Dear members of the Executive Board,

As University Council, we want to follow up on the past proposals regarding sustainability, namely the proposal of 6th of April 2020 (ur00038370) and parts of the proposal of 15th of March 2021 (UR/MH/38431). The UC appreciates all the efforts that already go towards sustainability in this university and as University Council, we want to encourage this even further. For instance, we highly support the declaration of climate and ecological emergency on the 6th of February 2023. We should take this declaration seriously and want to strengthen the efforts that go into sustainability. That is the reason for this proposal, which was crafted in collaboration with the Task Force Institutional Change for Sustainability (TFICS) by the Erasmus Sustainability Hub (ESH).

The University Council aims to support the goals and ambitions of the climate and ecological emergency declaration by facilitating knowledge exchange between faculties, asking critical questions, and pushing for sustainability to be a top priority of the strategic agenda.

Therefore, the Council proposes:

1. That more Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) salary resources are dedicated to the implementation of sustainability goals within a centralised Sustainability Office;

2. To facilitate critical sustainability education within every faculty;

3. To prioritise a multi-dimensional transparency campaign on collaborations, achieved goals, the Dashboard, the SDG Mapper, and the declaration;

4. A reminder of the implementation plan ensuring accountability of EUR.

FTE Commitments

In order to implement sustainability at an institutional level, the Executive Board needs to employ more resources, including money and FTEs. Failing to do so will result in not achieving the ambitions of the climate and emergency declaration.

This point was mentioned in previous demands but unfortunately rejected by the EB: "Although we endorse the need for dedicated sustainability expertise within our organisation, we choose not to create a sustainability office at this moment in time, as we do not necessarily see the added value of a separate sustainability office within EUR." (EB Response to UC Proposal ur00038370, 18/05/2020).

Notably, the UC "see[s] the same approach employed for the topic of Diversity & Inclusion at EUR" (UC Proposal UR/MH/38431, 15/03/2021).

However, this demand goes further than a Sustainability Office and the UC strongly advises to integrate a higher number of FTE Salary Resources, fully dedicated to sustainability at EUR. This should take place at both a strategic level, but also at a practical, and facility-focused level.

Critical Sustainability Education

As a structural mapping of the current sustainability efforts in educational programmes is in place, the UC proposes to extend these efforts and aims for sustainability education that is aligned with the programmes at EUR for every student. The UC supports the step to map out the current sustainability education that is already included in the courses our university offers in the Sustainability Monitor. We would like to emphasise that taking the next step–ensuring every student at EUR receives critical sustainability education–is essential. This is in line with the strategy.

To reach this goal, the EB should support deans and vice-deans to take the step towards the integration of sustainability and climate change matters in classes. We support the collaboration with the Design Impact Transitions (DIT) platform, and we see this as an example of progress. Thus, we hope to see classes aiming for knowledge and insight and provide a perspective based on action as Marieke Wal and Mariecke van der Glas proposed in June 2022 to the vice deans of education (see "Erasmus Honours Programme: Grand Challenges" as best practice).

Multi-dimensional Transparency Campaign

The education of both staff and students is part of a more extensive transparency campaign. This campaign is divided into three separate actions:

1. transparency on the methodology and data used for publications (e.g. the SDG Mapper or the Sustainability Monitor);

2. spreading information on efforts towards sustainability at EUR;
3. and involving stakeholders and their input on sustainability issues.

The UC further encourages the EB to raise awareness about these publications by communicating the documents widely via both the official channels (Osiris, myEUR, Canvas, etc.) and the unofficial, social media channels (Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, TikTok, etc.). As such, all stakeholders will be notified, and the information will be easily accessible on the official websites of EUR.

Finally, to build a transparent environment, the UC reinforces the idea to build a community concerned with sustainability and involve that community in the decision-making processes. As such, the UC supports the current continuous efforts in place by DIT together with the TFICS by ESH to engage students in dialogues with faculties.

The Implementation Plan
Lastly, the UC highlights that the EB mentions many ambitious targets in the climate and ecology emergency declaration of February 6th, 2023, which we encourage. Thus, the UC hopes that this proposal serves as a reminder that stakeholders are going to keep the EB accountable for their ambitions. Altogether the actions in place show effort, and the UC supports the EB by encouraging it to take further action.

Yours sincerely,