

Ministry of Education and Culture

Consultation on proposals to change universities' educational responsibilities

VN/26913/2021-OKM-1

The University of Vaasa is seeking the right to start education for law degrees. In the European IT industry, we strongly support the university's application and see it as important for the future of both Vaasa and the wider region.

It is exceptional that the largest ecosystem for energy and cleantech in Northern Europe is located in the Vaasa region. The ecosystem matters not only nationally, but also internationally. Strengthening the University of Vaasa and expanding law education from the current basis of economic law and public law meets the needs of this unique ecosystem and its companies. Legal expertise is increasingly needed, especially in the energy and environmental sectors as well as in respect to new technologies such as artificial intelligence. This expertise is beneficial to the whole of Finland, but from the students' point of view, providing it at the University of Vaasa, where the connection to the energy cluster is strong, offers unique opportunities.

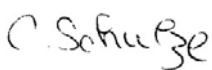
In the Vaasa region, students have extensive access to legal traineeships and jobs, both during their studies and job opportunities after completing their degree. The University has strong associations with businesses. The workplace self-sufficiency in the region is very good, up to 124.6%. Some of the most important industrial industries in Ostrobothnia are the energy industry, marine technology, food, plastics, bioproducts and boat industries. The region is characterized by strong internationality and investments in product development.

Strengthening law education brings synergies with the existing education and research at the University of Vaasa. Combining legal knowledge with business and technology education, and with administrative and communication sciences helps to answer the most pressing questions and phenomena of our time. In addition to the perspectives of the energy and environmental ecosystem, emphasis is sought on research and teaching on legal issues related to digitalisation and innovation, both of which are increasingly crucial areas for businesses and society at large. There is also a strong connection between legal and ethical issues. They often go hand in hand and can be addressed in this context as well.

Strengthening the profile of the University of Vaasa also responds to negative developments seen in the acceleration of regional differences in educational attaining levels in the 2010s. The number of young people with higher education is lower in most regions than in 2010; only in Uusimaa and Varsinais-Suomi has the number of higher education graduates increased. Such a trend poses a threat especially to international businesses.

By strengthening the University of Vaasa and giving the University the opportunity to offer law degrees, a foundation will be created for a more vibrant region. The decision will help to educate top experts with a very strong capacity to tackle the big issues of our time.

Brussels, 11/11/2021



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