

University Council
Via university.council@eur.nl

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Subject
Response to the UC advice on the
Convergence framework agreement

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Dear members of the University Council,

On 15 March 2021 the Executive Board received your formal advice on the Convergence framework agreement, intended to be signed by EUR, TU Delft and Erasmus MC. First of all, we wish to convey our thanks to you, as your advice shows commitment to the intended cooperation and to the success of Convergence as a whole. With this letter we formally respond to your advice and inform you about the way we are moving forward in this process.

Proposed articles considering participation

The University Council proposed some changes in the articles 3.8 and 3.9 of the agreement, considering the rights of and flow of information towards the different participatory bodies. On top of that, the University Council proposed a larger addendum, considering cooperation between the different participatory bodies.

As the intended cooperation is just that – a cooperation – all parties involved have underlined their wish not to establish an overarching decision-making body. All decision will always be made within a single institution (EUR, TU Delft and/or EMC) by the relevant and competent governing bodies. As such, that also provides for a clear framework when it comes to the involvement of participation: participation is established through the legal and respective institutional frameworks. The suggested linkage among the participatory bodies (to the extent that all bodies would have similar 'rights' on proposed decision) not only foregoes the principle of cooperation among autonomous institutions with their own governance, it would also involve changing the relevant respective participatory rules

and regulations. Following this analysis, the Executive Board will not propose a change in article 3.8 as suggested by the University Council.

Regarding article 3.9, the University Council advised to explicitly mention a proactive flow of information towards the participatory bodies *by the Convergence Executive Board*. As this would break with the principle that all institutions remain autonomous, with their own governance and thus with their own conversations between board and participation, this suggestion would give the Convergence Executive Board a standing it does not have. Of course, we as Executive Board are more than willing to hereby confirm that we will proactively inform you on all relevant matters concerning Convergence, needed for you to perform your participatory tasks. We trust you agree with us that this commitment need not be mentioned in the framework agreement.

With respect to the suggested addendum, printed on pages 3 and 4 of your advice, the Executive Board welcomes any form of cooperation between the participatory bodies of EUR, TU Delft and EMC. However, as there are three parties involved (and at least as many participatory bodies), this is not something for one party to decide. Moreover, the suggested changes to the framework agreement are extensive and would require a new round of decision making and as such of course also participation. The Executive Board would propose that the participatory bodies together first come up with a joint intention of working together, before laying down any articles on the matter. On that note, deliberation among the participatory bodies is of course always possible, and need not necessarily be written down. However, if all participatory bodies would request an agreement (or addendum on existing agreements), that of course would be possible. Such an agreement can be met amongst the participatory bodies themselves. If and when you feel the Executive Board (and its counterparts in the other institutions) should be part of such an agreement, we are looking forward to that joint intention of the participatory bodies involved.

Stakeholder involvement

The University Council also advised us on the way in which to involve stakeholders, also mentioned as the community of student, employees, and patients. The University Council asked for a more detailed description in article 4.2.

As we are at the start of the Convergence cooperation, it is also realistic to say that there is no telling in what *specific* ways our community of students, staff and patients will be effected by and as such should be involved in Convergence. What is important is that our intention to act only in the interest of our institutional and societal communities is clear. We feel very much supported in that intention by the talks we have had with the University Council on this topic so far, and again by the advice of the University Council in this matter. We feel it is not possible at this point to have the framework agreement elaborate in more detail about the involvement of students, staff and patients, and as such will not propose any changes to article 4.2. We would, however, like to state again our intention to let Convergence become a truly jointly built cooperation, working for the benefit of every member in our community. We will take your suggestions on the importance of storytelling to heart.

We hope to have duly informed you. The latest version of the framework agreement is attached to this letter. Signing of this version is scheduled for May at the latest. Of course, the University Council will receive copy of the signed documents.

Your sincerely,

The Executive Board of the Erasmus University Rotterdam,



Prof. dr. H. Brinksma

Chair of the Executive Board