







iEER Boost Growth Action plan for Helsinki-Uusimaa









iEER Project (PGI00111)		
Partner organization	Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council	
Other partner organization involved	Laurea University of Applied Sciences	
Country	Finland	
NUTS2 region	Helsinki-Uusimaa	
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Foreword

iEER "Boosting innovative Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Regions for young entrepreneurs (iEER)" is a flagship project, funded under the Interreg Europe programme and participated by 10 regions from all over Europe¹. The iEER, put in place by most of the regions which received the European Enterprise Award, is aimed at setting out smart courses of action and devising solutions which will allow the partners to stimulate the growth of regional entrepreneurship ecosystems for young entrepreneurs and place them under adequate control. The project puts special emphasis on the role which might be played in the creation of a favorable entrepreneurship ecosystem by the European structural funds and regional authorities. Therefore, this Action Plan aims to contribute to a more efficient use of the funds available under the 2014–2020 Regional Operational Programme of Southern Finland.

As a part of the project titled "Boosting innovative Entrepreneuriship Ecosystem in Regions for young entrepreneurs (iEER)", two main types of work are carried out:

- Stage 1: The exchange of knowledge and experience between the regions and the development of local action plans.
- Stage 2: The monitoring and implementation of action plans and recommendations on the action policy.

This document, titled "iEER Boost Growth Action Plan for Helsinki-Uusimaa", is one of the studies which close Stage 1 and define the action plan for the support of entrepreneurship in the region.

¹ The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and the Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Helsinki-Uusimaa), the Institute of Technology Tralee (Kerry County), the University of Applied Sciences in Brandenburg, the Regional Council of Marche, North France Innovation Development (Hauts-de-France), the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, the Region of Southern Denmark, the Regional Government of Valencia, Westpomeranian Region, and West Romania Region.









Helsinki-Uusimaa Region is strategically situated in the southern coast of Finland by the Baltic Sea, close to the growing markets of Russia and the Baltic countries. The Region has developed into a knowledge and innovation hub partly due to investments in research and development and the considerable number of people employed in ICT field. Its education system has performed well in PISA (the Programme for International Student Assessment in the OECD) stating its excellent quality. Helsinki-Uusimaa Region was awarded with the EER label in 2012.

The Helsinki-Uusimaa Region includes Greater Helsinki, the only large metropolitan area of Finland. Its land area (9,440 km2), represents only 3% of the total Finnish territory and, in contrast, its population (1.6 million) stands at 30% of the total country's population (density of 180/km2).

The region is the economic engine of Finland, relying on an extremely versatile industrial structure, a dynamic business landscape, highly-skilled workers, and a high-quality research and education environment. The region accounts for 34% of all jobs in Finland. As an international investment destination Helsinki Region is the best medium-sized region in Europe in 2016–2017 and 2018–2019. The main industry and economic activity centres are: Wholesale, Health and Social Services, Occupational, scientific and technical activity, Technology industry, Administrative and support services and Construction.

The Region is home to over 100,000 companies, employing over 500,000 people. The Helsinki-Uusimaa Region has developed into a knowledge and innovation hub, partly due to investments in research and development and a considerable number of people employed in ICT field. There are 12 HEIs: 6 Universities (University of Helsinki and Aalto University among others) and 6 universities of applied sciences. Furthermore, public research institutions are centrally located in the Uusimaa Region. Over 37% of the population has attained a degree or higher qualification.

The Region is well connected on national and local levels, and also to neighbouring countries (Estonia, Sweden, Norway and Russia); it has an international airport, four international ports and a versatile transport system due to long-term planning (20–30 years).

Thematic Focus within the Region through Good Practices

Entrepreneurial Competence and Mind-Set Activation

Almost each university and university of applied sciences in the region has an entrepreneurship society, the biggest being the Aalto Entrepreneurship Society (<u>Aaltoes</u>). Entrepreneurship Society is a mentoring activity, of the student community, that welcomes experienced serial-entrepreneurs as mentors and coaches. This fully volunteer-based association operates close to the university entrepreneurship education and provides activities such as start-up traineeship programmes, incubation programs, conferences, pitching events and even provision of venture capital funding.









The importance of start-ups and entrepreneurship in the Helsinki Region is also reflected by the organization of Slush – the largest and leading start-up and investor conference in Northern Europe. Slush is connected to Start-up Sauna, the Helsinki region-based seed accelerator, founded and run by the students, and which has been rewarded as the top young university accelerator in the world by UBI Index. In 2016, Slush was attended by over 2,300 start-ups, 1,100 venture capitalists and 600 journalists from over 120 countries.

<u>Helsinki Growth Alliance</u> (HGA) was funded by Southern Finland ERDF Programme in 2016–2017. It offered services to start-ups and entrepreneurs in the Greater Helsinki area, to develop business ideas into growth companies. Together with HGA partners, HGA organised regular training courses, workshops, events and other activities to support start-ups and individuals progress with their business.

Pathways for Young Entrepreneurs in Outlying Areas

The main actors supporting entrepreneurs and business development in the outlying areas of Uusimaa have been the development companies such as Keuke for the central Uusimaa and Novago for the Western Uusimaa, Posintra for the Eastern Uusimaa, HEl campuses and the Chambers of Commerce. In the context of the iEER, Uusimaa seeks good practices from other regions to better develop pathways or support for young entrepreneurs in the outlying areas of Uusimaa.

RIS3 - Smart Specialisation Implementation for Young Entrepreneurs

Helsinki-Uusimaa Region has a codified Smart Specialisation Strategy that was implemented in 2014. The initiatives currently available in the region are Smart and Clean Foundation, Health Capital Helsinki, Maria01, Turbiini Start-up Hub, Helsinki Business Hub, Upgraded, Start-up Sauna, Helsinki Think Company and Helsinki Growth Alliance (Polku). Several funding instruments (regional/national funding, cities' own funding and ERDF) have been utilized to finance these initiatives. In the new regional development programme for the Helsinki Region Vitality from start-ups and SMEs is one of the twelve objectives for 2018–2021.

Policy Framework supporting young entrepreneurs and start-ups

At the national level start-up support activities especially funding, is mainly lead by Business Finland - a new organization, formed through the merger of Tekes and Finpro. Business Finland offers Finnish companies services for innovation activities, internationalization, investments and tourism promotion. At the beginning of 2018, a new type of residence permit will be introduced for growth for start-up entrepreneurs. At the regional level, public business support is implemented by the ELY Centres (Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment). Regional development policies supporting SMEs are implemented by the regional councils. At the local and municipal level, cities and municipalities have taken an increasingly-important role in offering many advanced services for start-ups and entrepreneurs. For example NewCo by City of Helsinki offers a wide range of services. Science parks, business incubators and technology centres are the major actors supporting business creation and development. Besides public service providers there are other organisations like FIBAN, a Finnish, national, non-profit association of private investors that aims to improve the possibilities for private persons to invest in unlisted potential growth companies and Kasvu Open which is a project for sparring eager to grow companies with growth experts in Finland. At the moment, Finland is preparing the biggest regional reform which the new structure will be in place in 2020. The merger of three universities into one multidisciplinary science and art institution called Aalto University has also had positive impact behind the rapid development of Finnish start-up culture.









In the course of the iEER-project, the practices from the partner regions were explored and learned by the iEER Uusimaa local partners. On the basis of the regional report and the state of the start-up ecosystem, Helsinki-Uusimaa identified three key areas of good practices that inspired its action plan:

1. To streamline policy support for start-up growth

Multi-level governance synergy is critical to Helsinki-Uusimaa Region facing one of the biggest governmental structural reforms in Finland. The mandate and structure of support to business and start-ups is being developed. iEER good practices therefore serve as catalyst and inspiration in this negotiation process among different actors.

Good practices such as Valencia Entrepreneurial Council, Growth Forum and scale up Denmark.

2. To intensify coordination and development of regional entrepreneurial ecosystem

One of the strengths and weaknesses of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Uusimaa is that there are abounds activities for start-ups but often lack of cooperation. A diluted operating environment is hindering the invention of new innovations and practices. The disruption of different actors and agents and the development of new models of cooperation would benefit the companies and the operating environment of the region.

Good practices such as Hubhouses, Start-upV and Slush.

3. To renew skill and innovation in companies for growth

The accelerating digitization and the small size of the Finnish domestic market pose challenges for companies. For companies and start-ups to grow and access to global market, the business support agencies and school require renewal skill and knowledge on entrepreneurship, digitation and innovative business model.

Good practices such as Aura Emprende to train the trainers to encourage entrepreneurship in HEIs or success through succession to renew skill and knowledge of family business.

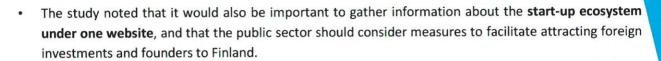
The action points are also based on the study "Growth factors and bottlenecks for business start-ups" commissioned by the Finnish Government:

- Open communication among the private and public sectors would lead to a sense of awareness and a better business environment.
- Entrepreneurship education starting already in elementary schools would help Finns to develop a more entrepreneurial mindset and would reduce the stigma related to failure, a key factor in hindering new business creation.
- Well-known start-up brands such as Slush should be used in marketing and branding campaigns promoting the Finnish start-up ecosystem.

















2. List of priority actions for Helsinki-Uusimaa based on iEER findings

1. To streamline policy support for start-up growth in Uusimaa

The action includes:

- 1.1 Prioritizing support to start-ups and SMEs in the Uusimaa Regional Programme 2.0
- 1.1 Maximising support of Sustainable Growth and jobs 2014–2020 Structural Funds Programmes of Finland to the development of Entrepreneurship Ecosystem cooperation in Uusimaa

2. To intensify coordination and development of a regional entrepreneurial ecosystem

The action includes:

- 2.1 Pilot of Entrepreneurial Forum in Uusimaa
- 2.2 Coordination of information channels and one stop shop for start-ups and SMEs
- 2.3 Feasibility on the development of a digital entrepreneurship ecosystem platform for regional entrepreneurship support actors

3. To encourage entrepreneurship in educational institutions

The action includes:

3.1 To support actions that enhance the competence of professors and teachers in teaching entrepreneurship in the classroom

4. To continue developing the Helsinki-Uusimaa as a global start-up hub

The action includes:

- 4.1 To support the participation of start-ups from iEER region in the Slush events
- 4.2 To further develop Soft-landing services for start-ups, investors and talents

5. To support participation of SMEs and start-ups in EU programmes

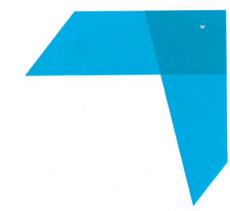
The action includes:

- 5.1 To raise the awareness of available funding
- 5.2 To actively participate and influence in EU policy development









3. Detail actions

Action 1: To streamline policy support for start-up growth in Uusimaa

1. Objective

To streamline the support of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme and the Sustainable Growth and Jobs 2014–2020 – Structural Funds Programmes of Finland to the development of a start-up and entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Uusimaa.

2. Background

On the basis of the findings of the Helsinki-Uusimaa regional report, the coordination and development of an entrepreneurship ecosystem is crucial to the competitiveness and attractiveness of the region as a world-renowned start-up hub. The notion of a start-up and entrepreneurship ecosystem is acknowledged by the regional actors and the better coordination of activities and cooperation among actors will improve the quality of the services offered to the start-ups and entrepreneurs. In order to maximize the impact of already scarce regional funding available in Uusimaa, the Danish Growth Forum has thus inspired Helsinki-Uusimaa with its model in pooling together the regional, national and European Structural Fund funding for the implementation of the regional business strategy. Alignment of policy support and priorities secure a smart path investing in the region.

3. Action

- To prioritise the issue of the start-up and entrepreneurship in the 2nd edition of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme (Uusimaa-ohjelma 2.0)
- To maximise the support of Sustainable Growth and jobs 2014–2020 Structural Funds Programmes of Southern Finland to the development of an entrepreneurship ecosystem in Uusimaa. Support to start-ups and SMEs has been prioritized in the regional call of Southern Finland ERDF Promotion of start-ups and SME growth, Priority 1, Specific Objective 1.1. The call specifically invites regional actors and projects 1) to Identify business capability skills such as marketing, digital solutions, customer needs identification, or sales, and 2) to support companies to detect, develop and specialize their renewal needs and growth potential, develop networked cooperation and new forms of cooperation.

4. Policy context

Sustainable Growth and jobs 2014–2020 – Structural Funds Programme of Southern Finland

5. Scope

The action sets the development of an entrepreneurship and start-up ecosystem as the investment priority of Helsinki-Uusimaa programme and the structural fund call launched in November. The action has been executed by the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and the Intermediate body of Southern Finland ERDF programme c/o Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council performing organisational adaption and policy change to the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme 2.0 and Southern Finland ERDF regional call launched in November 2017.









Intermediate body of Southern Finland Regional Operational Programme (Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council).

7. Timeframe

- **Step 1**: Preparation and inputs to the development of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme 2.0, May–June 2017.
- **Step 2**: Preparation and inputs to the regional call text of the ROP of Southern Finland ERDF, August–October 2017.
- **Step 3**: Launch of the regional call of Southern Finland ERDF November 2018 and closed in March 5th of 2018.
- Step 4: Selection of projects and funding decision of ERDF call in summer 2018.
- Step 5: Monitoring the approved projects from autumn 2018.

8. Costs

No costs. The action is implemented via organisational adaption.

9. Expected impacts of the action

- Number of the approved projects with objectives in developing a regional entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- Total budget of the approved projects in developing a regional entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- Indicators according to the approved project applications.

Action 2: To intensify coordination and development of the entrepreneurship ecosystem in the region

1. Objective

To pilot the Entrepreneurship Council in Uusimaa and to introduce good practices for future consideration.

2. Background

Open communication among the private, public and educational sectors and different actors would increase a sense of awareness and create a better environment and ecosystem for entrepreneurs. Learning from the experience of the Valencian Entrepreneurship Council, multi-player governance synergy is critical to facilitate and support the coordination and cooperation of local actors driving the development of an entrepreneurship ecosystem. The Helsinki-Uusimaa Region is facing one of the biggest governmental structural reforms in Finland 2017–2021. The mandate and structure of support









to business and start-ups is being developed. The model of multi-player council such as Valencia Entrepreneurship Council and Scale up Denmark model should be further explored and introduced in Uusimaa and thus contributed to the regional reforming. Existing digital tools and solutions for monitoring the policy, such as Astrid monitoring tool from Hauts de France or digital entrepreneurship ecosystem platform should be further considered too.

3. Action

- To pilot the Entrepreneurial Council.
- To map the need and solutions for the better coordination of information and one stop shop for start-ups and SMEs.
- To map the needs and feasibility for the development of a regional digital collaborative platform for regional actors.

4. Policy context

Permanent structure in the regional governance.

5. Scope

The action will be executed by the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council in cooperation with the Uusimaa 2019 Project to adapt the practices.

6. Players involved

Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, Helsinki Region Chamber of Commerce, Business Finland, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Uusimaa 2019 Project.

7. Timeframe

Step 1: Launch of Entrepreneurial Forum of Uusimaa by the Uusimaa 2019 Project, reform team of Helsinki-Uusimaa. Interval of the meeting is initially agreed to be monthly. (March 2018)

Step 2: Organisation of a workshop on the topics of improving information channels, one stop shop for start-ups and SMEs and development of a digital entrepreneurship ecosystem platform for regional entrepreneurship support actors. The event will be coordinated by Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Laurea University of Applied Sciences. (May-June 2018)

Step 3: Presentation of the feasibility and proposal to the Entrepreneurship forum of Uusimaa and the Regional Cooperation Committee. (2018)

8. Cost

8 000 euros.

9. Funding source

The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council will organise the event through its existing budget (EU service).

10. Expected impacts of the action







- Number of events organised.
- Number of participants.
- Synergy effects through collaboration (number of projects).









Action 3: To encourage entrepreneurship in education and research institutions

1. Objective

To support actions that enhances teachers' and researchers' entrepreneurship competencies in higher educational insitutions in Uusimaa.

2. Background

Entrepreneurship education is key to nurture a more entrepreneurial mindset and reduce the stigma related to failure of young people. Inspired by the Aula Emprende, Helsinki-Uusimaa Region and Laurea University of Applied Sciences support enhanced development of teachers' entrepreneurship competencies and stronger cooperation among region's HEIs.

Laurea University of Applied Sciences is committed to support teachers in entrepreneurship education and development of regional entrepreneurship education and academia-business cooperation. Laurea together with two other universities of applied sciences in the region (Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences) have formed a strategic alliance and one of the common work groups is devoted to the development of entrepreneurship guidance capabilities of HEI personnel. Competence development and testing of different methods is one of the key tasks and Laurea will bring Aula Emprede action to common work group while keeping region's other HEIs informed about iEER action of Aula Emprede. Laurea in Cooperation with three Universities of Applied Sciences is developing common plan and actions and will benchmark Aula Emprede action and external funding possibilities for even further action.

Furthermore, the Aula Emprende has been selected by the iEER partners and developed by the partners into a pilot action of the iEER to collectively transfer the practice. This cooperation will enhance better entrepreneurship mindsets and provide entrepreneurship education to professors but also students.

3. Action

- Introduction of the good practice to the three Universities of Applied Sciences cooperation by Laurea University of Applied Sciences and benchmarking Aula Emprede and external funding for further action.
- Implementation of the iEER pilot action (training the trainer) to learn and to motivate teachers and researchers to take an active role in the natural entrepreneurial competence of young people in the classroom.

4. Policy context

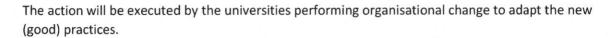
Inputs to the preparation for the governance and coordination of EU structural funds to Uusimaa.

5. Scope









6. Players involved

Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, Laurea University of Applied Sciences in cooperation with other higher education institutions.

7. Timeframe

Step 1: Mapping and understanding the circumstances for the inception of Aula Emprende according to regions, May–September 2018.

Step 2: Joining the "Train the trainer pilot International Conference / the Trainers' camp" in Valencia, October 2018.

Step 3: Applying and testing the learned methods in regions, January–June 2019.

Step 4: Validation of the results and roll-out plan for the continuity in the respective regions, July–September 2019.

8. Cost

6 000 euros (for the pilot action of the iEER project).

9. Funding source

Interreg Europe.

10. Expected impacts of the

- Number of teachers and researchers participating in the event.
- Number of students participating in the event.
- Number of events organized.

Action 4: To continue promoting the Helsinki-Uusimaa as a global start-up hub

1. Objective

Leveraging Slush and promoting Uusimaa as a global Start-up Hub and a favourable destination for start-ups, talents and international investors.

2. Background

Slush, one of the outstanding good practices, selected by the iEER partners, has attracted great interest and attention from different actors in the iEER partners. Regions of West-Pomerania, Valencia and Marche amongst others have thus explored the possibility to link the local start-up ecosystem with Uusimaa by financing the participation of start-ups in Slush. Multiplying the international contacts of actors in the start-up ecosystem would attract international talents, start-ups and investors to the region.









3. Action

- To promote and connect Slush with the iEER partners and support other partner regions in the participation of start-ups to Slush event in 2018 and 2019.
- To further define the means and soft-landing services for start-ups and talents in cooperation with the regional actors (International House Helsinki, Start-up Visa and etc).

4. Policy context

Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme 2.0

5. Scope

The action will be executed by the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council. It is to improve the attractiveness of the Helsinki-Uusimaa as a start-up hub and to support the cooperation between Helsinki-Uusimaa and other regional actors and start-ups.

6. Players involved

Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council, Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Slush, Helsinki Regional Chamber of Commerce, ELY Uusimaa, Helsinki Business Hub.

7. Timeframe

Step 1: To organise a preparatory meeting with Slush and connect the Slush with iEER regions (February-April 2018).

Step 2: Helsinki-Uusimaa Region to organise an initial meeting with local actors in defining needs and further development projects for improving the soft-landing services for start-ups and talents (May-August 2018)

Step 3: To further asset iEER regions in the coordination of the visit to Slush 2018 (May-October 2018).

8. Cost

NA.

9. Funding source

The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council will organise the event through its existing budget.

10. Expected impacts of the action

- Number of start-ups and investors from iEER partners to slush event.
- Number of events organised.
- Synergy effects through collaboration (number of new ties/ projects).









1. Objective

To encourage and facilitate the participation of SMEs and start-ups in EU programmes.

2. Background

Based on the findings of the regional report for the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region, the major obstacles for the start-ups and companies to participate in the EU programmes derive from bureaucracy and lack of information about funding. Supporting the actors to benefit from external EU funding has been one of the operational priorities of the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council. A special effort will be paid to encourage and facilitate the participation of SMEs and start-ups in the EU programmes.

3. Action

- To initiate a preparatory meeting with relevant actors (EEN, Business Finland, business support
 agencies, universities etc) to agree on feasible dates and focused topic for the info event.
- To prepare a background study for available funding and to organise the event.
- To wrap-up the feedbacks and feed into to Regional Cooperation Committee (MYR) for future EU policy debate.

4. Policy context

Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Programme 2.0.

5. Scope

The action will be executed by the actor(s) with own resources.

6. Players involved

EEN, Business Finland, business support agencies, universities etc.

7. Timeframe

Step 1: Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council coordinates a meeting for relevant actors (EEN, Business Finland, business support agencies, FIBAN, universities etc) agreeing on feasible dates and focused topic (May–June 2018).

- Step 2: Preparation and background study for available funding (June-August 2018).
- Step 3: Organisation of Information event on agreed date (September 2018).
- Step 4: Wrap-up of the event and feedbacks to Regional Cooperation Committee (MYR).

8. Cost

5 000 euros for event organisation.

9. Funding source









The Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council will organise the event through its existing budget (EU service).

10. Expected impacts of the action

- Number of start-ups and investors from iEER partners to Slush event.
- Number of events organised.
- Synergy effects through collaboration (number of new ties/ projects).

Monitoring and impacts of the action plan

The monitoring during 2018–2020 will be conducted by the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Laurea University of Applied Sciences. The LSG – local stakeholder group (all support agencies, supporters and entrepreneurs) will be involved in feedback and collaboration. The LSG will meet yearly.

Action	Indicator	How	Who
Action 1 – Streamline policy support for start- up growth in Uusimaa	 Quantitative KPIs Number of the approved projects with objectives in developing a regional entrepreneurship ecosystem Total budget of the approved projects in developing a regional entrepreneurship ecosystem Indicators according to the approved project applications 	Decision	Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council
Action 2 - To intensify coordination and development of regional entrepreneurial ecosystem	Quantitative KPIs Number of events organised Number of participants Qualitative KPIs Synergy effects through collaboration (nr. of new ties/ projects)	Record Record	Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council and Uusimaa 2019
Action 3 - To create and developing entrepreneurial spirit in education and research	Quantitative KPIs Number of teachers and researchers participating in the event Number of students participating in the event	Record	Laurea University of Applied Sciences







institutions – training the trainers	 Number of events organised 		
		News or media	
Action 4 - To promote Slush and Helsinki-Uusimaa as a global start-up hub	Quantitative KPIs Number of events organised Number of start-ups coming to Slush Qualitative KPIs Synergy effects through collaboration (nr. of new ties/ projects)	Record	Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council
Action 5 – To support the participation of SMEs and start-ups in the EU programmes	Quantitative KPIs Number of events organised Number of participants Qualitative KPIs Synergy effects through collaboration (nr. of new ties/ projects)	Record	Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council

This action plan will be implemented and monitored by the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region.

Ossi Savolainen

Regional Mayor, Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council

Signature:

Date: 23.3 2018

Stamp of the organisation