

EURECA-PRO alliance gathers in Nancy to shape the future of a sustainable, competitive, and European Higher Education

From 12 to 16 May, the European University alliance EURECA-PRO held its annual Review Week at Université de Lorraine in Nancy, France. The event brought together more than 150 participants—students, academics, institutional leaders, and external stakeholders—from nine partner universities across Europe to reflect on 18 months of progress and steer the alliance towards its strategic goals.

Nancy, 19.05.2025

Set against the backdrop of evolving European research and innovation priorities, this year's Review Week explored how higher education institutions can play a key role in advancing sustainable competitiveness, a central theme under the heading: **“Contributing to transitions towards a sustainable, competitive, and European future.”**

The event began with an Inaugural Session, featuring two keynote speeches on sustainable competitiveness by **Janez Potočnik** (economist and former European Commissioner) and **Sébastien Treyer** (Executive Director of the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, IDDRI), followed by a high-level European panel exploring the concept at global, continental, and regional levels. The panel featured distinguished guests such as **Adel ElGammal** (General Secretary of the European Energy Research Alliance, EERA), **Aurélien Genty** (Joint Research Centre of the European Commission), **Sébastien Treyer** (Director of the Institut du Développement Durable et des Relations Internationales in Brussels), **Christophe Yvetot** (UNIDO Representative to the European Union), and **Anaïs Voy-Gillis** (Chief Strategy and CSR Officer at Humens and Associate Researcher at Université de Poitiers). These opening reflections set the tone for an engaging and impactful week.

Reflecting on the significance of the gathering and the broader role of the alliance, **Hélène Boulanger, president of Université Lorraine**, emphasised the importance of international collaboration in today's challenging times:

“We were very proud to host the Review Week in Lorraine, the land of Robert Schuman, the father of Europe, for the first time. In light of the repeated attacks on our democracies, universities, and science, the work we carry out in international alliances such as EURECA-PRO is more important than ever, as it enables us to build a better future together.”

The programme continued with thematic workshops, offering a space for cross-cutting dialogue and reflection. Participants considered how EURECA-PRO can enhance its systemic innovation capacity, identify and bridge key competence gaps, and increase its territorial impact by engaging more directly with local ecosystems.

Mid-week, attention turned to the alliance's flagship-oriented transversal sessions, which supported the development of EURECA-PRO's strategic roadmap. Participants collaborated across three thematic areas: Carbon & Hydrogen Synergies, Sustainable Exploitation of Natural Resources, and Humanities & Transitions. Each session combined an inspiring keynote, a panel discussion, and practical workshops. These collective contributions will inform flagship roadmaps for joint research, educational programmes, and citizen science initiatives.

The Review Week also included internal meetings of the alliance's governance bodies, including the Board of Rectors, Executive Board, Work Packages, and Task Forces. These meetings provided an opportunity to share progress, validate joint programme agreements, support the emergence of academic communities, and align the alliance's communication strategies. A major milestone was achieved during the week as the rectors of the nine partner universities signed a Declaration of Intent to form a legal entity, solidifying the alliance's commitment to unified governance, a shared strategy, and deeper collaboration across borders.

Vanessa Massegg, EURECA-PRO project lead from Montanuniversität Leoben, highlighted the deeper significance of the gathering and its role in advancing the alliance:

"This week was not just a checkpoint in our project—it was a mirror for our mission and a compass for our future. It reminded us that while strategies shape plans, it is shared purpose that shapes progress."

About EURECA-PRO

EURECA-PRO was founded in 2020, inspired by French President Emmanuel Macron's initiative three years earlier. With its core focus on "Sustainable Consumption and Production," EURECA-PRO is dedicated to the 12th of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, the alliance brings people from across Europe closer together. For example, joint study programmes have already been developed, allowing students to seamlessly switch between two or more EURECA-PRO universities through integrated semesters abroad.