

CESAER

Declaration on contributions of universities of science and technology to sustainability

Dated **20 October 2023**

With this declaration, we, the universities of Science and Technology (S&T) united within [CESAER](#) underline our responsibility and willingness to advance our contributions to sustainability. We declare our intention to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Agenda 2030 and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), committing to take action and being agents of transformation addressing all dimensions of sustainable development. The conceptual foundation for this declaration is provided in the accompanying white paper ‘Leading by example: Boosting sustainability through good governance adopted by universities of science & technology’.

We recall that:

The [Resolution](#) adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015 and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals and corresponding 169 targets constitute the most significant framework and universally adopted agenda “to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind”. The 2015 Paris Agreement, signed by 194 parties, sets the goals to substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 2 degrees Celsius while pursuing efforts to limit the increase even further to 1.5 degrees.

As organisations that have unique societal roles and responsibilities as laid down in the [Magna Charta Universitatum](#), we commit to help tackle these major local and global challenges in order to achieve the SDGs and meet the Paris Agreement accord.

We agree to adopt and abide by the following key principles:

I) Nurture openness, through advancing open science, as a vital tool for instilling a collaborative ethos and encouraging greater sharing of best practices regardless of political or economic tensions thus accelerating research by:

1. promoting transparency and trust;
2. promoting cooperation, technology and knowledge transfer;
3. ensuring a well-balanced approach to knowledge safety and security.

II) Educate and train students, learners and employees to be aware of the challenges related to achieving the SDGs and their responsibilities through problem- and challenge-based learning and teaching, systems thinking, relevant skills, competencies and knowledge; to act in a manner that is consistent with the awareness of the impacts of these challenges; to live sustainably; and to empower others by:

4. implementing inter- and transdisciplinary programmes;
5. integrating sustainability into curricular and extracurricular learning and teaching activities;
6. fostering skills and competencies to tackle the pressing global challenges.

III) Release the transformative power of disruptive innovation, creativity and collaboration between academic and non-academic partners leading to a more sustainable society by:

7. moving from academia-industry collaboration to innovation ecosystems and beyond;
8. cultivating innovators and entrepreneurs by introducing new models where students become critical agents for change in their learning journey;
9. shaping markets to promote innovation for the common good.

IV) Lead by example and act as dedicated actors contributing to environmental sustainability within our own institutions by:

10. promoting a holistic approach of measuring and rewarding contributions;
11. reducing the ecological footprint of our universities.

V) Defend [values](#) promoting behavioural and cultural transformations within our universities and societies, also recalling our [declaration on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) (EDI), by:

12. promoting Gender Equality Plans and Diversity Plans;
13. putting forward women leaders as role models;
14. going into schools to boost interest for STEM;
15. developing gendered designs into intersectional ones.

VI) Advance our local and global engagement utilising our academic freedom and institutional autonomy to increase societal impact by:

16. forging and strengthening global partnerships with other universities, networks and centres of expertise worldwide in order to promote the SDGs;
17. engaging with national and global corporate leaders;
18. engaging with civic leaders, communities and civil society actors;
19. working with political institutions, governments and representatives.

We will continue to advance the contributions of universities of science and technology to sustainability, including in the follow up from the [call to action](#) and beyond. We invite the broader community to join us and we stand ready to engage with partners and friends globally to achieve sustainability that is ecologically sound, socially just and economically fair.

We collectively and individually commit to supporting the implementation of this declaration, and our association will showcase and evaluate progress made no later than 2028.

For more information please [contact](#) our Secretary General Mattias Björnmalm.

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Rooted in advanced engineering education and research, [CESAER](#) is an international association of leading specialised and comprehensive universities with a strong science and technology profile that advocate, learn from each other and inspire debates. Our Members champion excellence in higher education, training, research and innovation, contribute to knowledge societies for a sustainable future and deliver significant scientific, economic, social and societal impact.

