SHARED DOCUMENT OF GOOD PRACTICES ON EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCES IN THE ITALO-FRENCH CONTEXT

The event organised on March 30th 2023 at the University of Turin together with the Italian-French University, UNITA - Universitas montium and the French Embassy in Italy brought together 30 different European Alliances participating in the 'European Universities' initiative with the aim of discussing and sharing concrete projects taking place in Italian and French universities to pursue the goals of institutional transformation and to build the *european universities of the future*.

The strengthening of European Alliances is one of the topics addressed by the QUIRINALE Pact signed in November 2021, particularly mentioned in Article 8 (point 4): *"... Elles s'engagent dans ce cadre à promouvoir activement la participation des institutions d'enseignement supérieur*

*françaises et italiennes **au projet des Universités européennes** et à en accompagner le déploiement…"[1].*

The event has been co-designed in close collaboration with several Alliances (**UNITA; UNITE!; ULYSSEUS; CIVIS; EC2U; CIRCLEU**). Representatives of the aforementioned alliances led the thematic workshops and acted as rapporteurs in the wrap up session.

Four workshops dedicated to mobility, research, innovation and entrepreneurship for the territories, innovative teaching and student initiatives were held in parallel with a view to sharing good practices among the alliances.

The concrete output of the event is the present document of good practices on European alliances in the Italo-French context.

The event was attended by 200 participants (professors/researchers, administrative staff, Vicerectors for internationalization and students) from 30 alliances with 60 universities equally divided between French and Italian universities. The event was also open for Italian and French Universities interested in the Initiative but not yet members of an alliance: 14 of them took part as observers, in person and online.

During the morning session a first slot was dedicated to institutional speeches addressing the state of play of the European Universities Initiative from different perspectives: Vanessa Debiais-Sainton, Head of Unit Higher Education, DG EAC, European Commission; representatives of the French (Siegfried Martin-Diaz, Jacques Comby) and Italian (Michele Mazzola) Ministries of Higher Education; Tiziana Lippiello, President of the Commission for International Affairs, Conference of Italian University Rectors; and Carle Bonafous-Murat, Permanent Delegate of France Universités in Brussels. The importance of bilateral cooperation institutions and their role in support of the European Universities Initiative was highlighted in the speeches of Stefano Guerrini, President of the Université Franco-Italienne, and of Philippe Gréciano, President of the Franco-German University.

A session was devoted to quality assurance with interventions by representatives of the Italian (Marilena Maniaci, ANVUR) and French (Thierry Coulhon, Hcéres) agencies. The involvement of students in alliances was presented by Constance Chevallier-Govers (UNITE!) and some student testimonials of the European Students Assembly.

Detailed reports from the different workshops are reported below as a concrete output of the meeting.

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[1] *Within this framework, they commit to actively promoting the participation of French and Italian higher education institutions in the European Universities project and to supporting its deployment.*

Mobility formats for the EU Inter-university 'campus'

Seamless mobility toward EU Inter-university campus

Laurence VIGNOLLET, vice-présidente en charge des relations internationales de l'Université Savoie Mont Blanc, Alliance *UNITA Universitas Montium*

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ALLIANCES TO THE THEMATIC

During the workshop, European University Alliances shared their perspectives and practices on Mobility inside their Alliance:

- **ATHENA** develops the **BlendEd Mobility Project** (BMP). It combines physical and virtual mobility and blended learning over a semester. Companies propose projects, which will then have to be carried out by different teams of students from various fields of study (IT development, design, marketing, business, etc.). BMPs focus on teamwork and international collaboration of students from different disciplines under the supervision of a Professor as well a representative from the company they work for. Each team must be multidisciplinary in order to imitate the construction of projects in professional life and also to answer pertinently to the challenge. The BMPs aim to promote the employability of students and to internationalize their profiles.
- **CIVIS** handles a **BIPs coordination and a full process** to implement Blended Intensive Programs through the alliance as a tool for mobility and joint education. 10 BIPs are proposed by each university and 3 calls are launched per year. A mobility tool has been developed to support the process and a questionnaire validates the quality of the BIPs.
- The **4EU+** University Alliance significantly enhances its structural cooperation with **a series of measures and steps to reach an increased mobility**. 4EU+ developed common short-term student allowances for mobilities for up to 2 months and the Universties of the Alliance signed an Agreement on short-term, virtual and blended mobility to set a legal framework for these new forms of mobility. A Mobility charter was drafted and adopted, providing the framework for meaningful mobility within the new joint co-designed educational activities and a number of already existing study courses of each University. Accompanying measures were provided, including a "toolbox" for student and staff mobility and "mobility schemes" that collect all the available mobility formats, funding and duration.
- From Virtual to Rural, **UNITA** develops **a Vision for Innovative Student Mobility**, through different forms of international student mobility implemented by their alliance with a focus

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on rural mobility. This new form of mobility offers new opportunities for the student's personal and professional growth and has a strong impact on the sustainable development of the alliance's rural and mountain territories.

- In the last years **UNA EUROPA** addressed **mobility as a theoretical framework** to build innovative, joint educational frameworks and professional development, but also by implementing proper mobility paths, some of them embedded in joint educational formats (Joint bachelor in European Studies, joint PhD in cultural Heritage) and other ones designed, for instance, to face the pandemic restrictions. Now, the Alliance is undergoing though a process of structuring an overarching vision, strategy and action plan for mobility of students and staff, with an eye to the past challenges but with a strong push towards the future, to reach the ambitious goal of a "Mobility for All".
- **Arqus** successfully managed to set up an **Open Arqus Mobility (OAM) agreement**, which ensures the mobility of an unlimited number of students in all subject areas, wherever possible, at all partner universities. This proposal aims to present the elaboration, the obstacles as well as the success of the implementation of a unique, and never implemented before, mobility agreement.
- FORTHEM presents their **FORTHEM EUROPEAN CAMPUS**, a new innovative form of mobility consisting in an itinerant semester around the Alliance on thematic campus related to the research labs provided by the different FORTHEM Universities.
- **EELISA** puts the focus on an amalgamation on the work done and insight into the upcoming developments of EELISA on the following fronts: 1. Development of a European Engineer by potentially introducing joint degrees 2. Broadening engineering and non-engineering skills through EELISA courses across partner universities 3. Student Engagement and Mobility through targeted work packages and the opportunity to develop communities to foster learning and growth.

MAJOR CHALLENGES IN THE SPECIFIC THEMATIC ENCOUNTERED BY THE ALLIANCES

All the alliances aim to build a fully-fledged European University. *Mobility* is an effective means which contributes to this aim. This probably explains why the European Commission, from the first call, set a long-term objective for the alliances: **50% of mobility within the alliance**.

However, the commission did not specify what this 50% covered: do 50% of graduates have to have been mobile within their alliance? Is this objective only for students? What about staff?

Nevertheless, it is clear that mobility is an important tool in building alliances: in addition to developing skills, it helps to develop the sense of belonging.

Furthermore, alliances face common issues in developing mobility within them:

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- the number of seats available at other universities of the alliance, especially when the sizes of the universities are very different;
- the obstacles to 'traditional' long-term physical mobility;
- the limits imposed by the Erasmus programme which does not yet integrate the new needs;
- the development of new forms of mobility: virtual, hybrid, short-term physical mobility, etc. which requires
  - an appropriate coordination;
  - the definition of new processes at all key moments of these mobilities: before, during and after;
  - the development of tools to support those new processes;
  - a specific communication at all levels: students, teachers but also administrative staff.

The aim of the workshop was for each alliance to focus on **one good practice** implemented to develop mobility within their alliance and handle some of those issues. The main messages are developed in the next section.

HOME MESSAGES AND GOOD PRACTICES

The workshop highlighted good practices which are summarised here. It is important to note that the format of the workshop effectively limited the duration of the presentations, by the way, this summary does not pretend to reflect all the developments of each alliance in terms of mobility.

As mentioned above, the challenge of achieving 50% of mobility within the alliances requires them to develop new forms of mobility, and in particular:

- **Blended mobilities**
  - **ATHENA** develops its **"Student-focus" initiative for BIPs**, to solve a challenge proposed by a company. Students are thus confronted with a real-life problem, working together online and during short-term physical meetings;
  - **CIVIS** implements a BIP coordination at the level of the alliance and, associates their **BIPs** to their **Research Hubs**;

- **Rural mobilities**

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- ◦ UNITA proposes **UNITA Rural mobilities**, a program of international internships in rural mountain areas, inspired by the Desafío project created by the Universidad de Zaragoza and the diputacion provincial de Zaragoza in Spain, to bring highly qualified and motivated university students into Organizations and Companies working in rural areas linked to ecosystem needs;

- ● **Collaborative Online International Learning**

  - ◦ UNITA develops a strategy to enhance this form of "mobility @ home", called UCIL (**UNITA Collaborative International Learning**), based on the COiL model, but which can incorporate short mobility on the BIP model.

To increase mobility offers, several alliances have moved from innovation to institutionalisation:
- ● **Arqus** has set up the "**Open Mobility Agreement**", signed by all partners, which includes an unlimited number of places in nearly all subject areas in all the universities of the alliance (restrictions in Medecine, Law, Fine Arts and Architecture);
- ● **4Eu+** proposes a **model agreement for all types of mobility** (not only the "traditional ones") and an associated **mobility charter**;
- ● **Una Europa** has put in place a strategy and an action plan for all types of mobility for students and for staffs**,** building **multilateral agreements**;
- ● **ATHENA** and **CIVIS** handle **BIPs coordination** at the level of the alliance.

To remove some of the barriers, and make seamless mobilities a reality, tools have been developed by the alliances:
- ● **Pedagogical tools**

  - ◦ **Una Europa** proposes **Joint Programmes mobility paths**, starting with a joint bachelor in European studies, with possibly 2 mobilities in other universities during the 3 years;

  - ◦ **Multisite degrees** based on a common internal quality assurance mechanism for EELISA activities, which integrates exchanges in 3 countries and involves associated partners (hospitals, research partners, SME's);

  - ◦ To tackle language barriers, **UNITA** promotes **methods and tools for inter-comprehension between Romance languages**;

- ● **Digital tools**

  - ◦ 4EU+ **Student portal**, gives access to the catalogue of the Shared courses and displays Mobility opportunities for students;

◦ **CIVIS** integrates **a Mobility tool** in their virtual campus which supports the whole process for seamless mobility;

◦ **Una Europa** provides **a guide to student mobility** which includes offers, grants, etc. to increase awareness on all the opportunities.

Considering the limitations of the current Erasmus+ programme, one proposal that came out of the workshop is to write a position paper to the Commission and to the National Agencies proposing evolutions in the programme that would support and make it possible to achieve the challenge of mobility within the alliances with, among others:
- Erasmus+ multilateral agreements;
- more that 12 months of grant per cycle;
- more budget for the institutions who have the challenge to reach 50% of mobility;
- a higher funding per day and money for the travel for the short term mobilities (BIP).

There was also a general agreement that the key to success of all initiatives, and in particular the integration and recognition of any kind of mobilities is the **teachers' sensibilisation** to all these innovations.

In conclusion, European university alliances are truly an extraordinary means of developing the personalisation and internationalisation of educational paths, and "Mobility" is a particularly effective tool for this purpose, whether it is physical, virtual, blended, short or long. At that stage, after a pilot phase in which they have experimented with many innovations, they are working to institutionalise the initiatives that have shown real potential, especially those that boost mobility.

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Research and Innovation and entrepreneurship for the local ecosystems

Alessio Cavicchi, Professor of innovation in agribusiness and rural development at University of Pisa and Rector's delegate for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. University of Pisa is involved in Circle.U alliance, coordinated by l'Universitè Paris Cité.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ALLIANCES TO THE THEMATIC

This workshop has been an important opportunity to share experiences from different projects, highlighting best practices and underlining common critical issues in the organization and management of the activities to be jointly addressed in the next years.

Prof. Antonella Forlino, from University of Pavia, presented the EC2U project (7 Universities and more than 30 associated partners: among them cities, regional governements and agencies, Students associations and Scientific Parks, to cite just a few). EC2U has carried out a research activity to map common areas of interest. The result of this scouting on science, has been the "wheel of science": a map with 4 basic areas and many other subtopics. This activity allowed to understand common priorities among the members of the consortium and to set up a series of activities associated to 3 joint master degrees such as entrepreneurial weeks, think tank approaches to discuss each topic at local level, the involvement of the administrative staff.

Some take aways:
- "Setting up an alliance is a long process –a bi-annual appointment between colleagues directly involved in the project cane be useful"
- "Foster as much as you can the in-person contact"
- "Promote short term mobility for students"
- "Setting an objective as the participation to Horizon (that was not part of the original objectives in the submitted proposal) could be important for the empowerment of researchers"
- "Marie-Curie is another opportunity to increase the participation of Phd students. Both doctoral networks and individual fellowships"

In the following presentation, Prof. Frederic Marias – Universitè de Pau et des Pay de l'Adour – representing UNITA alliance, provided the story of 6 universities across Europe having in common

Rural and Mountains territories and Roman languages. One of the 8 work packages in this project is dedicated to Research and Innovation. Even in this case, a map of thematic opportunities has been created and 40 PhD co-supervisions have been implemented thanks to a common framework agreement developed by the consortium.

Some take aways:
"Seminars have been relevant to meet in person"
"Exploring the possibility for consortium to apply to Horizon Europe and other funding programmes"
They are pursuing the "Excellence in Research" initiative all together and they are focusing also with some activities on Gender Balance
Furthermore, there is evidence of the usefulness of "Online conference cycles", "Summer and winter schools", "Liason service: a repository for research internship positions".

"It is important to create a database of shared infrastructures"
"The promotion of spin-off forum, entrepreneurship schools and innovation prizes"
"A database to be connected with NGOs and Public authorities"

2 main questions were addressed from the workshop participants:

1. How to be successful in setting up PhD co-supervision
Answer: there was an attempt to put in the basket several grants and the all the other partners did the same

2. Do you think it would be possible to open the repository to all the other alliances?
Answer: yes, but it would be important to find a technical manager devoted exclusively to this activity.

In the third presentation, prof. Maria Isabella Leone from LUISS University in Rome, presented the case of Engage.EU with a focus on developing spaces for engaged innopreneurships. She wonders how to make students and entrepreneurs working with the local ecosystem that is not an easy task, especially in terms of stakeholders' engagement and management. How to effectively manage the governance is probably the "cloudiest" part. In general, Labs can be considered as innovative models of collaboration and co-creation for novel education of European citizens

They bring together researchers, learners, and society to:
- Identify pressing societal challenges
- To co-create solutions to these challenges

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In Engage.EU view, there are 3 models:

1. **x-labs** (pre-incubation phase to solve a challenge and have a proof of concept): a semester long, co-creation lab with companies and students

2. **Spaces:** physical and digital layers which promote collaborative and open processes, facilitating the cooperation of a variety of stakeholders in developing innovative entrepreneurial ideas, having a sustainable impact on society.

3. **The Incubators:** a common framework to enable the engage of students, faculty and partners to benefits from the various incubators and incubation activities that will be federated into a network spanning across the entire Engage Alliance.

All the challenges are mission-oriented, they create prosperity to the community and thus, this is a way to involve civil society and not only entrepreneurs

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Prof. Alison Bedejus from Université Lyon 1 introduced the work carried out in the European University **ARQUS**: 9 comprehensive research universities who share experience in joint projects. Among the different activities presented, it is worth mentioning the Career Week for PhD Students with a focus on entrepreneurial attitudes and skills.

Another interesting aspect is the multiplier effect that a European University can provide research projects. In fact, before the start of the Alliance, **Arqus** partners had 13 joint H2020 projects in about 5 years. In the remaining ~1,5 years of H2020, Arqus obtained 17 more H2020 projects (not counting Arqus R&I). From FP7 (the previous framework programme) to H2020 collaboration between Arqus partners increased from 20 to 30 (31 with Arqus R&I) joint projects.
It is interesting the Cluster Map 1.0 vs 2.0 that represents differences between November 2020 vs September 2022

In the follow-up project, **Arqus II**, there is a vision for the future with a focus on Arqus living labs

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Prof. Sabine Bottin-Rosseau addressed, thanks to a videoconference presentation, the efforts carried out by Université Sorbonne within 4EU+ (6 partners to build one comprehensive research European university).

Particularly, she presented a pilot project "Training Program in Entrepreneurship and Intrapreneurship Project Management" involving lecturers, students and corporate partners from the countries of the 4EU+ alliance.

This is a Hybrid course with 2 physical meetings: kick-off meeting and final. Every university involves students building a concrete solution based on a real problem posed by **an industrial partner.**

How is it organized: a Launch bootcamp > a group project tutorship and expert online conference (1-2 online session per month) > midterm review session > Group project tutorship 1 online session per week > final bootcamp

The project is still ongoing and it will be interesting to understand the outcomes of this activity.

Microcredentials and Open Badges can be important tools to increase the appeal of these courses for students.

Enrico Gastaldi – INNOUNITA

6 comprehensive research universities that are part of the European University Alliance of UNITA

An extensive coverage of the region with minimal investment in research and innovation which are included in the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS). This scheme includes Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Italy, either as an entire country or specific regions within the country.

Aims:
- To assist universities to develop their ability to innovate and teach innovation and entrepreneurship
- Collaboration with KICs
- Work package 5: develop structures and conditions for people to create or develop their businesses and start-ups
- Shifted from traditional university lecture series to practical learning series for real-life experience.
- Expanded network of contacts through collaboration and partnership with industries, companies, venture capitalists, and others
- Developed digital infrastructure to connect stakeholders and start-ups, fostering collaboration and innovation.

MAJOR CHALLENGES IN THE SPECIFIC THEMATIC ENCOUNTERED BY THE ALLIANCES

Some common open questions:
- How to set up effective challenges to be addressed by students?
- How to carry on effective stakeholder engagement in a long-lasting perspective

- How to involve researchers?

Now, we are facing a new challenge for all the alliances. How to work together with the new partners involved in enlarged alliances? The answer to these challenges could be a source of new approaches and methodologies to increase the number of participants and to work more and more on a network of European Ecosystems.

Education: Innovative learning paths within the Alliances (i.e.: new joint curricula; flexible learning opportunities)

Philippe Knauth (University Aix-Marseille - CIVIS) and Micaela Rossi (University of Genoa - ULYSSEUS)

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ALLIANCES TO THE THEMATIC

The presentations by the universities involved in the workshop highlighted some of the strengths of the action of the European university alliances, and most notably:

1. the importance of fostering teaching innovation ecosystems within the institutions, involving teaching staff, teaching support staff and students, who can play a crucial role by significant innovation actions in the universities systems and in teaching practices;

2. the increasingly important role of innovation projects in which interdisciplinarity is a concrete and real factor: European university alliances facilitate to bring together scholars and students from different disciplines to develop deeply innovative collaborative projects;

3. the need to link, in an increasingly effective and direct way, the results acquired from cutting-edge research in the various areas touched upon by the European Alliances projects with a teaching practice that adopts active, participatory methodologies addressing students, enhancing accessibility, inclusion and active participation in decision-making and management processes;

4. the urgency to increasingly develop soft skills in our students, through didactic innovation methodologies and experiences linked to the external stakeholders (work-based learning methodologies), exploiting the possibilities offered by the networks of the European Alliances;

5. the opportunities offered within the alliances by the modality of virtual mobility, already widely practised within some of the projects presented, a tool capable of offering the entire student community the experience of mobility while containing its costs, as well as social and environmental impacts;

6. the great potential offered by digital tools within the European alliances, tools that are often created *ad hoc* for the mutualisation of experiences and resources and that constitute a heritage to be perpetuated in the future.

MAJOR CHALLENGES IN THE SPECIFIC THEMATIC ENCOUNTERED BY THE ALLIANCES

The most difficult challenges that remain to be faced have emerged in most of the experiences presented and concern in particular:

1. The differences existing between the administrative and legal systems of the universities involved in the European Alliances, which make complex and difficult the daily work, but also the planning and design of innovative didactic interventions. Harmonisation at management level appears necessary and urgent, as well as the possibility of activating innovative didactic paths with a greater freedom to tackle the constraints of the administrative framework that characterises the different national contexts;

2. There appears to be an urgent need to define an agile framework for the mutual and formal recognition of the activities carried out within the European Alliances; many projects are currently questioning the use of micro-credentials, which may represent a first step towards the formal recognition of joint activities. Shared guidelines on this aspect could undoubtedly be helpful in order to manage the process effectively.

TAKE HOME MESSAGES AND GOOD PRACTICES

The University Alliances are drivers of EU values and have made big progress in the definition and implementation of joint teaching activities including on-line classes, short mobilities, but also joint degrees. They can be forerunners for sustainable education.

Virtual classes, essential during the pandemic, can be an important tool for new mobility schemes increasing student and staff mobility.

Multilingualism is an asset and an objective: in fact, this workshop was pretty trilingual with communications in French, Italian and English. Alliances can contribute to this goal.

The participation of the Franco-German university at this workshop shows that bilateral meetings like this French-Italian one can profit from European multilateralism and the association of further European partners.

And last but not least: a European university needs two legs, teaching but also research. Funding for research will be decisive for the future success of European University Alliances.

Student Engagement in the European University Alliances

Constance CHEVALLIER-GOVERS, Ass. Professor of Law Université Grenoble Alpes, Chair Jean Monnet, Université Grenoble Alpes, Unite!;
Elisa HAUSHERR, European Project Management Intern (European Universities Community), Université Grenoble Alpes, Unite!

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ALLIANCES TO THE THEMATIC

During the workshop, European University Alliances (EUAs) shared their perspectives and practices on student engagement:

- A crucial focus was set on identifying and defining the different forms of student engagement within the EUAs. One of the highlights was the valuable contribution of **EELISA** alliance in identifying and defining the different forms of student engagement within the alliances. **EELISA** alliance provided valuable insights into the challenges and significance of student engagement, defining it as involvement in all aspects of university life. Their contribution emphasized the importance of fostering a sense of belonging among students and encouraging their active participation in shaping the future of their universities. ***Unite!*** students also shared their perspectives, outlining three key aspects of student involvement: taking part in the activities and programs offered by the EUA (the alliance for students), organizing activities for students (students for students), and participating in the decision-making and co-creation of the EUA (students for the alliance). Together, the contributions of **EELISA** alliance and Unite! students highlighted the diverse ways in which student engagement can be fostered and promoted within alliances.

- One of the most important components of student engagement is **student representation in the alliance decision-making bodie**s (whether it is in the general board or in the work packages). The **student democracy** aspect was widely mentioned in the presentations which revealed the diversity of the forms of representation. In **Circle U**, student representation takes the form of student union (CUSU) whose members are elected in each partner university and meet both online and on-site several times a year. They also appoint representatives in the Work Packages of Circle U and sit at the General Assembly, the main governing body of the alliance. Other alliances presented their initiatives regarding student representation such as the **UNITA** Assembly or the **Unite!** SURE! (Students in Unite for Representation and Empowerment!). UNITA particularly insisted on the importance of creating inclusive and democratic processes for student representation, through reflection

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and dialogues on the best democratic practices. UNITA started a benchmark study of the different forms of student representation in the EUAs.

- **CIVICA** presented the European Student Assembly (ESA), an initiative carried by the European Universities Community, a group of students and academic and non-academic staff of several EUAs. This initiative focuses more on student participation rather than representation, to help them practice actively their European citizenship and to discuss important European political issues.

- **Una Europa** presented an innovative way of giving the EUA local anchors. **Local involvement of students** is important in developing a sense of belonging to the alliance on campus. One way to achieve this is through the training of **local task forces**, as Una Europa is doing, which involves students in local projects and initiatives. The Una Europa Local Task Force also allows students to network and develop skills. It also provides an opportunity for students to actively engage with the alliance and contribute to its goals, while offering visibility to the EUA on campus.

- Organizing **non-academic activities, such as student festivals**, is another way to attract and motivate students to engage within the alliance. For example, the **UNITA** Cup International Student Art and Culture Festival and the **Unite!** Student Festival in Lisbon in June 2023, which includes the discovery of the traditions of one of the alliance countries. These activities provide a way for students to showcase their talents, learn about different cultures, and foster relationships with students from other countries.

- Alliances such as **Eut+** and **EUTOPIA**, with the "EUTOPIA Student Think Tank: a platform for European Students Voices" focus more on academic activities. They have created collaborative platforms for sharing research. It aims at helping students who may not have the opportunity to publish their research, as a valuable resource for promoting inclusivity and providing equal opportunities for all students within the alliance.

To resume, students can engage within alliances through various initiatives, including student representation in decision-making bodies, the creation of student assemblies, local involvement, academic and non-academic activities, and research-sharing platforms. These initiatives provide opportunities for students to have a voice, contribute to the alliance's goals, and develop a sense of belonging and connection to the alliance.

MAJOR CHALLENGES IN THE SPECIFIC THEMATIC ENCOUNTERED BY THE ALLIANCES

During the workshop, we collected challenges and difficulties related by the alliance's representatives (mainly students but also staff for Una Europa for instance):

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- One of the most significant challenges is **attracting and retaining students**. This is particularly hard as some alliances have low visibility among the student community. This can be a difficult task, because of the many distractions and competing priorities that students face in today's world.

- **Communication** is a significant challenge for many alliances. Both **under-communication and communication overload** have been related. They can be problematic as they lead to misunderstandings, missed opportunities, and other issues.

- Another key challenge that alliances often face is related to **funding**. Many alliances operate on limited budgets and must balance competing demands on their resources. Some students have great ideas, but funding does not always match their expectations and ideas. This can make it difficult to invest in new initiatives or pursue ambitious goals.

- Another challenge recognized by some alliances is related to **the issue of recognition of student engagement** and **limited available time of students**. Many students are not enticed to engage more in the activities and programmes of the alliance because their time is limited, and these activities are not always highly recognized among the community or academia. They do not always receive certificates, badges, credits, or other forms of official recognition.

- Finally, **the high turnover of student representatives** can also be a challenge for alliances. Finding and training student representatives is time-consuming and sometimes difficult to manage if the mandates are short, combined with conflicting study paths.

TAKE HOME MESSAGES AND GOOD PRACTICES

Fostering student engagement in EUAs is essential for both institutions and students to achieve their respective goals. This, in turn, is important for students as it provides opportunities for academic and personal growth, as well as networking. In this regard, the following good practices can be implemented:

1. **Encourage co-creation to involve students in the development and implementation of work packages**, promoting a sense of ownership and engagement among students and leading to greater participation and commitment.

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2. **Give students a voice in decision-making bodies**, promoting student democracy and providing diverse perspectives to enrich, strengthen, and better target the actions of the EUAs to its main beneficiaries: students.

3. **Establish clear guidelines and procedures for electing and training new student representatives** to ensure a smooth turnover and promote the sustainability of student boards.

4. **Create research-sharing platforms f**or students to showcase their research and foster a shared-knowledge environment within the EUA.

5. **Offer intercultural opportunities through extra-curriculum activities** such as student festivals to develop a sense of community, to contribute to personal growth and develop skills such as adaptability and cultural competence.

6. **Establish local student units,** such as local task forces within the partner universities of the EUAs, involving students in local projects and initiatives to give them a sense of belonging and actively engage with the alliance. The task force can serve as a platform for students to network, develop skills and contribute to the goals of the alliance, while also promoting the visibility of the EUA on campus.

7. **Acknowledge the challenges faced by students in participating in alliance activities. This can be done by delivering Open Badges but also by** providing official supplements to diplomas and/or ECTs to incentivize student participation and validate their efforts. **The integration of student engagement activities into more traditional universities' curricula** can also help to ensure long-term sustainability as they require less extra-curriculum engagement from the students and therefore addresses the time commitment issue (such as hackathons and innovation challenges, mentoring programs, joint courses, joint research programs, exchange programs, interdisciplinary projects and joint diplomas…). This requires **collaboration with academic departments to integrate EUA activities into their courses.**

8. **Use seed funds to support student engagement activities,** joint research projects, and student mobility programs, etc... Seed funds foster initiative among students and the university community in general while addressing funding issues.

9. **Establish a strong communication strategy** can prevent communication challenges. EUAs can encourage good communication, and avoid misunderstandings, and missed opportunities by prioritizing information, creating a common information hub, and increasing its visibility.

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10. **Begin conducting and participating to a collaborative benchmarking study** to understand more and exchange practices of student representation (and more broadly, student engagement in general) between EUAs. The workshop demonstrated the wide range of practices and forms for student representation that can be helpful to all.

By putting these helpful strategies into practice, EUAs and students can develop a relationship that is mutually beneficial. Both can work together to improve the overall student experience and reach their respective objectives. Students' knowledge and abilities can grow because of their active participation.

In conclusion, EUAs offer students a unique chance to participate in the development of a European identity within European universities, which is a key goal of the EUAs. When President Macron launched the idea of creating European universities, he mentioned two objectives: to make universities in the European Union more competitive but also to contribute to the consolidation of European citizenship. EUAs have therefore a political role to which student engagement contributes by supporting the development of a stronger sense of European citizenship. EUAs are therefore essential to the process of European integration.