



Alliance of European Universities “European Campus of City-Universities, EC2U” RENEWED MISSION STATEMENT (2023-2027)

Preamble

In 2020, the Alliance entitled “European Campus of City-Universities, EC2U” was selected as one of the 41 pilot Alliances of European Universities, under the flagship “European Universities initiative” of the Erasmus+ programme. During this pilot phase, the EC2U Alliance was constituted of seven Full Partner Universities: **University of Coimbra, Portugal; Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Romania; Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany; University of Pavia, Italy; University of Poitiers, France; University of Salamanca, Spain; University of Turku, Finland.** The EC2U Consortium has included **thirty Associated Partners** (Municipalities, Regional Governments and Agencies, Science Parks and Chambers of Commerce, Higher Education stakeholders, Student Associations). The EC2U Alliance welcomed in April 2022 one Strategic Partner University: the **Ivan Franko University Lviv, Ukraine.** It will also welcome, in Spring 2023, one Associated Partner University: the **Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria.**

At the mid-term of the pilot phase (October 2020 – April 2021), the EC2U Alliance implemented **87 deliverables** that include (non-exhaustive list):

- The creation, implementation, and development of the EC2U Consortium via **shared governance, common practices and projects;**
- The creation of **three Virtual Institutes¹** and the launch of **three Joint Master’s Programmes²** related to specific United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Good Health and Well-Being (SDG#3), Quality Education (SDG#4), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG#11)³;
- The development of a joint digital ecosystem – the **EC2U Connect Centre** including the EC2U Interchange Platform and the EC2U Knowledge Hub – that brings the Alliance one step closer to seamless mobility and fluid intercultural exchanges with, in particular, the preparatory technical steps for the delivery of the EC2U European Card for students and staff;
- The creation of a **joint campus life** where the EC2U academic community participates in a network of common activities and flagship events such as the first **EC2U Science Battle⁴** and the **EC2U Fora⁵** (incl. 7 Higher Education round tables and 5 Citizen Science sessions). This campus life is supported by a

¹ <https://ec2u.eu/virtual-institutes-staff/>

² <https://ec2u.eu/for-students/ec2u-master-programmes/>

³ See Annex to the Renewed Mission Statement “Analysis of the research outputs of EC2U Alliance and contributions to SDGs in the period 2016-2021” for rationale on the selection of specific SDGs

⁴ <https://ec2u.eu/news/science-battles/>

⁵ <https://ec2u.eu/news/ec2u-forum/>

unique and innovative tool: the **EC2U Mobile Application**⁶ called “My Mobile Tutor-EC2U”, created in collaboration with all Partner Universities to facilitate seamless mobility within the EC2U Campus;

- The implementation of the **EC2U Entrepreneurial Academy**⁷ (with online modules and training weeks for students) and of the **EC2U Think Tanks**⁸ (with about 1500 participants involved in two particularly relevant topics: “European values” and “Circular economy”);
- **150 project meetings, 20 major EC2U events** (Fora, summer/winter schools, conferences), the engagement of more than **300 students and staff** in the development and implementation of the Alliance’s activities, and the participation of **1600 people** in the EC2U Fora.

The EC2U Alliance, through deepened and extended collaboration between the Partner Universities, has been a catalyst for a number of additional activities. These initiatives, based on the guiding principles and goals of the project, have been co-created and implemented in complete complementarity with the initially defined Work Programme. These additional projects answer the community’s needs and expectations by providing diverse, inclusive, innovative, and transversal activities: **cotutelle PhD theses, EC2U Ambassador programme**⁹, **Student projects**¹⁰, **Joint submission of projects to the Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe programmes**.

By the end of the pilot phase (which will end on the 31st of October 2023), a total of **82 additional deliverables** will be produced, many of them being instrumental for the future of the EC2U Alliance (non-exhaustive list):

- Organisation of several **major students events**;
- Continuation of the **Science Battles** with the final competition in Fall 2023;
- Creation of the **EC2U European Card for students and staff**;
- Results and studies from the first **research projects** within the EC2U Virtual Institutes;
- **EC2U Career Plan certificates**;
- Results from the “**Welcome to the European Classroom**” programme;
- **Political and Financial Sustainability Plan**;
- **Internationalisation Plan**;
- Continuation of the **EC2U Fora** with the last pilot Forum in Fall 2023.

All these activities will have also induced a **significant increase of in the intra-Alliance mobility**, including students, staff, teachers and researchers. Notably, several mobility opportunities will have been organised to support EC2U students in the co-creation of the **future EC2U Student Council**.

Furthermore, in 2021, the EC2U Alliance was granted with additional financial support from the European Commission via the specific Horizon 2020 call related to “Science with and for society” for the project entitled “**Research and Innovation for Cities and Citizens, RI4C2**”. This project started in September 2021 for a three-year period: it aims at extending the activities of the EC2U Alliance to the Research and Innovation (R&I) fields, in order to transform the EC2U Alliance into the core driver of a **Pan-European Knowledge Ecosystem (PEKE)** via a series of activities with relevant (local) stakeholders leading to:

⁶ <https://ec2u.eu/for-students/tools/>

⁷ <https://ec2u.eu/news/entrepreneurial-weeks/>

⁸ <https://ec2u.eu/ec2u-think-tank/>

⁹ <https://ec2u.eu/for-students/students-ambassadors/>

¹⁰ <https://ec2u.eu/for-students/student-activities/>

- A **joint R&I agenda**;
- Tools to support **EC2U researchers' careers** (incl. promotion of gender equality in research);
- The extension of the **EC2U Connect Centre** to R&I online support platforms;
- A joint approach to **Innovation ecosystems, Citizen Science, and Open Science**.

Many of these activities and deliverables are paving the way to the collective R&I dimension of the EC2U Alliance.

Taking stock of all these achievements, it was concluded in the mid-term report sent to the European Commission in June 2022:

“the EC2U Alliance, as a united community, is making continuous progress and its trajectory is perfectly aligned with its guiding principles:

- *Establish an operational Alliance;*
- *Create a united pan-European campus;*
- *Respond to the challenges of the Knowledge Square”.*

This progress has been recognised by experts from the European Commission in the assessment of the EC2U mid-term report:

- *“The alliance has fully achieved its objectives and milestones/outputs/outcomes for the period”;*
- *“The alliance has delivered exceptional results with significant immediate or potential impact”;*
- *“Major achievements include the establishment of 3 Masters Programmes and the creation of 3 Virtual Institutes that are already up and running. Plans that are being implemented for enhanced mobilities for students and staff are also impressive”;*
- *“A truly excellent student app designed to make students feel quickly at home in the various cities of the alliance. This app could serve as a useful model in wide range of European projects”;*
- *“Action, decisiveness and speed characterise this ambitious alliance”.*

Building on these initial achievements, the EC2U Alliance decided to consolidate its trajectory with the preparation of a new phase of activities, for the period 2023-2027.

The trajectory of the EC2U Alliance

In 2020, the first EC2U Mission Statement stated:

*“EC2U is a **multi-cultural and multi-lingual Alliance** consisting of **seven long-standing, education- and research-led, locally and globally engaged universities from Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western regions of Europe**. The main ambition of the Alliance is to create a **European campus** by allowing **mobility to flow freely, i.e. without administrative, psychological and cultural barriers**, between the seven universities and respective cities. The proposed activities will contribute to overcome clichéd views of regional and national identities and thus participate to the achievement of a more united Europe. Making critical thinking and societal concern integral*

parts of the daily life of all citizens, the EC2U European Campus will develop, over time, **a network of joint activities linking all aspects of the Knowledge Square** (education, research, innovation, service to society).

EC2U members have already conceived a joint long-term strategy, as well as efficient and flexible governance structures and procedures for responding to EHEA challenges, such as:

- Jointly providing quality education and culture for all, with an equal emphasis on shared European values, local knowledge and global challenges;
- Undertaking joint research and innovation projects in response to and connection with the great challenges confronting local communities - cities and citizens within the Alliance.

To support this long-term strategy, the **seven universities are committed to integrate their respective resources** (including staff manpower, platforms and tools, mobility grants from own budgets, etc.) **into the EC2U pan-European campus**".

In early 2023, after almost two and a half years of joint pilot activities, this statement has never been so true and it is, not only renewed with the present document, but further strengthened by:

- **Welcoming two new Full Partner Universities:** the Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria, from the beginning of the "consolidation phase, 2023-2027" and another University later during the consolidation phase, with specific activities for fast-track integration;
- **Welcoming one Associated Partner University:** the Ivan Franko University of Lviv, Ukraine;
- **Developing further the fruitful cooperation with previously appointed Associated Partners** that have renewed their commitment, among which are the Municipalities, Student Associations, etc.¹¹;
- **Involving new Associated Partners from the public and private sectors, including Research University Hospitals¹⁰;**
- **Strengthening the participation of students to the Alliance governance with the creation and implementation of the EC2U Student Council** (in addition to their current participation to the EC2U Executive Committee);
- **Extending the scope of activities to a fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) from the United Nations:** SDG#16 on "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions"; in addition to the three founding SDGs "Good Health and Well-being (SDG#3)", "Quality Education (SDG#4)", "Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG#11) "3;
- **Implementing new cooperation activities in capacity-building areas: Digital Education, Life-long career (incl. Doctoral Training and Micro-credentials), Innovation and transfer.**

With such a new phase of **geographical expansion and thematic extension**, during the next four years, the EC2U Alliance aims at reaching the needed **maturity, robustness, and comprehensiveness** to provide visibility and recognition to the **"EC2U model for the University of the Future"**.

¹¹ See Annex to the Mission Statement for full list of Associated Partners
EC2U Mission Statement

The EC2U model for the University of the Future

The foundations of the EC2U vision are related to the **University in the City** concept, as a **humanistic, citizen-centred, and sustainable model of collaborative actions**. The EC2U model defines **universities as central actors of the Knowledge Square** (education, research, innovation, service to society). This model establishes sustainability and quality as basic requirements for a **responsible university**. As a heritage of the “Poitiers Declaration” launched in 2016¹², the EC2U model reasserts the idea that universities play a central role in the development of cities, which in turn, represent a fundamental framework and are a catalyst for universities’ development. Cities and universities have a common and vital interest in the development of education and knowledge: **the EC2U Alliance aims at playing a shaping role within its ecosystem, at all levels** (municipalities, large urban areas, regional, national, and European territories).

To reach this vision, the EC2U model promotes **common engagements and values**:

- **Collegial, transparent and intensified transnational cooperation towards the shared vision;**
- Defence of **academic and democratic values;**
- Development of a **genuine European dimension in the higher education sector;**
- Retention of **on-campus activities** (completed by virtual activities, when relevant) to foster physical interactions among students and staff, as the most efficient mean to **promote interpersonal and intercultural understanding;**
- Promotion of **active citizenship, tolerance, equality and diversity, openness and critical thinking.**

In other words, “EC2U” stands also for: *Empower. Connect. Collaborate. Unite.*

At the end of the consolidation phase (beyond 2027), the successfully implemented activities will be **permanently integrated into the Alliance portfolio** and **continuously extended to other disciplines and challenges**, thus reaching and impacting always more internal academic communities and external partners, stakeholders, and citizens. This long-term vision is enshrined in the present formal Mission Statement, where the EC2U Alliance commits to reach, by 2027, the status of a **real pan-European campus** with:

- **A sustainable joint governance with shared resources, notably via the “EC2U Connect Centre”;**
- **Active involvement Students in the Alliance governance** and support to their **societal engagement;**
- **Joint culture and sport events** as well as **integrated inter-university green campus and inclusive academic life;**
- **Sustainable multidisciplinary joint EC2U Master’s Programmes, based on selected United Nations SDGs, in full compliance with the Bologna Process**, leveraging the full potential of all available **European tools** (European Student Card, open badges, etc.);
- **Drastically increased, facilitated and geographically balanced mobility** (physical, virtual, blended) of students, academic and non-academic staff, with a focus on **inclusive and green mobility;**
- **Sustainable Virtual Institutes** promoting inter-, trans- and cross-disciplinary activities for “Good Health and Well-being”, “Quality Education”, “Sustainable Cities and Communities” and “Peace, Justice and

¹² <https://www.coimbra-group.eu/poitiers-declaration/>

Strong institutions”, **linking education, research, innovation and service to society via joint projects**, supported by a diversity of internal and external funding;

- A **yearly sustainable rendezvous between academia and citizens** on the occasion of the **inter-cultural EC2U Forum**, at one of the pan-European campus sites;
- A **world-class reputation with recognised academic impact on society**, based on **successful joint education and research projects**, new **innovative enterprises**, etc., all **jointly delivering solutions and services to citizens**.

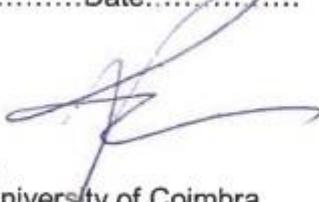
With these activities, the EC2U Alliance will continue to **pave the way towards the University of the Future** and will maintain its **pioneering spirit** in coherence with the objectives of the **European Strategy for Universities**¹³:

- Strengthening the **European dimension** in higher education and research;
- Supporting universities as lighthouses of our **European way of life**;
- Empowering universities as actors of change in the **twin green and digital transitions**;
- Reinforcing universities as drivers of the European Union’s **global role and leadership**.

¹³ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/commission-communication-on-a-european-strategy-for-universities>

Done at Coimbra.....Date: 17/01/2023

Stamp of the University


Amilcar Falcão
Rector of the University of Coimbra



Done at Iasi.....Date: 11.01.2023

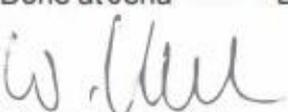
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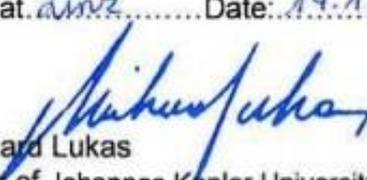
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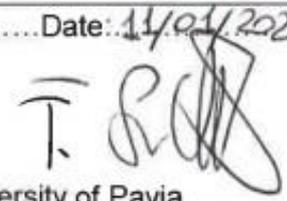
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