Beyond cooperation: European networks and University Alliances and the future of academic values. How European University Alliances can reinforce the Magna Charta values?

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Background

- The European Universities initiative and the networks of universities have become **the most ambitious policy developments** within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
- The MCU and the work of the MCO continue to provide **the ethical and normative foundation upon which European universities have built** their identity.
- The principles of ***institutional autonomy, academic freedom, integrity, social responsibility, and international cooperation*** remain essential in responding to today's geopolitical, technological, environmental, and societal challenges.

Background

- As European University Alliances and the networks of universities mature and move from project-based collaboration towards sustainable institutional transformation, questions emerge regarding **how these alliances embody, protect, and promote the fundamental values of higher education?**
- The discussion is particularly timely in the context of **ongoing debates on the European Degree, quality assurance, transnational governance, inclusion, democracy, and** universities' contribution to resilient societies.

Background ... added value

For the first time, this panel should **position the European University Alliances, networks of universities and the MCO not as separate initiatives, but as complementary forces shaping the future of European higher education** through shared academic values

Purpose

This panel will explore **the relationship between the operational transformation driven by the European Universities initiative, networks of universities and the values framework** promoted by the MCO.

It will examine **how alliances, and networks can become laboratories for values-based innovation** while reinforcing the foundational principles that have long defined European higher education.

Objectives

- explore **how European University Alliances, and networks of universities operationalize the principles of the MCU** in their governance, education, research, and societal engagement;
- discuss **the role of academic freedom, institutional autonomy, integrity, and democratic governance** in the development of **transnational university cooperation**;
- reflect on **how shared values can support the long-term sustainability and global attractiveness** of European higher education.

Expected outcomes

- **foster dialogue** between representatives of European University Alliances, network of universities the MCO, policymakers, and higher education organizations;
- **identify good practices** in embedding fundamental academic values within alliance governance and activities;
- **formulate recommendations** for strengthening cooperation between European initiatives promoting institutional transformation and those safeguarding university values;
- **contribute to the broader debate on the future architecture of the EHEA** and the role of universities as autonomous, responsible, and globally engaged institutions.

Guiding questions

- *How do European University Alliances and network of universities translate the principles of the Magna Charta into everyday institutional practice?*
- *What governance models best protect academic freedom and institutional autonomy within transnational alliances?*
- *Can the European Universities initiative and network of universities becomes catalysts for strengthening the values underpinning the EHEA ?*

Guiding questions

- *How should universities balance innovation, competitiveness, and societal impact with their fundamental academic mission?*
- *What role can the MCO play in supporting alliances as they evolve into permanent forms of European cooperation?*
- *How can universities jointly respond to emerging challenges - including AI, geopolitical instability, sustainability, and threats to democratic values - while remaining anchored in the principles of the Magna Charta?*

Instead of conclusions

European University Alliances and networks of universities are transforming how universities collaborate. The Magna Charta reminds us why they collaborate.

Th panel will strongly affirm that Europe's university alliances can ensure that innovation, integration and institutional transformation remain firmly anchored in the fundamental values that define higher education reflecting on the ongoing question ...

"Can Europe build a University of the Future, an Alliance or a network without compromising the values that have defined universities for almost a thousand years?"