policymakers and legislators, fostering cross-border collaboration among researchers and students, and transforming communities through EU-funded initiatives. Our European engagement ensures that Europe's societal, green, and digital transitions are not only innovative but also inclusive, ethical, and human-centric.



# Transforming with Science

Take [CultuurCampus](#), for example. This [New European Bauhaus Lighthouse Project](#) isn't just about building a sustainable hub in Rotterdam South - it's about reimagining an entire neighborhood through arts, education, research, and community collaboration. Or consider [UNIC](#), the European University Alliance, which unites 10 universities and their cities, facilitating their post-industrial transitions and fostering inclusive education and societal transformation. EUR also supports European governments in strengthening democratic resilience. For example, the [TWIN4DEM](#) project combines various computational social science methods to prototype the first-ever digital twins of four European democratic systems.

**These initiatives demonstrate that EUR's work isn't just academic - it's actionable, impactful, and deeply connected to Europe's future.**

European engagement is about **influence and partnerships** with EU institutions, industry, and civil society. It is a collaborative effort that involves researchers, educators, policymakers, and citizens. It's about EUR researchers like Prof. Annelien Bredenoord shaping [Horizon Europe's future](#), Prof. Eveline Crone advocating for curiosity-driven, fundamental research in the SSH domain, Prof. Pearl Dykstra shaping European Commission policies through [scientific evidence and advice](#), Prof. Klaus Heine, whose [Jean Monnet Chair](#) has helped European legislators and policymakers better understand AI and big data while shaping European digital governance. Additionally, Dr. [Carlotta Scioldo](#) combines her academic career with consultancy in EU cultural policies and programs.



UNIC is more than an alliance—it's a movement to create inclusive societies through education, research, and community.

**Prof. Semiha Denктаş**  
Academic lead UNIC





Hosted by EUR, 2024  
**NL-EU R&I Dialogues**



## Looking ahead

**European engagement at EUR is about making Europe better - for everyone.** As Europe navigates an era of unprecedented change, EUR's role in European engagement will only grow in importance. By continuing to align our work with EU priorities, fostering cross-border collaboration, and advocating for the integration of social sciences and humanities in EU policies, we can help ensure that Europe's future is not only innovative but also inclusive and sustainable.



# Engaged Science for Impact

Over the past five years, EUR has become an active player in European research, education, and policy engagement, shaping Europe's future. Our milestones reflect a commitment to excellence, collaboration, and societal impact, showcasing how our expertise contributes to Europe's - and the world's - most pressing challenges. From pioneering pan-European alliances to groundbreaking research collaborations and high-level EU policy engagement, these achievements highlight EUR's growing influence in Brussels and beyond.

Brussels  
EUR EU Strategy Days 2024







## 01

### Networks & Alliances: Building Bridges

EUR's voice in Brussels has grown stronger over the years. Through memberships in networks like the [European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities](#), the [European Network of Innovative Higher Education Institutions](#) (ENIHEI), and [Science|Business](#), as well as proactive engagement with key stakeholders, we have helped **shape EU research, innovation, and education agendas** while advocating for **evidence-based policymaking**.

We have strongly advocated for **engaged scholarship and the integration of social sciences and humanities** (SSH) into transformative research and education programs to address global challenges.

For example, EUR's president, Prof. Annelien Bredenoord, was the [sole SSH representative](#) in the [High-Level Expert Group](#) that authored the [Align, Act, Accelerate](#) report on the future of Europe's research and innovation landscape. At the [2025 Science|Business Summit](#), she called for "societal competitiveness" as a fundamental enabler of Europe's industrial competitiveness. Additionally, EUR's contributions to the Vision 2050 – Future-proofing the Next Framework Programme conference were published as a [Viewpoint article](#), in which Prof. Eveline Crone and Meri Georgievska presented the EUR-TUD-EMC Convergence as a model for transformative, transdisciplinary research.

EUR's influence extends into key European initiatives. Since 2025, the Erasmus Centre of Law and Digitalization has been an active member of the [EU Industry-Academia Network of the Cybersecurity Skills Academy](#). Within [ENIHEI](#), Dr. Farshida Zafar leads efforts to foster entrepreneurial talent and promote women's leadership in innovation and technology. EUR is also a signatory of [COARA](#) (the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment), with Dr. Tung Tung co-chairing the [Recognising and Rewarding Peer Review](#) Working Group to reform research assessment practices across Europe.

**Together, these efforts demonstrate EUR's role as a thought leader, building bridges between academia, policy, and industry to drive impactful change.**

## Expert Groups: Engaged Science and Evidence-Based Policymaking

EUR researchers are not just studying Europe's challenges - they are actively shaping solutions. For example, Prof. Eveline Crone's tenure as [ERC Vice-President](#) elevated the visibility of SSH research, ensuring it received the same recognition as STEM and life sciences. Similarly, Prof. Pearl Dykstra's work within the [Group of Chief Scientific Advisors](#) has influenced EU policies across multiple domains. Other EUR experts have provided critical guidance to EU institutions: Prof. Peter Knorringer has advised DG Research & Innovation on integrating [frugal innovation into EU policies](#), while Prof. Peter Scholten, Prof. Thea Hilhorst, Prof. Susanne Janssen, and Prof. Arjen Leerkes have shaped EU migration, asylum, and diversity policies.

**These are just a few examples of how EUR's expertise informs decision-making at the highest levels, facilitating evidence-based policies that have a lasting impact.**

## Events: Bringing Europe to Rotterdam, and Rotterdam to Europe

High-profile events have brought EU policymakers to our doorstep while also taking EUR's leadership and researchers to Brussels. We have had the privilege of hosting and engaging in meaningful discussions with two EU Commissioners for Research & Innovation, two ERC Presidents, and Directors-General for Research & Innovation and Education, among other key policymakers and experts.

In 2022, [ERC President Maria Leptin](#) visited our Woudestein campus, meeting with ERC laureates and praising EUR's leadership in transdisciplinary research, particularly through our Convergence initiative with TU Delft and Erasmus MC. In 2024, a high-level EUR delegation traveled to Brussels for two days of strategic sessions, during which [Commissioner Iliana Ivanova](#) recognized EUR as a thought leader in transdisciplinary research on sustainable and inclusive prosperity. That same year, an EU delegation led by [DG R&I Marc Lemaître](#) visited EUR as part of the first Enhanced R&I Dialogue between the EU and the Netherlands dedicated to the topic of [Excellence, impact, strategic choices and R&I-ecosystems](#). In his closing remarks, Lemaître acknowledged EUR as a frontrunner in transdisciplinary education and research.

**These moments are not just milestones; they are proof of EUR's growing influence and the significance of our work in shaping Europe's future.**

June 2022

**ERC President  
Leptin meets  
EUR ERC  
Laureats**







Prof. Knorringa meets EU  
R&I Commissioner Moedas

Frugal Innovation is  
about improving the  
living conditions of the  
poorest part of society.

**Prof. Peter Knorringa**



# Research Excellence

From climate resilience to digital humanism and equity, migration justice to inclusive healthcare, EUR has a **diverse portfolio of research projects** that investigate unexplored themes and address the world's most wicked challenges. This section offers a **snapshot of EUR's collaborative spirit** and academic excellence - showcasing **selected initiatives** that exemplify how our researchers lead Horizon Europe consortia, ERC-funded breakthroughs, and cross-sector partnerships. While these highlights represent just a **fraction of our work**, they illustrate EUR's commitment to shaping policies, technologies, and lives for a fairer, greener future.



**Top:** EU Director General for R&I Lemaitre visits the Sync Lab and Prof. Crone

**Down:** Associate Prof. Rianne Kok





## On Navigating Societal, Climate & Digital Transitions

A few examples of EUR's work in this area include:

**CUES** (Dr. Yijing Wang): Aims to revolutionize food consumption by fostering a 'Triple Change' in culture, the food value chain, and policy. Through co-designing scientific methods and approaches, CUES actively involves consumers, food industry stakeholders, and policymakers to guide consumer knowledge and behavior, promoting sustainable food consumption.

**JUSTWIND4ALL** (Dr. Julia Wittmayer): Tackles complex social-ecological-technical challenges related to wind energy deployment. The project integrates expertise from social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering within a rigorous transdisciplinary research design, engaging both academic and non-academic partners. It also emphasizes effective and just wind governance, considering energy citizenship and energy justice.

**ERC RRUSHES-5** (Prof. Jun Borras): Investigates how contemporary global commodity rushes ('land grabs') reshape the politics of food, climate, labor, citizenship, and geopolitics. The project examines structural, institutional, and political shifts, demonstrating how these issues impact not only the 3.5 billion people living in rural areas but also the global population.

### **GENES, POLICY, AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY** (Dr. Niels Rietveld):

Merges genetics and economics to explore how genes and environments interact to shape inequality. The work dismantles deterministic views of human potential while seeking policies that reduce disparities.

### **SCENSUS** (Dr. Thomas Bauwens):

Aims to help reshape society and transform the economy by focusing on the mechanisms that enable social enterprises to scale their societal and economic impacts. By challenging conventional thinking about the roles of markets and states, this project promotes sustainability through collective action and innovative community-driven approaches.

**UNIC4ER**: Addresses post-industrial transitions and societal challenges through engaged research, involving communities, local governments, and stakeholders to ensure practical applicability and societal impact. The project fosters social innovation through impact-driven education and promotes economic growth and sustainability in post-industrial cities. The UNIC Centre for City Futures serves as a model for city-engaged research and learning, forming a European transnational laboratory for societal impact.



## On Youth, Family, and Social Equity

**BRAINLINKS** (Prof. Eveline Crone): Investigates the development of prosocial behaviors (e.g., helping and giving) in adolescents transitioning into adulthood through a brain-behavior perspective. Combining hormone data, neuroimaging, and behavioral experiments, the project provides insights into fostering behaviors critical for addressing societal challenges like climate action and inequality.

**PARADOX** (Prof. Loes Keijsers): Delves into the complexities of parental support, exploring how excessive involvement can hinder adolescent autonomy. Through surveys of Dutch families, the project develops a theoretical model of parental support, offering nuanced insights into adolescent development and family dynamics.

**CHILDCARE STRATEGIES** (Dr. Tom Emery): Investigates barriers to formal childcare access among low-income families, identifying systemic hurdles and proposing solutions to reduce inequalities. The project advances equitable opportunities for children by addressing disparities in childcare uptake and policy



## On Inclusive Healthcare

EUR's healthcare innovations span projects like:

**ASCERTAIN** (Prof. Carin Uyl-de Groot): Ensures that innovative health technologies remain affordable and accessible while encouraging sustainable development. The project focuses on delivering cutting-edge healthcare solutions without compromising affordability, innovation, or environmental responsibility.

**ERC AGING BRAIN MATTER** (Dr. Janna Cousijn): Studies how the social environment and the brain jointly shape adolescent risk and resilience to addiction. This interdisciplinary research offers new insights into psychological and neurological challenges in adolescence.



## On Migration

Among EUR's initiatives addressing migration are:

**FAIR** (Dr. Arjen Leerkes): Places the rights and well-being of migrants at the core of its mission. Researchers support policymakers in strengthening the governance of return migration by addressing legitimacy deficits, providing insights into factors that foster or impede policy effectiveness.

**PACES** (Dr. Simona Vezzoli): Investigates factors influencing migration decision-making and aims to develop forward-looking migration policies that reduce unintended consequences, such as irregular migration and marginalization. The project uses participatory approaches to incorporate diverse migrant needs and stakeholder perspectives into policymaking.

**ERC HUMANITARIAN GOVERNANCE** (Prof. Thea Hilhorst): This ERC proof-of-concept project explores how civil society actors and crisis-affected communities shape humanitarian governance through accountability and advocacy. It seeks to develop alternative humanitarian ethics models, incorporating solidarity alongside traditional humanitarian principles. A key component examines how humanitarian actors conceptualize and address climate-related displacement.



## On Human Centric Technologies and digital humanism

**SEISMEC** (Prof. Jason Pridmore): Drives the Industry 5.0 transition through human-centric technological advancements, redefining digitalization and AI in work contexts. The project empowers workers by co-designing AI solutions that improve workplace conditions and foster sustainable innovation.

**EXCENTRIC** (Dr. Erik Hitters): Enhances human-centric collaborative ecosystems for smart digital transformation in the creative and cultural sectors. The research prioritizes audience-centric experiences and supports sustainable innovation through co-created technological solutions.

**DIGIPORTS** (Dr. Jess Bier): Examines digitalization's impact on labor and racial inequalities in the container shipping industry. Combining critical logistics and algorithm studies, the project analyzes how digital infrastructures reshape labor practices in a globalized economy.

## On Culture, Diversity and Inclusive societies

EUR's cultural resilience efforts feature projects such as:

**CultuurCampus & UNIC** (Prof. Semiha Denktas/ Prof. Amanda Brandellero): Pioneer inclusive and co-creative local development strategies, fostering social cohesion, educational opportunities, and cultural engagement. These projects transform post-industrial cities into vibrant, resilient communities by engaging local stakeholders and integrating local knowledge into policymaking.

**EIT Knowledge & Innovation Community (KIC) on Culture and Creative Industries** (Prof. Trilce Navarrete): Contributes to a pan-European innovation ecosystem spanning 27 member states, empowering creatives to lead Europe's green and digital transitions. EUR's involvement underscores its commitment to blending culture, technology, and sustainability.

**ERC WORLDS OF IMAGINATION** (Prof. Stijn Rijnders): Investigates film tourism, exploring how films and TV series generate tourism flows and their impact on landscapes. The research analyzes the influence of popular media on identity perceptions and provides insights for cultural heritage institutions and tourism stakeholders.

**RECHARGE** (Dr. Trilce Navarrete): Addresses social inequalities by enhancing cultural participation through partnerships with heritage institutions and policies that enable accessible digital cultural offerings. The project promotes mental well-being, digital literacy, and inclusive engagement.

**INVENT** (Prof. Susanne Janssen): Ensures cultural heritage remains accessible and relevant by fostering stakeholder relationships and policies for equitable digital access. The project strengthens community resilience through inclusive cultural engagement.







## On Science Communication

**Bridging the gap between science and society through projects like:**

**IANUS, TRESKA & COALESCE** (Prof. Hub Zwart and Prof. Jason Pridmore): These interconnected projects address public distrust in science and misinformation. They promote transparent, inclusive communication, equipping citizens and policymakers with tools to navigate scientific crises, rebuild trust, and enhance science literacy across Europe.



## Shaping Tomorrow, Together

While this selection represents just a fraction of EUR's many initiatives, they exemplify how interdisciplinary rigor and community partnerships transform complex challenges into opportunities. By fostering trust in science, amplifying marginalized voices, and scaling sustainable innovations, EUR reaffirms its role as a global catalyst for societal transformation.

Across the university, hundreds of researchers drive progress in countless ways. As we navigate an era of rapid transitions, EUR remains committed to curiosity-driven discovery and impact-driven collaboration. Together with policymakers, industries, and citizens, we are not just imagining a sustainable and inclusive future - we are building it.

# European Engagement and Funding Ecosystem at EUR

At EUR, a multilayered ecosystem brings together professionals and academics, enabling them to collaborate in transferring knowledge to society, building strategic partnerships, attracting and securing national and EU funding for research, innovation, and educational initiatives, managing projects, communicating science, and actively representing EUR on the national and European research, education, and innovation stage.

## Engaging with Europe: Strategy and Advocacy - EU Liaison Officer

The EU Liaison Officer (EU LO) plays a vital advocacy role, connecting EUR to the broader European funding and policy landscape, enhancing the university's visibility, and promoting its excellence and societal contributions. Operating at the intersection of strategy and public affairs, the EU LO acts as a bridge between the EU and EUR's research, education, and innovation initiatives. By ensuring EUR's proactive representation at the European level, the EU LO translates knowledge into policies and societal impact.

## Navigating European Funding: Grants Advisors

Accessing European funding opportunities requires expertise in aligning research proposals with funders' priorities. Faculty-based Grant Advisors play a key role in helping researchers navigate programs such as Horizon Europe, the European Research Council (ERC), Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA). They provide insights on eligibility, application procedures, and proposal development, strengthening submissions and increasing funding success rates. By connecting researchers with the right opportunities and offering tailored guidance,

they ensure that EUR remains competitive in the funding landscape.

ERS's Grants team offers a **Coordinatorship Enablement Package** (CEP), providing expert support to researchers leading major, multi-million-euro, multi-partner collaborative projects. This package includes access to a dedicated ERS Collaborative Proposal Development Partner for proposal and consortium development, as well as a dedicated Project Manager to ensure successful project implementation and completion.

To encourage knowledge exchange and best practice sharing, secondment arrangements are in place between certain schools and ERS, strengthening capacity-building efforts and providing direct support in preparing research proposals. Our experts also offer training sessions, informational events, and coaching for the EUR research community.

## Building Impactful Collaborations: Innovation & Partnerships

Strong partnerships with non-academic stakeholders enhance EUR's ability to drive real-world impact. Innovation & Partnerships Managers facilitate connections between researchers and industry, public sector organizations, and societal partners to co-create knowledge and solutions. They work closely with Grant Advisors to develop impact-driven projects and support interdisciplinary initiatives, such as those within the Convergence alliance with TUD and Erasmus MC. By guiding researchers in translating their findings into policy, practice, and innovation, they help maximize the societal impact of EUR's research.





Organised by ERS  
**SEISMEC Writing retreat**

### **Project Management and Financial Support**

Project management support is available both within individual schools and through a dedicated ERS team that oversees the university's Major Initiatives. These teams help EUR researchers navigate project complexities, ensuring smooth execution from start to finish. Support includes expert guidance on project execution, consortium management, and resource planning. Our experts provide the necessary tools and maintain strong partnerships with consortium members to foster a collaborative environment. Financial monitoring ensures that funds are used effectively, while compliance checks guarantee that expenditures align with funding regulations.

### **Deepening Research Impact Through Science Communication**

Identifying and effectively utilizing pathways for science communication requires expertise that often extends beyond a researcher's core skill set. Strategic science communication expertise is essential from the proposal phase, ensuring that the dissemination, exploitation, and communication (DEC) process is well-planned before commitments are made.

During the project, researchers must deliver on their DEC commitments, often as a legal obligation, while also understanding the broader societal and policy impact of their work. Science communication experts help researchers craft narratives that effectively reach key audiences through events, multimedia content, strategic dissemination, KPI selection, and impact evaluation. As projects evolve, these experts also provide guidance on adjusting communication strategies when necessary. These services can be drawn from different levels of the university or a combination thereof, but they are most effectively implemented when a dedicated communication manager is assigned to the project, ensuring alignment between faculty, ERS, and the Central communication departments.

### **A Collaborative Approach to European Engagement**

This integrated approach - combining expertise in strategy, funding, project management, innovation and business development, and science communication - exemplifies EUR's robust ecosystem for engaging with European policy, funding, and collaboration opportunities. This system ensures that EUR researchers receive the strategic guidance, institutional support, and external visibility needed to thrive in the European research landscape.



ERS's support was instrumental in securing our Horizon Europe grant. Their expertise in consortium building and grant management allowed us to focus on science.

**Prof. Jason Pridmore**

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