

SEAMK strengthens European collaboration through HEROES membership

12.9.2025

What are European University Alliances?

The European Universities alliances are part of a flagship initiative of the European strategy for higher education. It is seen that they have a key role in developing and promoting the quality, attractiveness and international competitiveness of European higher education now and in the future. The partner universities of the alliance engage in close and ambitious cooperation to build top-level higher education and research collaboration in the framework of strategic-level cooperation of the alliance partners (European Commission, n.d.).

The partners in the alliances are working together to find new ways of long-term, structural, sustainable, and systematic cooperation in the fields of education, research, and innovation. In alliance collaboration, specific objectives often include a creation of European university campus with built-in physical, blended and virtual mobility of students and staff members, high-quality and multidisciplinary jointly delivered study offerings and joint programmes that utilize innovative pedagogy as well as building new connections with research and innovation (Opetushallitus, n.d.).

At present, there are 65 European Universities alliances in operation (European Commission, n.d.). They comprise more than 570 higher education institutions from all over Europe.

HEROES European University Alliance and SEAMK

SEAMK is a proud member of HEROES European University Alliance since January 2025. The alliance's name, HEROES, has a meaning that comes from the alliance's purpose: Higher Education for Resilience-Oriented and Empowered Societies (HEROES European University Alliance, n.d.). At the core of the alliance there are nine higher education institutions from nine different countries: Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Portugal, Sweden, Germany, and the Czech Republic, as shown on the map. In addition to these, the alliance has associated partner universities in Albania, Kosovo, Greece, France, and Ukraine. The alliance also has more than 50 regional associate partners and is supported by various international organizations, as well as universities in Ghana and Kenya as representatives of the global dimension. HEROES is an ecosystem of 120 000 students and 14 000 staff members which makes it a huge international collaboration and opportunities platform and remarkable tool for developing different aspects of higher education, research and regional collaboration in a European and international setting.





HEROES Flagships

HEROES collaboration is based on three flagship areas (HEROES European University Alliance, n.d.). The flagship area, EDUCATION4HEROES, means building joint educational offerings in alliance collaboration, ranging from courses and study modules to double and joint degrees. The joint offerings will cover both bachelor and master level education, but also some elements of doctoral educational offerings. For SEAMK students and staff members, EDUCATION4HEROES means many new opportunities for international

cooperation, experiences and learning – various combinations of international elements to be included in their studies or work and making them more ready for the future working environment in more and more globalized world.

The flagship area of HEROES4REGIONS focuses on joint HEROES research and development activities (R&D) as well as the development of regional cooperation between education and businesses (HEROES European University Alliance, n.d.). One aim is also to promote tight links between education and R& D activities. These actions aim at the development of innovations to promote regional development and innovative teaching methods. Boosting regional development and resilience across the regions of HEROES partners in alliance collaboration is a strong objective in HEROES4REGIONS. For a company or organisation being a member in HEROES ecosystem is an opportunity to gain international collaboration.

The goal of the HEROES4EVER flagship is to provide flexible learning opportunities and a wide range of learning pathways in order to promote and support continuous learning (HEROES European University Alliance, n.d.). This facilitates new international learning opportunities also for those who are already in working life.

As a summary, it can be seen that HEROES Alliance offers to SEAMK and its partners an excellent opportunity to learn from each other's best practices and use this as a tool to further develop their operations in a strong European collaboration. This benefits students, staff members and associated partners in many ways. It facilitates more and different learning and mobility opportunities for students and those who are already in working life, new international collaboration opportunities for teachers and other staff members, innovated research and development possibilities for the HEIs and their regions – just to mentioned some. HEROES ecosystem is not just only the higher education institutions involved but also the international and local stakeholders and regions around the partner institutions. As part of the ecosystem are seen good and effective regional business and organizational cooperation, high-quality alumni activities, and the commitment of the HEROES community to environmental awareness, EU values, and inclusion, as well as encouraging practical grassroots actions that increase resilience.

HEROES is a European Union co-funded project

Marjo Arola
Manager of International Education Services
SEAMK

Saija Råtts
Senior Lecturer
SEAMK

Sources

European Commission. (n.d.). *European Universities Initiative*. EU Education and Training. https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/european-universities-initiative

Finnish National Agency for Education. (n.d.). European Universities. https://www.oph.fi/en/programmes/european-universities

HEROES European University Alliance. (n.d.). *HEROES – Higher Education Roaming for European Sustainability*. https://www.heroesuniversity.eu/

Opetushallitus. (n.d.). *Eurooppalaiset yliopistot*. https://www.oph.fi/fi/ohjelmat/eurooppalaiset-yliopistot