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***Note from ARENA to the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences.***

After the Faculty Board meeting on December 16, 2021, ARENA was asked to provide additional information about its cooperation with other units at the faculty: «*Styret etterlyser videre ARENAs redegjørelse for hvor senteret ser muligheter for samarbeidsrelasjoner mellom senteret og øvrige enheter ved fakultetet og hvilke initiativ som eventuelt er tatt/planlegges for å utnytte mulighetsrommet som fakultetstilknytningen gir.*» This note responds to that request.

ARENA has a strong international profile and extensive collaboration with universities, think tanks and other entities outside Norway. The international collaborative networks have partly been driven by the nature of our research theme – European Studies – and by our focus on large collaborative projects within the EU-funded Horizon programs. Nevertheless, ARENA is also deeply anchored at the University of Oslo and the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Historically, most of our larger research projects have included elements of cooperation with other units at UiO, in particular at the Faculty of Social Sciences. This is the case also for ongoing and future planned projects. For example, the new and ongoing projects TIGRE, EU3D, COMPLEX, SINGLEMARKETS and ENROL all include participants with affiliations at the department of political science (ISV). Two out of three NFR-applications submitted in February 2022 included participants with affiliations at ISV (and the third with participation from OsloMet). ARENA has recently applied for projects together with participants at the department of sociology and human geography (ISS) and wish to do so again soon.

Researchers from other departments at the faculty frequently present their work at ARENA's Tuesday seminar, participate in seminars and workshops and collaborate with ARENA in organizing academic and outreach events. Several of ARENA's staff – including the Centre director and administrative staff – have shared positions with other units at the faculty or are partly on leave from positions at other departments (ISV) to work in research projects at ARENA. ARENA's Board includes representatives from ISV and TIK. All PhD students at ARENA are enrolled in the PhD programs of other departments at the faculty, often with a co-supervisor from that department. ARENA's staff regularly contribute to the supervision of Master students at the other departments. Some of these students are connected to specific projects at ARENA and given a stipend and office space at ARENA.



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ARENA runs a PhD course on differentiated European integration in cooperation with ISV and the faculty student administration. PLATO – the Horizon PhD Marie Curie Innovative Training Network (MC-ITN) led by ARENA in 2017-2021 – included close cooperation with the PhD program at the faculty. A similar cooperation is planned for the new Horizon MC-ITN network AGORA that ARENA has applied for, with a possible start in 2022. Generally, ARENA's administration is closely integrated with the faculty administration and the UiO EU Research and Innovation Office and contributes regularly with their competences, not least with regards to handling Horizon programs.

At the Faculty of Social Sciences, ARENA's ties have been closest to ISV (in particular) and ISS. ARENA is a very small unit in terms of permanent research staff and there is a limit to how many projects we are able to handle at once. However, ARENA welcomes more cooperation with other departments at the faculty and plans to take initiatives towards more cooperative projects. There are numerous examples internationally of how the broad subject of European Studies fruitfully combines elements from different social science disciplines. For example, given the central role of the Economic and Monetary Union for the European Union, there is a strong potential for more cooperative projects with researchers at the Economics department. Notably, our new project SINGLEMARKETS has a strong political economy profile (but with cooperation partners outside Norway).

As an interdisciplinary center of European studies, ARENA is well equipped to provide a platform for collaborative research projects among scholars of different disciplines at the faculty, who share an interest in European societal developments. ARENA's extensive and unique experience of leading and participating in large-scale collaborative projects within the EU Horizon Programmes is a resource in this regard that will be useful in future cooperative projects with colleagues at the faculty.

It should be noted that ARENA also has extensive and deep cooperation with other research units at the UiO and in the broader Oslo area. The ongoing projects COMPLEX, EU3D and PLURISPACE include participants with an affiliation with OsloMet. The project NORMS is a cooperation between ARENA and the Institute for Social Science (ISF). The new large interdisciplinary project ENROL, starting in 2022, is a collaboration with the Department of Public and International Law at UiO. We are also planning on cooperating more closely with both the Centre for European Law at UiO and with the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) to create a platform in Oslo for research and public debate on the theme of Europe's rule of law crisis.

Furthermore, ARENA has project applications under review for common research projects with the Oslo based Institute for Transport Economics (TØI) (on the Europeanisation of public sector (railways) reforms) and with CICERO Centre for International Climate Research (on the European Green Deal and implications for Norway).

It should be clear from this inventory of ongoing and planned projects that ARENA is deeply engaged in cooperation with scholars at the Faculty of Social Sciences and at other units within and outside the UiO. The multidisciplinary nature of our research, by definition, requires cooperation. Our base

at the Faculty of Social Sciences gives us a platform to build such cooperative research projects and to bring value to the faculty, both academically and economically.

The most important missing piece in terms of cooperation between ARENA and the faculty is the underused potential with regards to teaching. As already mentioned, ARENA contributes with supervision of PhD students and Master students, as well as to courses on the European Union at ISV, but ARENA has so far been blocked from giving additional contributions to the teaching portfolio at the faculty.

ARENA has suggested to the Faculty Board that we would be happy to develop – in cooperation with other departments at the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Law – an interdisciplinary and internationally competitive Master program in European Studies. Such a programme would most likely be highly attractive to students and fill a void in the Norwegian educational system. It would provide ARENA with some basic income independent of external funding and offer its staff teaching opportunities, which is particularly important to younger researchers who want to pursue an academic career. It would also correspond with the faculty's stated ambitions to encourage precisely such interdisciplinary educational initiatives<sup>1</sup> and the ambitions of UiO within Circle U<sup>2</sup>.

ARENA's involvement in teaching could also take other forms. ARENA could for example take responsibility for a course on the EU, as part of the portfolio of other departments at the Faculty. Generally, ARENA's staff has expressed strong interest in contributing more to the teaching at the faculty, which would have the additional benefit of further integrating ARENA with the other departments.

Finally, we believe that our ability to develop even more and closer ties with other scholars at the faculty would be further strengthened if ARENA was welcomed back to localities at the Blindern campus.

Oslo, February 21, 2022

Daniel Naurin

*Director, ARENA - Centre for European Studies*

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<sup>1</sup> Tiltak: "Oppmuntre fagmiljøer til å etablere undervisningsaktiviteter på tvers av fag og Fakulteter". *Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet Årsplan 2021-2023*, versjon 17.11.2020, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.uio.no/om/aktuelt/aktuelle-saker/2020/circle-u-er-offisielt-i-gang.html>