

Press release

Paris, March 11th 2019

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European Universities: « European University of Sustainable Animal Science » -EUSAS-, « One Health in the sustainable livestock systems of tomorrow »

Agreenium and 5 European Universities, together with 18 partners from the public and private sectors in Europe and beyond, submitted the project "European University of Sustainable Animal Science" - EUSAS -, in response to the call published by the European Commission on October 24th, to select alliances of European universities.

The alliance was formed by internationally top-ranked institutions in veterinary and agricultural sciences. Coordinated by Agreenium, it includes the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), the Wageningen University (WUR), the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), the Free University of Bolzano (Unibz) and the University of Life Sciences and Technologies of Latvia (LLU). The project aims to found a European university centered around the topic of "Sustainable Animal Science", with a focus on PhD education in close coordination with masters and bachelor levels and specialised training of residents.

An initiative deeply rooted on the « One Health » concept

The long term ambition is the creation of the « European University of Sustainable Animal Science » (EUSAS). This University will be created after exploring, in the 2019-2022 EU project, all the requirements needed for its full establishment. Ultimately, EUSAS will deliver a European PhD diploma and will constitute an excellence network for the formation of specialised engineers, animal scientists, veterinarians, physicians, etc. who will lead to the necessary changes in the livestock systems in our changing world.

This initiative is deeply rooted on the One Health concept: 2/3 of human emerging infectious diseases are of animal origin, and protection of human health needs an adequate management of livestock systems to maximize the health status of animals with the aim of reducing the risks of disease transmission to human populations and of development of antimicrobial resistances.

Digital resources for communications and specific digital tools for dissemination (MOOCs, on-line courses, social networks) will be designed. Links with existing and future EU projects and/or platforms (GenTORE, iSAGE, Feed-a-Gene, SAPHIR, ROADMAP, SMARTER, SuSan, SmartCow, AquaExcel2020) will be developed.

The EUSAS network will actively work to reduce the risk of antimicrobial resistance development and spreading and to limit disease transmission to animals and humans in Europe through the One Health approach and will provide European populations with safe, high-quality animal products obtained in satisfactory conditions and sold at affordable prices, while preserving ecosystems and biodiversity.

A multidisciplinary approach and joint procedures

The skills of the high-level EUSAS professionals will be very broad in order to renew the approaches for proposing innovative solutions fitting with the One Health concept.

Based on a multidisciplinary approach, EUSAS will gather together Agreenium and 5 universities as full partners, 18 associated partners, other European and non-European universities (China, USA, Canada, South Africa), international research and non-governmental organizations, private companies and other stakeholders.

EUSAS will be strongly linked to the existing Erasmus Mundus, Erasmus, and national MSc programmes in the field.

Joint procedures will be developed for coordinating the selection of PhD projects and candidates, the supervision of PhD projects and the geographical mobility of Doctoral scientists, the implementation of individual training plans as well as the criteria definition for submitting and evaluating PhD manuscripts.

The selection of the EUSAS project will mainly fund student and teacher exchanges, mobility and differences in purchasing power between countries, the reception of PhD students in laboratories and the common work necessary for the creation of a common European diploma.

A call to strengthen the European identity

This call with a budget of 60M€ was open to applications until February 28, 2019 for implementation at the end of 2019. Bringing together "at least three higher education institutions from three countries", alliances will aim to promote and strengthen the European identity, cultural exchanges, language skills, and to stimulate excellence and improve the competitiveness of European higher education institutions. The initiative follows the draft constitution of European Universities as

developed in the speech of the French President of the Republic at the Sorbonne in September 2017. The EUSAS project is one of 54 alliance projects submitted to the European Commission call, involving 300 institutions from 31 European countries. The Commission will select 12 projects for funding this summer.

Agreenium, the French Agricultural, Veterinary and Forestry Institute gathers 18 members including 4 research bodies (INRA, CIRAD, ANSES, IRSTEA) and 14 higher education institutions (agronomic, veterinary, environmental and landscape schools). In the EUSAS project, INRA, CIRAD, ONIRIS Nantes, ENV Toulouse, VetAgro Sup Lyon, ENV Alfort, AgroParisTech, Montpellier SupAgro, Agrocampus Ouest Rennes, Toulouse INP-Ensai, AgroSup Dijon, Bordeaux Sciences Agro and ENSAIA Nancy are particularly involved.

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