

CESAER Secretariate  
Mattias Björnmalm

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST:****CESAER BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2026 - 2029, TORIL A. NAGELHUS HERNES**

I hereby express my interest in serving on the CESAER Board of Directors for a second term, 2026-2029. Since I have been a member of the Board, (2023-2025) as well as co-chairing the task force innovation (2020-2025), I have experienced a progress in the activities, the visibility and the impact of CESAER, which is in accordance with my vision for the organisation. During this period, I have also experienced open and inclusive discussions in the board about important matters, sharing of knowledge, competence and opinions, resulting in an external voice of CESAER that is in agreement with my values. These are important reasons why I would like to continue to actively contribute to the CESAER community through a second term on the Board of Directors.

My vision is that CESAER, in accordance with its members wishes and requirements, continues to manifest and develop its position as a strong and important voice in Europe that makes a difference, and that CESAER is heard and listened to by European policy makers.

Vision for CESAER's future:

It is of particular significance that CESAER continues tirelessly to support and safeguard sustainable European funding for research, innovation and higher education, and of utmost importance that CESAER continues to be an advocate for the special role and contribution of universities of science and technology to the benefit of Europe. The importance of research and technology for securing European competitiveness was firmly established by the Draghi-report and emphasised by President Ursula von der Leyen when presenting the proposal for the future EU research and innovation programme.

In the European landscape of universities and knowledge alliances, the special role of engineering and technology universities must hence be clearly articulated and expressed. My vision for CESAER is for the organization to continue to take responsibility for displaying both the member institutions' excellence, distinctiveness and importance. The CESAER Strategy 2030 "Leading transformation across science, technology and society" is fully in accordance with my own vision for the organisation, including the level of ambition and how to achieve the goals. In my experience, the governmental structure is working well, including the task force organization and responsibilities.

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My contribution if elected:

I am motivated and will be dedicated to contribute to making CESAER even more influential and visible in European research, innovation and higher education policies in the years to come.

I will contribute to the implementation of CESAER's ambitions and strategy based on a strong interest and commitment to a range of long-term engagement in research, innovation and higher education policies.

I have through high visibility, clarity and as a point of reference substantial experience in successfully influencing national and international policies. At European level, I have been invited to numerous events to comment on and give input to the development of the European research and innovation area. I have systematically taken the opportunity to answer to European Commission consultation and initiated and developed position documents and addresses.

I have through my engagement acquired substantial knowledge and competence about European policies and programmes for higher education, research and innovation, which is also the reason why I have been asked to contribute with input in European discussions in European and international conferences.

I would like to acknowledge that this engagement has been strengthened by the years of my involvement in CESAER, both on the Board of Directors, in the CESAER Task force innovation, as well as through the role as Chair of the European University Association expert group on innovation and innovation ecosystems. I believe that I have a solid platform of knowledge and understanding as well as networks in European knowledge policies that I would like to build on to the benefit of CESAER in a second period on the Board of Directors.

I would also like to emphasise that I have taken great pleasure in working closely with the highly competent and inspiring colleagues in the CESAER Board of Directors and the CESAER secretariate. This is a cooperation and a dialog that I would very much like to continue and further strengthen in a second Board period, as well as in the task force innovation.

I am also committed to the further development of the CESAER community by putting emphasis on experience and knowledge sharing and stimulate discussions and debates among the members about excellence in higher education, research and innovation, and the role and strategies of universities of science and technology.

Advancing reflection and understanding of the role of science and technology in a sustainable future and a societal development firmly founded on research and knowledge is imperative, including CESAER universities' impact as significant providers of knowledge of major scientific, economic, social and societal impact.

Special interest and competence areas:

I have a particularly strong interest, knowledge and experience in addressing the whole value chain of knowledge, from fundamental research to innovation, building close collaboration with both the private and public sector, and putting research results and new technology to use in society to strengthen European competitiveness and impact. This is a topic of major interest for the CESAER members, especially in relation to the next European framework programme and the Competitiveness fund.

Another topic close to my heart central to the CESAER community is talent development, education and training, both of the current and next generation of European citizens emphasizing new types of skillsets and mindsets in an area of rapid technological development and new ways of using technology. Europe needs in particular to educate the next generation of tech talents and future entrepreneurs and innovators. I am Pro-Rector of Research and Innovation at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU, the period in office being 2025 – 2029. I also have longstanding experience as a university leader from my role as Pro-Rector of Innovation (8 years), Head of Department, as well as extensive knowledge from my own active research career as a professor in leading national and European research and innovation projects.. My experience includes both strategic structural perspectives on overall program structures as well as how to organize intellectual property acts, facilitating increased commercialisation from academic research.

NTNU is one of the largest universities in Europe covering about 43.500 students and 9.000 employees. NTNU has a main and national responsibility for technology research, innovation and higher education, NTNU educates 80 % and Master of Technology and 90 % of Ph.D.s in technology in Norway.

NTNU has for many years been heavily engaged in European research, innovation and higher education policies and collaboration with a large project portfolio in the framework programmes for research, innovation and education, and active engagement in giving policy advice and input to the European commission. This is part of my responsibility as Pro-Rector for Research and Innovation. NTNU has an office in Brussel, is a member in the Nordic5Tech Alliance and in the University Alliance ENHANCE.

I would also like to emphasize Norway's geographical position, Norway plays an important role in the geopolitical landscape among the Nordic countries, in Europa as well as in artic and polar areas which might be important and relevant for CESAER. I have already taken commitment and responsibility to host several task force meetings (Task force innovation, Task force learning and teaching), at NTNU and I am also delighted to host upcoming CAMs if that is of interest for CESAER (see earlier expression of interest for CAM 2028 attached).

We stand at a crossroad in European knowledge politics where the role of universities and especially universities of science and technology must be even stronger and clearer expressed, with CESAER as the key actor.

The development in the world and the geopolitical landscape, means that the European research, innovation and higher education area becomes more important and significant than ever. At the same time, finding ways to sustain a global knowledge system and continue international collaboration also with countries and academic environments outside of Europe becomes important. Challenges in international cooperation is a matter of special concern for universities of technology, and CESAER should actively contribute to the debate and the solutions.

Academic freedom, academic values, research integrity and autonomy are at risk in many parts of the world. CESAER must hold these values high and use our opportunity to support an open knowledge system based on peace and prosperity, human rights, democracy, evidence-based policy making and the free circulation of knowledge.

Based on these values and interests, I hope my expression of interest to join the Board of Directors of CESAER in the coming period will be considered and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Toril A. Nagelhus Hernes, sign

Attachments:

- 1) Recommendation from Rector of NTNU, Tor Grande
- 2) Recommendation from The National Rectors' Conference of Norway
- 3) Recommendation from TU Berlin
- 4) Expression of interest to host CAM 2028
- 5) CV, Toril Nagelhus Hernes

To CESAER  
Director General Mattias Björnmalm

## Expressions of interest from NTNU to host the CESAER Annual Meeting in 2028

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU, would like to express interest in hosting the CESAER Annual Meeting in 2028 (CAM 28).

The current call for expression of interest to host the CESAER annual meeting with deadline 20 May 2025 is for CAM 2026 and CAM 2027. Still, we would like to take the opportunity to already now express interest in hosting CAM 2028. We are of course prepared to submit a full expression of interest in due course.

The reason 2028 would be an excellent time for NTNU host CAM, is that NTNU's new campus, as well as the Norwegian Ocean Technology Centre will be opened during 2028, offering opportunities for interesting site visits, as well as themes for discussion, including innovative learning environments, state of the art research infrastructures and innovation ecosystems.

As 2028 is still some years away, the topic for CAM will have to be further explored. However, 2028 is the first year of the next European framework programmes for higher education and research and innovation, or if one or both the framework programmes are not continued, the first year of the new structures for higher education, research and innovation in the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework starting in 2028.

A timely topic for CAM 2028 could be approaches towards higher European higher education, research and innovation in the new funding period, new structures and new realities, with a focus on collaborative research and innovation, across sectors, within Europe and between Europe and the rest of the world, cooperation building on both openness and responsibility, and emphasizing democratic and academic values and practices.

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NTNU has excellent premises for both the CAM reception, conference dinner and auditoriums and meeting room of different sizes with state of the art technical equipment, networking areas and cafeterias for lunches and coffee breaks. We also have experienced employees that will be committed to supporting both the development of the programme for the annual meeting, as well as the communication and technical sides of the meeting.

There are in total 13 direct flights to Trondheim from European cities, including from Amsterdam, Copenhagen, London, Berlin and Helsinki. From Trondheim Airport Værnes it is a 30 minute bus or train journey to the city centre leaving from right outside the arrival hall.

Trondheim is a university city with NTNU employees and students amounting to approximately 20 % of the population. Everything is within walking distance in Trondheim. The university main Campus at Gløshaugen is a 10 - 15 minute walk from the city centre with a wide spectrum of suitable hotels for CAM participants.

We would also like to offer a social programme for participants, including the vibrant music stage in Trondheim, as well as culinary and cultural experiences.

We would be delighted to receive the CESAER community at NTNU in Trondheim in the autumn 2028.

Your Sincerely,



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Toril Hernes

Pro-Rector for Research and Innovation



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Tor Grande

Rector