



University of Stuttgart
Germany

**Vice Rector for Information
Technology**

Dr. Simone Rehm

University of Stuttgart • Keplerstrasse 7 • 70174 Stuttgart • Germany

Mattias Björnmalm, PhD
Secretary General
CESAER
Kasteelpark Arenberg 1, Box 200
3001 Leuven (Belgium)

By E-Mail

contact
Keplerstrasse 7
70174 Stuttgart • Germany
T +49 711 685-82550
F +49 711 685-72550
e-mail:
cio@uni-stuttgart.de
www.uni-stuttgart.de

29.08.2025

Motivation Letter

Dear Mattias, dear Delegates of the CESAER General Assembly,

I am applying for a seat on CESAER's Board of Directors with the strong support of TU9, the Alliance of Leading Technical Universities in Germany. My mission, if elected, will be to strengthen CESAER as a driving force in European research policy, connecting bottom-up expertise with top-level decision-making. I am motivated by the conviction that academic freedom, open science, and digital sovereignty are essential for Europe's universities of science and technology to innovate and deliver solutions society urgently needs.

My career spans leadership roles in IT management across public and private sectors and over a decade in university governance. Since joining the University of Stuttgart in 2016, I have modernised IT and information services, driven digital transformation, and developed a participatory digital strategy that is now being implemented. I have contributed to strategic bodies such as the German Council for Scientific Information Infrastructures (RfII) and currently serve as Co-Chair of the Technical Expert Committee for Base4NFDI, a joint initiative of all discipline-specific consortia within Germany's National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI). Throughout my career, I have combined a strong service orientation with strategic foresight, building bridges between users, service providers, and policy-makers – skills I now aim to bring to CESAER to advance its 2030 vision of transformative leadership.

From my perspective, sustainability represents a particular responsibility for universities of science and technology. We must rapidly develop innovative and scalable solutions to effectively combat climate change. Political regulation and individual behavioural changes alone will not be enough; technical solutions are crucial. This leads me to three key areas of action for our universities:



1. Inspiring and attracting more students to STEM fields to secure Europe's next generation of researchers and innovators.
2. Focusing research efforts on solutions directly addressing the grand challenge of sustainability.
3. Accelerating the translation of research into real-world applications — because time is now the decisive factor.

CESAER plays an important role in this regard, as it engages its members with global challenges and translates academic expertise into concrete policy recommendations, as exemplified by the recent position paper on Artificial Intelligence (AI). The paper emphasizes that talent development must keep pace with rapid advances in AI and that AI growth should be aligned with sustainability goals, supported by targeted EU funding.

Policy positions like these are strongest when based on sound expertise and interdisciplinary collaboration. On the Board, I see my role as building and strengthening bridges between researchers, university leaders, and European decision-makers. I will leverage my TU9 and wider network to encourage experts to contribute their knowledge to CESAER's policy work, and I will highlight CESAER's strategic importance to university leaders to ensure successful implementation at the institutional level.

The Task Forces are CESAER's think tanks, where member universities exchange experiences, identify common challenges, and co-create strategic impulses influencing policy. In my role as Co-Chair of the Task Force Openness in Science and Technology, I consider three issues especially urgent and look forward to addressing them strategically in collaboration with CESAER:

- **Defending academic freedom** — supporting institutional autonomy against political shifts.
- **Upholding open science** — ensuring research quality and credibility while respecting legal and ethical constraints.
- **Achieving digital sovereignty** — enabling universities to remain independent and innovative with EU support.

With my background in digitalization and information technologies, I am highly motivated to contribute to CESAER and its members in creating a sustainable, open, and sovereign digital future for Europe's science and technology sector. It would therefore be an honor for me to serve on the Board of Directors.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Simone Rehm".

Dr. Simone Rehm