

LINKING RESEARCH, POLICY & PRACTICE



[EAIR Forum 2025: Exploring “Openness: A Mission Challenged”](#)

Dates: 27–29 August 2025

Location: Utrecht University, Netherlands

The European Higher Education Society (EAIR) is pleased to announce its 2025 Annual Forum, which will be hosted by Utrecht University. This year’s forum, themed “Openness: A Mission Challenged,” will bring together global leaders in higher education to examine the resilience and adaptability of universities amidst evolving global challenges.

On behalf of Mr. Panourgias Papaioannou, Communication Manager of WG2 and Board Member of EAIR, we are delighted to extend a cordial invitation to all VOICES COST Action members to join the EAIR Annual Forum. This aligns closely with our shared goal of fostering dialogue between young researchers and higher education stakeholders within the research ecosystem—both at the systemic and institutional levels.

Universities have long stood as pillars of open, democratic, fair, and sustainable societies. Their missions are deeply rooted in the principles of open science, fostering societal connections through research and nurturing students with open minds and inclusive attitudes. In an interconnected world, openness—from open borders to collaborative education systems—is vital for addressing global challenges.

However, the global landscape is shifting. Rising illiberal trends, geopolitical tensions, and heightened security concerns threaten institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and international collaboration. This growing instability risks undermining the ability of universities to fulfill their roles as foundational institutions of democratic societies.

Diverse Conference Tracks to Tackle Key Challenges

The EAIR Forum 2025 will feature six comprehensive tracks, each addressing crucial aspects of openness in higher education:

Governance & Management

Discussions will focus on safeguarding academic freedom and institutional autonomy amid global pressures. University leaders will explore strategies to defend their commitment to openness while navigating national policy shifts and political dilemmas.

Teaching & Learning

This track will examine how universities can continue fostering open educational practices, engage students in societal issues, and build resilience against misinformation and social media influence. It will also address support for teaching staff in managing sensitive classroom discussions.

Research Policy

Sessions will delve into the impact of open science on research methods, community collaboration, and research assessment. Participants will analyze how security pressures and publisher interests challenge academic integrity and how evolving recognition frameworks (DORA & CoARA) shape research careers and PhD training.

Quality Assurance

Attendees will explore how openness influences quality in research, education, and institutional performance. Innovative evaluation methods, work-life balance, diversity, and the interplay between research and teaching will be key discussion points.

Internationalization

With global openness under threat, this track will assess the future of academic mobility and cooperation. Discussions will cover evolving EU policies, national responses, and the impact on university alliances in Europe and beyond.

Digitalisation

The role of technology in advancing open education and research will be a central focus. Participants will explore topics such as learning analytics, AI integration, data security, and governance challenges in digital transformation.

Shaping the Future of Open Higher Education

As universities navigate an increasingly complex global environment, the EAIR Forum 2025 will offer a critical platform for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation. Scholars, policymakers, and higher education professionals will collectively address how to sustain and strengthen the openness that underpins academic excellence and societal progress.