



The Vice Rector for Research, Innovation and
International Affairs

Univ.Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr. Peter Ertl

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26.08.2025

Dear Members of the CESAER Board and General Assembly,

It is with great enthusiasm and a deep sense of responsibility that I submit my candidacy for the position of Director of **CESAER**. As **Vice Rector for Research, Innovation and International Affairs at TU Wien** and a long-standing advocate for European science and technology collaboration, I am committed to advancing **CESAER's** mission of shaping a sustainable, resilient, and competitive Europe through excellence in research, education, and innovation.

My motivation is rooted in a deep conviction that science and technology hold the key to shaping a better future. In a world marked by geopolitical shifts, digital disruption, and societal fragmentation, universities of science and technology must rise as proactive agents of change - connecting disciplines, sectors, and nations with purpose and vision. I see **CESAER** not only as a platform for collaboration, but as a strategic force capable of guiding Europe through transformation with clarity, integrity, and innovation. I am ready to contribute my leadership, experience, and strategic foresight to help steer this journey - toward a future where knowledge empowers resilience and progress.

My vision for **CESAER** aligns closely with the draft Strategy 2030 and builds on **four strategic pillars**:

1. Bridging Society, Science and Technology as Forces for Good

As Vice Rector at **TU Wien**, I am deeply committed to strengthening **CESAER's** voice in European policy. I will actively advocate for increased and sustained investment in science and technology, guided by an engineering mindset that is constructive, evidence-based, and solution-oriented. For me, it is essential that our members' contributions to sustainability, security, and innovation are not only recognized at the highest political levels, but also meaningfully connected to society at large.

This approach represents a central paradigm at TU Wien, which is also why we proudly serve as a founding member of the **EULiST alliance**. EULiST's mission - to link society, science, and technology through interdisciplinary collaboration between **STEM** fields and the social sciences and humanities - mirrors **CESAER's** strategic vision. As a member of both alliances, TU Wien actively contributes to building a European academic landscape that is collaborative, responsible, and future oriented.

2. Empowering Members through Strategic Engagement

Drawing from my experience at **TU Wien** and in European networks & alliances, I will foster deeper member engagement through agile formats, task forces, and peer learning. I believe in the virtuous cycle of participation and benefit, as outlined in the strategy: the more our members contribute, the more value they derive. I will work to ensure that **CESAER** remains both a trusted external advocate and an internal catalyst for institutional development.

To achieve this, I will promote inclusive participation across institutional profiles and geographies, ensuring that all members - regardless of size or structure - can shape and benefit from our collective agenda. I also aim to strengthen the visibility and impact of member contributions by aligning engagement opportunities with strategic European policy developments.

3. Future-Proofing Academic Freedom and Institutional Sovereignty

In line with both **CESAER** and **TU Wien** values, I will defend the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. These are not only ethical imperatives but strategic assets in a time of increasing political directionality and dual-use dilemmas. I will promote frameworks that empower universities to act independently while contributing to shared European goals.

This includes advocating for legal and financial conditions that protect institutional diversity and enable long-term strategic planning. I will also support the development of shared tools and guidance to help members navigate tensions between openness, security, and academic independence.

4. Addressing Dual-Use and Security Research with Responsibility and Strategic Foresight

In an increasingly fragmented geopolitical landscape, universities of science and technology face growing pressure to engage in research with potential dual-use applications - technologies that can serve both civilian and military purposes. This includes fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, cybersecurity, and advanced materials. These areas are not only critical for societal resilience and competitiveness, but also for strengthening Europe's strategic autonomy and defense capabilities in a rapidly evolving global security environment.

At **TU Wien**, we have already established dedicated working groups on **research security** and **research integrity and ethics**, which play an active role in our academic governance and daily operations. These structures ensure that sensitive research is conducted responsibly, transparently, and in line with both national and European frameworks. They also foster a culture of critical reflection and institutional learning, which I believe is essential for all **CESAER** members.

As the largest technical university in military **neutral Austria**, **TU Wien** carries a particular responsibility to engage in these debates with care, clarity, and commitment to European values. Our neutrality does not exempt us from contributing to Europe's resilience - it challenges us to do so with even greater emphasis on transparency, ethics, and dialogue.

As Director, I will ensure that **CESAER** provides a trusted and neutral platform for its members to navigate these challenges collectively. This includes:

- Developing shared principles and guidance for responsible dual-use research, aligned with academic freedom and institutional autonomy.
- Facilitating peer exchange on best practices in risk assessment, export control compliance, and ethical review processes.
- Engaging with European institutions to shape coherent policies that support innovation while safeguarding democratic values and human rights.
- Promoting transparency and trust in science by fostering open dialogue with society about the benefits and risks of emerging technologies.
- Supporting the contribution of the technical universities to Europe's **defensive preparedness**, while ensuring that research remains grounded in ethical responsibility and long-term societal benefit.

CESAER must lead in helping its members balance openness with responsibility, and innovation with integrity. By doing so, we can ensure that science and technology remain forces for good—even in the most sensitive domains. I also want to highlight my commitment to head a task force on dual use, defense and space research, independently from my application to the board of directors.

Commitment to the Role of Director

I fully embrace the responsibilities outlined in the function profile for Directors. I am committed to acting in the collective interest of the association, contributing to strategic deliberations, supporting the Presidency, and helping shape the future of **CESAER** through active participation in the Board. I will ensure institutional support from **TU Wien**, including the appointment of a policy officer to accompany and assist me in this

role. I am prepared to invest the necessary time, energy, and leadership to fulfill this mandate with integrity and purpose.

Anchoring CESAER's Vision in TU Wien's Strategic Transformation

At TU Wien, I have had the privilege of co-leading a comprehensive institutional transformation through our "fuTUre fit" strategy. Our vision - *TU Wien: Where we dare to reason. The creative urban tech university. Unlimited.* - is more than a slogan; it is a guiding principle that shapes how we think, teach, and innovate. We have translated this vision into eight strategic goals, including strengthening scientific leadership and international visibility, embedding sustainability and digital transformation, and fostering a culture of creativity, innovation, and inclusion.

I am particularly proud of how we emphasize the unity of research and teaching, the societal responsibility of science, and the importance of global partnerships. These priorities are not only deeply embedded in our institutional DNA - they also mirror **CESAER's** ambitions. They equip me with the strategic mindset, operational experience, and European perspective needed to help lead our association into a future defined by excellence, responsibility, and impact.

In conclusion, I see the role of **CESAER** Director not only as a position of governance but as a platform for collective impact. Together, we can ensure that our universities remain engines of progress, resilience, and democratic values. I would be honored to serve and lead this remarkable association into its next chapter.

With sincere respect and commitment,



Univ.Prof.Dipl.-Ing.Dr.techn Peter ERTL

Vice Rector for Research, Innovation and International Affairs

Der Rektor

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To whom it may concern

Graz, July 22nd, 2025

Letter of Support for Univ.-Prof. Dr. Peter Ertl's Candidacy as CESAER Director

Dear Members of the CESAER Board and General Assembly,

I am pleased to express my strong support for Univ.-Prof. Dr. Peter Ertl, Vice Rector at TU Wien, in his candidacy for the position of Director of CESAER.

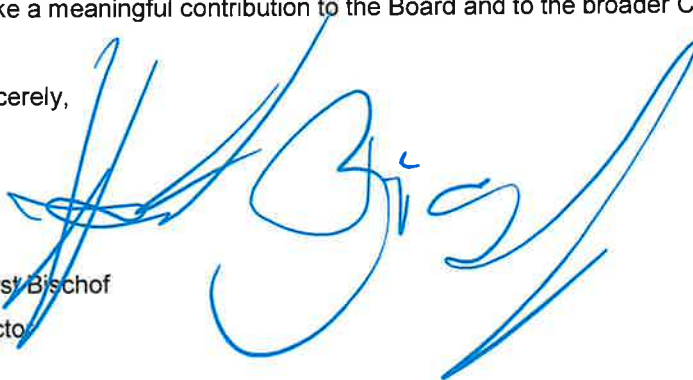
Peter Ertl brings a compelling combination of strategic vision, European engagement, and institutional leadership. His commitment to bridging science, technology, and society, as well as his focus on responsible research and academic freedom, aligns closely with CESAER's mission and future direction.

As the rector of TU Graz, a member of TU Austria and a member of the CESAER alliance, I would like to emphasize the importance of having an Austrian representation on the CESAER Board. Austria's unique geopolitical position and strong tradition of academic excellence offer valuable perspectives, particularly in areas such as research ethics, neutrality, and innovation policy.

Peter Ertl's candidacy ensures that these perspectives are well represented. We are confident that he will make a meaningful contribution to the Board and to the broader CESAER community.

Sincerely,

Horst Bischof
Rector



unite!

University Network for Innovation,
Technology and Engineering

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Allianz der
Technischen Universitäten Österreichs:



Wien/Graz/Leoben, 23.7.2025

Letter of Support for Univ.-Prof. Dr. Peter Ertl's Candidacy as CESAER Director

Dear Members of the CESAER Board and General Assembly,

I am writing to offer my wholehearted endorsement of Univ.-Prof. Dr. Peter Ertl, Vice Rector at TU Wien, as a candidate for the role of Director of CESAER.

Professor Ertl exemplifies a rare blend of strategic foresight, deep-rooted European collaboration, and proven academic leadership. His dedication to integrating science and technology with societal needs, along with his advocacy for responsible research practices and the protection of academic freedom, makes him exceptionally well-suited to support and advance CESAER's objectives.

In my capacity as the official spokesperson for TU Austria—an alliance representing Austria's three premier technical universities—I would also like to highlight the significance of Austrian participation on the CESAER Board. Given Austria's distinctive geopolitical context and its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, Peter Ertl brings valuable insights on critical matters such as ethical research, neutrality, and innovation strategy.

His election would ensure that these important perspectives are effectively represented. We are confident that Professor Ertl will offer substantial contributions to the Board and enrich the wider CESAER network.

Sincerely,


Prof. Dr.-Ing. Jens Schneider
President