Representatives from the Sorbonne, Heidelberg, Charles and Warsaw universities have met in Prague to kick the wheels of the 4EU alliance further in motion. The alliance, building on existing ties of all four institutions, two years in the making, is aiming to boost research, infrastructure, curricula and the ease of mobility of students at all four institutions.

Sorbonne Université president Jean Chambaz discussed where things stood at present, ahead of a meeting of officials at Charles University.

"Things are moving very fast and that is as we want it. It is now our second rectors meeting after we met in March and decided to go ahead with the alliance in the first place. In Prague, today, the aim is to begin moving ahead, and to take the first decision to formalize steps and to begin activities in September 2018.

"We are not going to wait, although we are applying for European support, we are going ahead with the project and I of course hope that we will form one of the pilot programs in the universities program. But if for some reason we are not chosen, we are still going to go ahead because it makes strategic sense for all four of our schools.

"As part of the first step, we decided to pool funds from each of the universities to start projects. These include research projects which will bring together top researches from the universities, we will develop a teaching and learning project where the main object will be to free people from endless bureaucratic obstacles.

"Imagine you are a student enrolled in Prague but you want to go and study for three months, half a year, a year, in Paris or Warsaw, or Heidelberg. Still enrolled in Prague but with all the possibilities offered students at the three other cities. Where credits are automatically transferrable and there is no need to debate it.

"The aim is to simplify things, we know we can rely on each other, and the same possibilities will be available to researchers and staff. If we want to build a common culture among our institutions, administrative staff too can benefit from experiencing firsthand how things are done elsewhere.

"It will help us to better solve problems. And while it is a huge project, we want to get started."