

SUMMARY OF THE EVENT:

# How to steer and accelerate Europe's recovery, preparedness and resilience through European research and innovation collaborations

Digital event organised by the University Alliance **Stockholm trio** and the **Stockholm Region EU Office**, representing local and regional authorities, 8 June 2021 09.30-12.00.

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*Cross-border research and innovation collaborations will play a key role in Europe's recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*The University Alliance Stockholm trio, formed by the three most research-intensive universities in Stockholm; Karolinska Institutet, KTH Royal Institute of Technology and Stockholm University, and the local and regional authorities in the Stockholm Region have together an extensive collaboration with important actors and users in the region, as well as at national and European level.*

*During this webinar representatives from the region presented current research and innovation collaboration projects which focus on areas in line with the EU-priority to 'accelerate the twin green and digital transitions and associated transformation of our economy, industry and society' as well as Europe's recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*Thank you for taking part in our event!*

*Please, follow [this link](#) if you would like to watch the recording of the event.*



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## SUMMARY

The event was opened by **Dan Andrée**, the representative of the university alliance Stockholm trio in Brussels, who explained that the aim of the event is to stimulate contacts between our colleagues in Stockholm with you in Brussels and the whole of Europe.

The moderator for the event, **Amanda Crowfoot**, Secretary General of the European University Association (EUA), was introduced. Amanda Crowfoot pointed out that all three universities in the Stockholm trio are valuable members of the EUA.

### [Introduction speech by Anna König Jerlmyr, Mayor of Stockholm and Chair of the Stockholm Region for European Affairs](#)

Anna König Jerlmyr opened the event by welcoming the Stockholm trio to Brussels. The City of Stockholm has already strategic partnerships with all three universities of the Stockholm trio, and Anna hopes, now that both parties are present in the heart of Europe, that they can take their cooperation to the next level.

The City of Stockholm has, together with the trio, identified three prioritised areas in addressing key societal challenges, namely climate change, transport and mobility and health. Within these areas, digitalisation plays an important role as a tool for development. Through joint projects, the two parties have together developed solutions that bring added value to the citizens of Stockholm. One example is the Viable Cities initiative, where the city works closely together with KTH, focusing on accelerating the transition towards a climate neutral city. In this context, the quadruple helix cooperation between the academia, the citizens, and the public and private sector, plays a crucial role.

### [Introduction speech by Sigbritt Karlsson, President of KTH Royal Institute of Technology and Chair of Stockholm Trio](#)

*“It is our firm conviction that Stockholm trio will strengthen our international competitiveness and open the door to plenty of new opportunities and collaborations.”*

The three universities of Stockholm trio are complementary to each other and has received about € 420 million from Horizon 2020 to date. We want to be more present in Brussels to contribute to EU R&I. The cooperation between our universities and local and regional authorities in the Stockholm Region is crucial for impact in science at a European level. The hope for the event is for the participants to know more about the trio and Stockholm region and what we can achieve together.

### [Keynote speech by Jean-Eric Paquet, Director General, European Commission, DG Research and Innovation](#)

Jean-Eric Paquet, Director General, European Commission, DG Research and Innovation gave the keynote speech and welcomed the Stockholm trio to Brussels and said that he was looking forward to meeting the Presidents when they visit Brussels. He emphasised that it is very useful for the trio to be in Brussels to interact the Commission services, member states representative and the network here – ‘it is also a benefit for the EU to have you here’. He was happy to meet the mayor Anna König Jerlmyr when the climate city contract was signed in Stockholm and it manifests the important role of the Stockholm region.



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He underlined the importance of fundamental research to contribute to the recovery of the union and the development of the COVID-19 vaccine is an important proof of that and the EU has reacted swiftly with calls already underway.

Further he mentioned some new aspects in Horizon Europe, in particular the new requirements on open access of results and to have a gender equality plan. He acknowledged Sweden being in the forefront of gender equality but still you will have to present a plan so if you do not have its time to start! He also mentioned two new concepts in Horizon Europe: The partnerships and the missions. The new approach to partnerships where member states are much more committed and with fewer partnerships there will be a simplification for researchers. The real innovation is the missions. Horizon Europe is very much about R&I but missions are about producing real and concrete impact and a difference in society. It will also contribute to more coordination of national efforts – ‘we hope to have a political agreement between member states on the way forward at the end of June’.

The moderator, Amanda Crowfoot, asked if he could pinpoint any other changes in Horizon Europe compared with H2020 and Paquet said that continuity and stability are important. The European Commission will continue with simplification and one example is on personal costs. We will have [extensive information days](#) starting 28 June where you are all welcomed to learn more about the calls and procedures on how to apply he added.

Finally, Paquet also mentioned the new European Research Area Pact and the new ambition to involve stakeholders where universities are very important. Meetings have been held and will continue with e.g. EUA, LERU, the GUILD and EARTO. ERA will be taken up in during the [Research and Innovation Days](#) starting 23 June. The moderator asked about the involvement of stakeholders and Paquet emphasised that stakeholders are in a way more important than ministries - as they do not do any research!

The new hop-on-scheme was highlighted whereby a consortium can secure additional funding if institutions in widening countries join them at a second stage. With this scheme the Commission hopes that the results of projects will have greater impact in the whole of Europe.

#### [Comments by Ole Petter Ottersen, President at Karolinska Institutet](#)

Ole Petter Ottersen, President at Karolinska Institutet starts with mentioning that he wants to give Jean-Eric Paquet positive comments on what is happening in Brussels these days and on the development on the EU strategy for Research and Innovation.

He continues with saying that it is a milestone, the opening of an office in Brussels. The Stockholm trio as a major beneficiary have a responsibility to engage and contribute to the development of research and innovation strategies in Europe and that is something they want to live up to. It is extremely important for Stockholm trio and Karolinska Institutet that there now is an office in Brussels. Stockholm trio also enjoys the close collaboration with the Stockholm Region and Stockholm City.

There are three issues he brings up from Jean-Eric Paquets talk:

1. There is a need to find a balance between mission oriented and curiosity driven research, it is fundamentally important. The unsung hero of the present crisis is basic research. It has taken us to where we are today and where we want to be tomorrow. The key issue is that we must not leave the basic science behind. At least ERC is strongly supported in the time to come. Basic research has contributed to major achievements of today.



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2. We need to find a positive commutation of independency and interconnectedness. It is especially important in times of polarisation between continents and countries, how do we preserve the possibility to engage between other countries outside EU. The European Commission's communication of the global approach is of key importance. We must ensure an independence and interconnection globally and this has much to do with the principle of open science.
3. We need universal preparedness for health. Across geographical borders, socioeconomic strata (we need to think about equity) and governance levels. We must avoid working on preparedness in silos. We need to work interdisciplinary. This is a signal to balance mission oriented and curiosity driven research, here it is time for true interdisciplinary research. The complexity of preparedness and resilience is enormous and here Stockholm trio is prepared to contribute.

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## Panel presentations and discussion

### [Anna Mia Ekström, Clinical professor in global infectious disease epidemiology, Karolinska Institutet](#)

Anna Mia Ekström talked about how the pandemic strike unequally among the countries in the world. There is a large difference in COVID-19 related deaths, highly related to the proportion of older population in a country but also due to other risk factors like obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and research poor health systems. The World bank and WHO says that we are at risk to lose a decade of different developments in reducing extreme poverty. Not due to high numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases, but rather indirect effects of for example lockdowns and poor access to health care in general.

It is obvious that we cannot continue as we have. We have an urgent need for innovative solutions, cross-disciplinary implementation, and international collaboration on all levels to mitigate pandemic affects and build universal future preparedness for health. Anna Mia is very happy to see the calls in the Health Cluster in Horizon Europe and say that we, through Horizon Europe, can make a difference, which is more needed than ever.

### [Clara Hellner, Director of Research and Innovation, Region Stockholm](#)

Progress within knowledge and innovation is crucial for Europe's recovery after the pandemic, and data is, and will continue to be, key to support this. Clara Hellner, Director of Research and Innovation, Region Stockholm, introduced the Region Stockholm's work with health data and how the project *Centre for Health Data* constitutes a regional health data space. Clara explained the difficulties researchers are experiencing when it comes to accessing health data for secondary use, and how Centre for Health Data facilitates this. As a one-stop-shop, Centre for Health Data handles a large part of data and helps researchers gain access by handling the communication and practical issues with the care givers.

Clara also mentioned different development projects related to health data sharing and data access where Centre for Health Data is involved. One of the projects focuses on synthetic data, and on converting existing data sets to formats where personal identification information is excluded.



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Clara underlined that data-driven research will be at the core of the Horizon Europe and that data will be a requisite for many upcoming Horizon Europe and Digital Europe Programme calls.

[Karl Henrik Johansson, Director of Digital Futures, KTH Royal Institute of Technology](#)

Digital Futures research centre is targeting collaborative research that is focusing on shaping a sustainable society through digital transformation. It gathers more than 150 academic research groups in Stockholm that collaborate in a number of cross-disciplinary research projects. Digital Futures aims to excel in research and build community across disciplines to make scientific and societal impact. Karl Henrik mentioned some example project: *How to detect and mitigate leakages and contamination in water distribution networks* and *Operating automated vehicles for smart city transport*. He ended his presentation stating that collaboration is in the core of the centre that focuses on tackling challenges in society together with partners.

[Björn Hugosson, Chief Climate Officer, City of Stockholm Executive Office](#)

Björn started by highlighting the fact that the City of Stockholm, thanks to its climate efforts, has achieved a reduction in CO2 emissions despite an increase in population. A cornerstone of the City of Stockholm's climate work is the goal of becoming fossil free and climate positive by 2040.

During Björn's presentation, Stockholm's part in the Climate City Contract was highlighted, and how the contract is working as a tool for the green and digital transition. The contract, signed by eight mayors in Sweden, is an instrument for climate transition. By signing the contract, the cities commit to strong climate actions. To make the cooperation within the contract fruitful, the Viable Cities initiative is used as a working platform, where transitions labs allow the cities to elaborate and share experiences. Through the work with the national Climate City Contract, the City of Stockholm's aims towards becoming one of the 100 climate neutral cities by 2030.

[Ilona Riipinen, Professor of atmospheric science, Stockholm University](#)

Clouds and aerosols play an important role in Earth's radiation budget and climate response. Aerosols are also central to outdoor and indoor air quality and thereby influence health. Moreover, they play a role in airborne disease transmission. There is a crucial need for better scientific understanding and method development related to aerosols, and knowledge transfer within and between relevant communities is critical. The H2020-project FORCeS (Constrained Aerosol Forcing for Improved Climate Projections), coordinated by Stockholm University, exemplifies how improved climate projections can contribute to making better policies towards meeting the targets of the Paris agreement. Stockholm University is a European node for climate and environmental research and the University is looking forward to future collaborations at the European level.

[Magnus Frodigh, vice-president, Head of Ericsson Research](#)

Magnus stressed the importance of research and that research cooperation was instrumental in the creation of 5G. We were involved in more than 100 projects cooperation within and outside Sweden with researchers, SMEs, large enterprises and users.

At the moment we are focusing on strategies for 2030 and this will be a starting point for 6G. We are looking into a set of case examples: Internet of senses, connected intelligent machines, digitalised and programmable physical world and sustainable world. In the 6G world we will be moving in a cyber-physical continuum. This development also means that we have to cooperate in a different way. Before the focus was on development of technology but now, we also must have more vertical cooperation – e.g. smart manufacturing and also cooperating with society. The health area is very



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important for example in preventive health care and health monitoring. In this context the data driven society very important. Having said that Magnus stressed that we also need to cooperate with partners where we need to develop new technology together e.g. in AI, machine learning and security.

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Before leaving the floor to the final speaker, the moderator **Amanda Crowfoot**, said that this event really shows the importance of research and innovation in Europe's recovery, preparedness and resilience and that it is obvious that there are huge possibilities to cooperate with all partners in Stockholm.

[Concluding remarks from Astrid Söderbergh Widding, President of Stockholm University](#)  
Astrid Söderbergh Widding thanked all the speakers and panelists for their great contributions highlighting the possibilities of Horizon Europe and Stockholm's potential from a research and regional perspective. She expressed hope that the participants had received enough information and inspiration to make contacts with the trio directly or via the Brussels representation. Health and climate research are examples of how the Universities of the Stockholm trio are forming a complete academic environment, bringing in different disciplines and perspectives from medicine, technology, natural, human and social sciences. Stockholm trio has a great potential to join forces in truly interdisciplinary research and innovation of the Horizon Europe programme. The Stockholm trio is convinced that cooperation between universities in higher education is crucial for shaping a sustainable Europe for the future. Our next event is planned for the first half of October and will focus on the important area of 'European Health Data Space'.

## ABOUT STOCKHOLM TRIO AND STOCKHOLM REGION EU OFFICE

### [Stockholm trio](#)

forms a comprehensive academic university alliance of international model and entails, among other things, opportunities to develop new educational programmes, collaborate on research and research infrastructure and enter into partnerships with leading international universities. Stockholm trio is also very much engaged in policy discussions at EU-level, concerning the future of ERA and the EEA, as well as contributing to the debate on the Global approach to be presented by the Commission this spring. At national level, Stockholm trio conducts more than 30 percent of all academic research and postgraduate education in Sweden.

### [Stockholm Region EU Office](#)

serves as a representation office for the Stockholm metropolitan region and brings together local and regional authorities in the Stockholm Region Association for European Affairs, where the City of Stockholm, Region Stockholm and STORSTHLM (a non-profit organisation formed by and for Stockholm County's 26 municipalities) are founding partners. Together they are committed to contribute to the development and formation of EU policy for smart sustainable growth, including by participating in the EU research and innovation program. The Stockholm Region is today a European hub for research and innovation and the region aims to become the world's most innovation driven economy by 2025.

Please, follow [this link](#) if you would like to watch the *recording of the event*. Link to [Part I](#) and [Part II](#).



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