
EBU POSITION PAPER

Who is EBU?

The **European Bioeconomy University (EBU)** was founded as an alliance of six partner universities on July 3, 2019 in Brussels. The six partners are: AgroParisTech (Paris Institute of Technology for Life, Food and Environmental Sciences), Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) in Vienna, University of Hohenheim in Stuttgart, Wageningen University and Research, University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu.

The aim of **EBU** is to strengthen the capacity and competitiveness of bioeconomy research, education and innovation through co-operation of the involved universities and their collaborators and to build up a creative hub for the development, promotion and implementation of the bioeconomy across Europe. More information can be found on the website: <https://bioeconomyalliance.eu/>.

Context and needs

Anthropogenic climate change challenges the future of humankind. As one of the most developed regions on this planet, the

European Union has an outstanding responsibility to contribute to a solution. This is accompanied by several other challenges concerning biodiversity, ecosystems and natural resources. At the same time, regional, social and economic imbalances are spurring on disintegrating forces that endanger the cohesion of the European Union and its ability to act. This is happening in an environment where growing global competition with Asia and North America is putting strong pressure on the EU.

An inclusive, resilient and competitive bioeconomy is a powerful instrument to support the EU's climate goals and to create a better, fairer and peaceful future in an integrated European Union, while also contributing to preserve ecosystems and natural resources: (i) its rich technological opportunities will generate prolific social and economic dynamics; (ii) it will contribute to reduce income imbalances between urban and rural areas and finally will boost the development of European regions and political integration in Europe as a whole; (iii) furthermore, convincing sustainable

Contact:

ebu@ua.uni-hohenheim.de | +49 (0) 711 459 246 11

solutions will strengthen the global competitiveness of the European Union.

Innovation and education are pivotal in the achievement of a European Bioeconomy meeting these high social expectations. To this end, the European Union needs an intellectually strong and responsible partner representing the academic bioeconomy community as well as a unique and innovative think tank to achieve the goals of mitigating climate change, sustainable development and strengthen European cohesion, through research, education and innovation.

EBU positioning and ambition

The **EBU** plays an essential role in the implementation of the bioeconomy strategies at European, national, regional and local level: to create critical mass by exploiting relevant knowledge and to use synergies from the cross-fertilization of different bioeconomy disciplines ranging from natural sciences to engineering as well as social sciences and humanities.

The **EBU** contributes to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and supports the implementation of the European Green Deal by untapping the potential of bioeconomy in Europe and globally. **EBU** promotes the integration of

education, research, innovation and public engagement to boost the efficient use of resources, thus fostering the full deployment of a clean, circular bio-economy able to revert biodiversity loss and cut pollution within a Healthy Planet model.

EBU is Europe's leading knowledge institution capable to connect the exploitation of the economic potential of bio-based resources with the needs and wants for a future-oriented and sustainable European society aiming at protecting and safeguarding the natural environment and biodiversity. The **EBU** covers the entire spectrum of the bioeconomy and provides an internationally unique and competitive model. It focuses on inter- and transdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, regional, European and international collaboration in education, research and innovation to guarantee the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN. **EBU** addresses competitiveness, growth and renewal of our industries as well as the necessary changes in consumption patterns and consumer behaviour while acknowledging the heterogeneity of European regions. The exploitation of the varied knowledge bases of European regions and the creative exploration of the learning potentials is the founding idea of the **EBU**.

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EBU leverages the rich opportunities with EU programmes and acts as a multiplier of public investment required to overcome critical thresholds and to spur eventually a self-organized systemic change. **EBU** will answer scientific and applied questions and cover the educational needs on all levels of modern societies: production, consumption and policy-making.

For this purpose, **EBU** is addressing all relevant disciplines and technologies composing the European bioeconomy, with the aim of emphasizing and exploring complementarities among the bio-based, the circular and the sharing economy with digitalization, AI and robotics to replace products based on non-renewable materials and to induce behavioral changes and technological as well as social innovation. The impact of the EBU is not confined to its partner countries: the EBU is open and cooperative and each alliance university brings with it a strong network of research and education institutions, companies and NGOs to work with on local, regional, national and global level. Such a broad and multidisciplinary approach is unique and can drive a broad deployment of territorial bioeconomy with an international scope.

To sum up, EBU is the driver for solutions to present and future societal challenges:

- ✓ Scientific excellence of six leading universities covering all dimensions of the bioeconomy
- ✓ Fostering the rapid transition towards a sustainable and circular bioeconomy through innovative approaches of education, research and technology transfer
- ✓ Ensuring a holistic approach by integrating all sectors and systems of the bioeconomy
- ✓ Supporting decision-making, policies and strategy processes on bioeconomy
- ✓ Engaging stakeholders and citizens in the bioeconomy, empowering them to make informed and more sustainable choices and integrating priorities of civil society into bioeconomy research agendas
- ✓ Promoting the deployment of the bioeconomy in all European regions
- ✓ Being a flagship for the European bioeconomy on the global level