

CHARM-EU Annual Conference

2025 Utrecht University

Poster Proceedings

Introduction

The CHARM-EU Annual Conference was held on the 12th of November 2025 in Utrecht University. As part of the conference, a poster session was held related to the theme “*Boosting European Competitiveness: European University Alliances as Catalysts for Innovation and Sustainability in Higher Education*”.

A broad view of European competitiveness was posed, and a diversity of poster presentations related to research, practitioner case studies, policy or procedure examples, collaborative initiatives, emerging ideas, or personal narratives on an initiative were welcomed.

Posters were required to align with at least some of these topics:

- Higher education institutions, alliances or external stakeholders contributing to general European competitiveness.
- Educational curricula supporting skills for key competitiveness areas (e.g. digital and green transitions).
- Research contributing to European societal or economic competitiveness.
- Micro-credentials or lifelong learning initiatives that enhance talent.
- Creating environments for innovation, entrepreneurship, and start-up support.
- Policies or practices that have impacted on competitiveness.
- Personal narratives on activities or challenges related to competitiveness.
- Increasing employability, boosting European careers, transdisciplinary collaboration, intercultural competencies, transversal skills, personal impact, DEI as an enabler.
- Open Science policies and practices enhancing competitiveness for Europe.
- Students and researchers’ mobility in European higher education area contributing to a competitive Europe.

These proceedings display the abstract for each of the 21 poster presentations.

A best poster award was presented to Anouk Ruijters, Bente Haukes, Galang Gibran & Grace Fratello-Hakim for their poster *Land subsidence in Jakarta: a threat and a possibility* based on a public vote.

Accessible Learning in the Field? Developing Universal Design for Learning Resources for Field-Based Teaching

Marie van der Kloet, Associate Professor, UiB, Ellen Lien, Project Manager, UiB

Field-based teaching is considered to be absolutely integral to learning in many disciplines. It is perceived to be exciting, learning rich and key for the formation of disciplinary identities. However, despite its clear importance to the disciplines, it is also identified as exclusive and inaccessible, in particular for people with disabilities, women, LGBTQ+ and BIPOC people (Heimann & Johansson, 2024; John & Khan, 2018; Philips & Gilchrist, 2012; Rowan et al., 2022; Stokes et al., 2019). This presentation reports on a project focused on Universal Design for Learning in Field-based Learning and will present two resources for teaching development that will be available for staff at the University of Bergen in 2026: a handbook on Universal Design for Learning and Field-based Learning, and a university pedagogy course focused on accessibility and inclusion in field-based teaching. The resources will be shared both nationally and within Charm, to partners who are interested.

In addition to discussion of the resources, we will present several key processes from the project, including interviews with students with disabilities about their field work experiences, interviews with academic staff who teach in the field, professional staff who support students with disabilities and consultation with peers and experts on accessibility and inclusion. This project contributes to key aspects of sustainability that are concerned with inclusion, educational quality, and opportunities for good and meaningful work (SDG 8, 10) by focusing on how to strengthen accessibility and inclusion in field based teaching. We present and argue that inclusion and accessibility in higher education are only possible through effective resourcing and support for academic staff, the fostering of creative and collegial communities, and critical, intersectional approaches to social change.

Agora: A Digital Platform Empowering University Alliances through Acceleration Services

Farnaz Haji Mohammadali , Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Jesus Alcober, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

University alliances across Europe are increasingly focused on enhancing cross-border collaboration, resource sharing, and digital transformation. To support these ambitions, Agora has been developed as a digital platform tailored to the evolving needs of European university alliances. It offers a customizable and modular environment where each alliance can manage, promote, and share its services in research, innovation, and education.

Built entirely on open-source technologies, Agora ensures flexibility, interoperability, and long-term sustainability. Each alliance can adapt the platform to reflect its specific priorities, organizational structure, and operational workflows. This adaptability has been tested and validated by European university alliances, each of which has implemented Agora to support real institutional initiatives. Among its core services is the Research Infrastructure Catalogue, which enhances access to laboratories, equipment, and scientific facilities across partner institutions. This encourages the efficient use of shared resources and facilitates cross-border collaborative research. The Research and Innovation Catalogue provides visibility for ongoing projects, support services, and collaboration opportunities. It is designed to connect researchers and support staff across universities, improving matchmaking and resource alignment.

The Course Catalogue enables alliances to promote joint academic offerings, such as courses, workshops, and training programmes, filterable by topic, institution, or user type (students, staff, or researchers), thereby increasing accessibility and participation.

The Internship Catalogue supports student mobility by showcasing internship opportunities across alliance institutions and partner organizations, contributing to career development and inter-institutional exchange.

Through its Event Management tools, Agora also enables alliances to create and manage events such as webinars, fairs, and information days. Features include agenda planning, integrated registration, and attendance tracking.

More than just a digital platform, Agora represents a service-oriented and user-centered approach to supporting the collaborative missions of university alliances. Its modular architecture, tested usability, and growing adoption demonstrate its value as a strategic tool.

Agora offers Showcases, a simple, no-coding service for faculty, staff, and alliance members to create and share custom web pages showcasing their projects and expertise. With easy-to-use tools, users can build attractive pages within the alliance website to promote their work and collaboration opportunities.

This poster will present key examples of Agora's implementation, demonstrate its core functionalities, and invite new alliances to explore how the platform can be adapted to meet their specific goals in digital transformation and collaboration.

Inner Development for Future-Ready European Educators: Enabling Employability, Transdisciplinary Collaboration, and Intercultural Impact

Prof. Dr. Maria Eisenmann, Dr. habil. Nataliia Lazebna, Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg (Germany)

This study explores the Inner Development Goals (IDGs) of pre-service teachers, framing them as crucial anchors for fostering social activism and global citizenship. Conducted as a four-phase study, it involved students from the Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg (TEFL Chair, Slavic Studies Chair) and the National University Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic (Department of Foreign Philology and Translation), alongside other Ukrainian and international partners from Italy, France, Réunion, and the Czech Republic.

The methodology encompassed diverse activities across four phases:

- (1) inter-institutional international collaboration through hybrid and online TEFL classes featuring global experts;
- (2) social extracurricular activities, including an Online Multilingual Speaking Club to enhance linguistic and intercultural competencies;
- (3) participation in a project for linguistic support and integration of Ukrainian refugee children in Würzburg; and
- (4) a course on "Transcultural Project-Based Learning through eTwinning", promoting project management, intercultural communication, and multilingual skills through the arts.

The Meaning, Awareness, Purpose (MAP) model was implemented to analyse the participants' IDGs, fostering student-centred learning, motivation, and purposeful action. Student reflections were interpreted using the SDG Pyramid, categorised into "People," "Ecological," and "Spiritual" dimensions. This framework also represented the five IDG aspects: Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, and Acting.

Preliminary findings indicate that the study successfully cultivated empathy, resilience, and community engagement among students. It supported their transition from developing learning experiences to actively contributing to sustainable development, particularly in addressing the challenges of integrating Ukrainian refugees and promoting sustainable teaching and learning environments. This holistic approach integrated the five IDG dimensions into practice, demonstrating their potential for equipping future educators for a globally connected world. The study highlights diverse perspectives for future research, including expanding volunteer engagement and developing assessment scales for pre-service teachers. This innovative integration of IDGs with the SDGs represents a pioneering step towards reimagining teacher education for the 21st century.

CHARM-EU micro-credential strategy and activities for European competitiveness

Adam Toth, Utrecht University, Silvia Gallagher, Trinity College Dublin, Jake Byrne, Trinity College Dublin

Lifelong learning is a key segment of the European educational landscape, prioritized by CHARM-EU, to consolidate and extend our innovative educational model. By enhancing social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development, competitiveness, and employability (Council of the European Union, 2018), lifelong learning aligns strongly with CHARM-EU's values and mission, and European competitiveness.

Micro-credentials are becoming central to this varied, flexible, and innovative lifelong learning ecosystem; a tool for all learners to gain or upskill relevant labour market skills through transformative learning opportunities. Their role within this ecosystem is to facilitate market-relevant skill acquisition, personalized learning pathways, accessibility for all learners, adaptability to market changes and needs, recognition of effort, transparency of learning standards, and portability across modern educational and professional settings.

CHARM-EU aims to become a leader in the European micro-credential ecosystem, offering learners accessible, high-quality educational opportunities that align with the evolving demands of the global workforce. Its vision is to harness the combined strengths of CHARM-EU institutions to progress micro-credential adoption, delivery, innovation, and quality across and within our institutions.

Five overlapping strategic recommendations were identified to guide the CHARM-EU micro-credential strategy. These included clarity in communication, alignment with stakeholders and industry, flexibility and accessibility, standardization and quality assurance, and differentiation through CHARM-EU's unique educational value.

Since the development of the strategy, CHARM-EU has delivered a range of activities to further its strategy, including a digital badge pilot with 5 programmes and 100+ individuals, joint micro-credentials with multiple partners, promotion of existing micro-credential programmes in our partners aligning with our educational principles, supportive funding for new programmes via the CHARM-ED call, networking and collaboration across partners, and a governance, quality assurance and policy framework. However, more engagement with external stakeholders is required to scaffold our strategy. In the poster session, we seek to engage with external stakeholders using an interactive format to collect their views on how CHARM-EU can support their needs and increase European competitiveness.

These strategic activities position CHARM-EU's micro-credential ecosystem as an instrument for European competitiveness. By promoting flexible, targeted, and quality-assured learning opportunities across our partners, CHARM-EU supports the green and digital twin transition, employability, and mobility across Europe (Sanchez Barrioluengo, 2025). Embedding CHARM-EU micro-credentials within European education policy frameworks (e.g. Council Recommendation on micro-credentials (European Union, 2022), ESCO skill framework), ensures transparency, recognition, and portability. CHARM-EU seeks to ensure that lifelong learners can upskill and be adaptable and relevant to the global employment landscape.

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eduTAP - Interoperable Campus Cards & Student IDs in the Smartphone Wallet

Alexander Loechel; Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München; EUGLOH Alliance

eduTAP – Interoperable Campus Cards and Student IDs in the Smartphone Wallet, an EUGLOH (<https://eugloh.eu>) project that enables seamless interoperability and direct access to services on-site.

The Smartphone Wallet and modern credentials allow secure access to on-site services. The eduTAP concept fulfils the vision of the European Student Card to enable real interoperability and direct service access on arrival while on mobility.

eduTAP was recently awarded the EUNIS Elite Award for Excellence and we are excited to share our experience and insights

More information and previous presentations can be found at <https://edutap.eu/>.

Democratising Entrepreneurship & Innovation Across All Faculties and Universities: The Open Incubator Model: Transforming University Innovation

Zaur Samadov-Unsizde, Trinity College Dublin

The Open Incubator model is redefining how innovation and entrepreneurship are understood across universities in Ireland. Traditionally, many non-business students regarded entrepreneurship as irrelevant, assuming it was solely about creating startups. The Open Incubator challenges this stereotype by embedding entrepreneurial thinking directly within faculty curricula. It reframes entrepreneurship as a set of essential competencies—creative problem-solving, critical thinking, and innovation—that can empower students in any career path.

This approach has demonstrated significant impact. For example, health sciences students initially questioned the relevance of entrepreneurial training. Yet, through practical workshops and design thinking activities embedded in their courses, they came to recognise how these skills could improve their clinical practice, research, and patient care. Many reported increased confidence in identifying challenges, generating solutions, and communicating ideas effectively within multidisciplinary teams.

The core achievement of the Open Incubator is not limited to venture creation but lies in building lasting innovation capacity within universities. By collaborating with 12 institutions nationwide, the model has engaged more than 5,500 students. To date, over 300 projects have emerged, with €250,000 invested in early-stage initiatives. While these outputs are significant, the broader success lies in shifting perceptions: demonstrating that innovation is not confined to business schools but is vital within health, humanities, sciences, and beyond.

Faculty feedback reinforces this cultural shift, noting improved student engagement, stronger applied learning, and greater relevance of entrepreneurship to diverse disciplines. By democratising access to entrepreneurship education and embedding it within academic programmes, the Open Incubator ensures that all students—not just those with business ambitions—are supported to become innovators and changemakers.

Ultimately, the Open Incubator is transforming mindsets, empowering individuals, and positioning Ireland's universities as leaders in inclusive, cross-disciplinary innovation. Its vision is to ensure every student, researcher, and educator can view entrepreneurship not as an isolated career path but as a universal skill set for creating meaningful impact.

Fostering Transdisciplinary Practice: The First CHARM-EU Summer School for Doctoral Researchers

Vanessa Vignano, CHARM-EU Alliance, University of Montpellier

In June 2025, the University of Montpellier hosted the first edition of the CHARM-EU Summer School for Doctoral Researchers, a one-week event dedicated to fostering transdisciplinary practice among early-career researchers. The initiative brought together 26 PhD candidates from all disciplines and from across the nine universities of the CHARM-EU alliance, reflecting the alliance's commitment to shaping the next generation of European research leaders.

The Summer School was designed around the theme “Developing Transdisciplinary Practice to Tackle Complex Challenges”. Its pedagogical format combined collective workshops, mentoring by senior researchers, and project-based collaboration. PhD students worked intensively in small, interdisciplinary teams to co-develop research proposals addressing pressing global issues such as climate change, urbanization, global health, and artificial intelligence. These projects were evaluated by members of CHARM-EU's Knowledge Creation Teams (KCTs), ensuring alignment with cutting-edge, multidisciplinary research practices.

A highlight of the week was the international conference “Connecting Knowledge, Shaping Futures: Transdisciplinarity in Research”, held on 24 June 2025. Renowned speakers from the nine CHARM-EU partner universities showcased pioneering research projects that placed transdisciplinarity at their core. Their contributions, spanning disciplines such as philosophy, epidemiology, law, hydrology, medicine, and physics, illustrated how European universities can act as catalysts for innovative, societally relevant research.

The Summer School demonstrated how immersive, cross-disciplinary training can strengthen European competitiveness by equipping doctoral researchers with skills crucial for the future of research: collaboration across disciplines, contextualization of scientific impact, and engagement with international partners. Moreover, the program created fertile ground for future joint projects and long-term collaboration within the alliance, laying the foundation for a sustainable community of practice.

This inaugural edition highlights the transformative role of European University Alliances in developing new learning and research environments that boost innovation, employability, and resilience. By fostering transdisciplinarity at the doctoral level, CHARM-EU contributes to a competitive, inclusive, and future-oriented European Research Area.

Land subsidence in Jakarta: a threat and a possibility

Anouk Ruijters, Bente Haukes, Galang Gibran & Grace Fratello-Hakim, (CHARM-EU Students).

During the second phase of our Master Programme Global Challenges for Sustainability, we conducted research on the sinking city Jakarta. In this research we looked at the following research question:

How can the Circles of Coastal Sustainability (CCS) framework be adapted to evaluate the socio-economic, environmental, and governance dimensions of current practices and solutions within the Ciliwung River Watershed to address land subsidence in Jakarta?"

While looking for answers from different dimensions, we also had to come up with an innovative end product. Therefore, we created a platform to enhance collaboration between scientists, the local community and tourists to gain more knowledge about the problems Jakarta is facing and to have a central place where all this knowledge is gathered. This platform is thus a tool for change. and an interactive card game. A second innovation we created was an interactive card game that teaches youth the value of their local river ecosystem work together to inspire change in the Jakarta community. In this card game the strengths of a Serious Game is combined with a Bottom-Up approach and Knowledge Sharing.

Accelerated population growth, urbanization, and intense environmental degradation have left the Ciliwung Rive in a state of intense crisis. Our research analyzes this crisis through the lens of four domains: ecological, social, economic, and governance, developing a transdisciplinary approach to solutions for a Ciliwung River Basin that embraces sustainability of society and environment. Through the development of the Circles of Coastal Sustainability framework applied to Jakarta and the Ciliwung River, research led to the identification of key indicators in each domain that necessitate action for improvement. Thus, complementary solutions were developed that highlight educational initiatives that establish a transdisciplinary approach to the nuanced problems facing the Ciliwung River Basin.

All in all, through this project, it can be seen that the Alliance and the possibility to work together with people from other universities and other countries has brought us to a feasible and creative innovation. Global Challenges for Sustainability can be seen as a catalyst for this in Higher Education.

Tackling Health Challenges Through Internationally Linked Research Hubs

Dr. Sandra Crnko (University Medical Center Utrecht), Dr. Sonia Cantel (University of Montpellier, Institute of Biomolecules Max Mousseron), Vanessa Viganò (University of Montpellier), Annet van der Riet (Utrecht University), Dr. Niels Bovenschen (Utrecht University, University Medical Center Utrecht), Dr. Gilles Subra (University of Montpellier, Institute of Biomolecules Max Mousseron)

In today's globalized world, addressing health challenges requires approaches that cross disciplinary and national boundaries. Together with the CHARM-EU Alliance, we have developed an innovative educational module, Tackling health challenges in internationally linked research hubs, designed to foster transcultural collaboration in health research and education.

The first edition of this module was delivered in the academic year 2024–2025 in collaboration between Utrecht University (UU) and the University of Montpellier (UM), combining hybrid education with on-site activities. The module kicked off with a conference in Montpellier that brought together students, researchers, medical doctors, and patients, all offering their perspectives on the selected health challenge. The topic changes yearly, and for the first edition, the focus was on colorectal cancer.

Students worked in interdisciplinary and international teams on real-life health challenges brought forward by researchers from both institutions. Feedback from participants and stakeholders confirmed the value of combining different academic and cultural perspectives in addressing complex health problems. Students reported a strong sense of ownership, a deeper understanding of the research process, and increased confidence in working across cultures. The module concluded with a final pitch session in a conference-like setting, where student teams presented their research proposals to peers, researchers, and external stakeholders. This format encouraged constructive feedback and fostered exchange between institutions, providing a platform to share early-stage ideas and build research networks.

Following the elective module, selected students had the option to embark on a six-month lab-based research internship at one of the participating universities, where they could explore their topic hands-on in a real research setting. The internship includes opportunities for international exchange, further strengthening the link between research, education, and mobility within CHARM-EU.

Based on the success of this pilot between UU and UM, the model is now being further developed with the aim of including more CHARM-EU partner institutions. The combination of challenge-based education, hands-on research experience, and intercultural exchange offers a scalable and impactful approach to educating future professionals equipped to tackle global health issues.

A Transnational Living Laboratory for Societal Impact: UNIC Centre for City Futures

Dr. Gwen de Bruin, UNIC, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Lisenne Giel, MSc., UNIC, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Post-industrial cities across Europe face urgent challenges of inequality, sustainability, migration, and governance. Meeting these challenges calls for new forms of collaboration between universities and cities, that extend beyond isolated projects, to reshape both urban futures and higher education itself. The UNIC Centre for City Futures (CCF) was established to strengthen such partnership. It functions as a transnational living laboratory, linking the ten universities in the UNIC alliance and their post-industrial cities to co-create knowledge, innovation, and pathways for transformation. The centre's work is organised through a multi-level framework: on the microlevel local CityLabs function as living labs for experimentation, on the mesolevel transnational projects connect cities around shared issues, and on the macrolevel mission partnerships embed collaboration in long-term strategies. CCF activities are guided by the Open Discovery Process (ODP), a structured method for linking city challenges to research, teaching, and innovation. Each city contributes a City Futures Roadmap, setting out its local priorities while connecting them into a shared European framework for transformation. Through this framework, the centre brings together universities, municipalities, businesses, civil society, and environmental actors. It supports the integration of city engagement into the four university missions of education, research, innovation, and service to society and contributes to addressing societal challenges in ways that are both locally grounded and internationally connected. In doing so, the CCF demonstrates how universities and cities can move from short-term pilots to systemic change and from local interventions to collective European missions.

INVESTing in excellence: how INVEST Centre of Excellence reinforces European research and regional competitiveness?

Hélène Goeury, INVEST European University Alliance Project Manager - University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne, Louise Depermentier, INVEST European University Alliance Communication Officer - University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne

The INVEST European university alliance (INnoVations of rEgional SustainabiliTy) has placed research excellence at the core of its strategy with the creation of a Centre of Excellence in Research, Development and Innovation. This INVEST flagship project is at the heart of Work Package 6, which is coordinated by the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne. The INVEST CoE was officially launched in October 2024 to address one of Europe's higher education key challenge: how to structure collaborative research that strengthens both regional development and European competitiveness? With the tagline “Advancing knowledge, driving sustainability, bridging regions”, the INVEST CoE aims to provide a framework for joint excellence and innovation philosophy, that connects research communities, infrastructures and stakeholders across border.

Built on the strengths of 7 European universities, the INVEST CoE mobilises knowledge and expertise through 7 thematic clusters, already gathering over 160 researchers:

1. Sustainable and smart agriculture
2. Renewable energy and energy transition
3. Water resources management
4. Education and capacity building
5. Urban–rural relationships
6. Circular and bio-based economy,
7. New business models and smart technologies.

Each cluster is co-led by partner universities to foster a spirit of interdisciplinary and collaboration.

At regional level, the INVEST CoE aims to anchor its research in local innovation ecosystems, ensuring strong links with businesses and policymakers. By doing so, it strengthens Europe’s capacity to innovate in key sustainability domains while creating long-term impact on territorial cohesion.

At European level, the INVEST CoE contributes to competitiveness by advancing research excellence and offering tangible opportunities for researchers at all stages of their career, thus attracting talents:

- Doctoral candidates benefit from co-supervised theses and international mobility
- Early-career researchers gain an easier access to European networks and capacity-building in proposal writing

- Senior researchers can engage in leadership roles, project coordination and policy dialogue.

This integrated approach not only enhances individual careers but also builds collective capacity to respond to regional challenges.

By showcasing INVEST CoE governance model and opportunities for researchers, the poster would demonstrate how European University alliances can serve as catalysts for delivering excellence in research and impact for our regions, thus enhancing Europe's competitiveness.

Montpellier, City of Science: A Transdisciplinary Exploration of Water in the City

Vanessa Vignano, University of Montpellier

In the context of growing global and European priorities around sustainability and intercultural dialogue, the University of Montpellier has developed Montpellier, City of Science: Water and the City, an innovative geolocated learning tour. This initiative highlights water as both a local and universal theme: crucial to Montpellier's identity as a Mediterranean city and central to European debates on climate change, resource management, and sustainable urban development.

This geolocated tour has been created using a transdisciplinary approach, in collaboration with the CHARM-EU university alliance's team. Two students designed it during their internship, following a student-centered approach, and in collaboration with municipality officers, academics and researchers from diverse field of expertise, and the university's IT educationalists. By co-creating this tour, we ensured that diverse perspectives were integrated into its content, from natural sciences and health to history, society, and urban planning. This blend of scientific knowledge with cultural heritage allows the final product to be of interest to a widest audience, outside the university usual reach.

Accessible through a smartphone application, the self-guided tour leads participants through emblematic sites in Montpellier's historic center. Along the route, participants encounter scientific insights, historical anecdotes, and interactive challenges, encouraging them to actively engage with the intersections between water, science, and society.

The pedagogical design of the tour reflects principles of situated learning and technology enhanced: knowledge is constructed in real-world settings, where participants physically experience the city's spaces while engaging with digital tools. This learning experience sensitizes university students, staff, and the wider public to the significance of water in both local and global contexts, while also fostering curiosity, dialogue, and cultural appreciation.

In addition, this excursion, available in English and French, will be integrated in CHARM's master water track and will be open to the whole university as well. It aims to open exchanges across Higher Education Institutions, promoting sustainability, intercultural understanding, and the complementarity of knowledge across countries. Water in the City is a first step to open exchanges across disciplines and borders, demonstrating how local initiatives can strengthen European competitiveness.

The Competitive Edge of European Communities: Piloting Strategic Collaboration in CHARM-EU

Nicolas De Keyser, Researcher at Hochschule Ruhr West, Simone Roth, Professor of Marketing at Hochschule Ruhr West, Ines Müller-Vogt, CHARM-EU Manager at Hochschule Ruhr West.

The European Universities Initiative (EUI) was launched to enhance both the global competitiveness and internal cohesion of the European Higher Education Area. In this context, the CHARM-EU alliance has acted as a living laboratory for institutional transformation, seeking new approaches to strengthen collaboration across universities, disciplines, and stakeholder roles.

This poster presents the design, implementation, and evaluation of a series of seven internal networking pilots steered by CHARM-EU Work Package 9.2, the task group within the alliance responsible for advancing sustainable internal community building. Guided by theories of Communities of Practice, Networked Improvement Communities, and meta-organizational governance, the pilot formats were informed by six inductively and deductively co-created Guiding Principles: agile working, inclusive engagement, transparent communication, intercultural awareness, collaborative participation, and innovation. Each pilot was tailored to a thematic focus (e.g., engineering, language teaching, student governance) and evaluated using mixed methods, with over 150 participants from across CHARM-EU's nine partner institutions.

Findings show that structured-yet-flexible networking formats can significantly improve relationship-building, mutual learning, and strategic alignment. Iterative refinements to session design, onboarding, and facilitation led to improved participant satisfaction and outcomes over time. In this way, the pilots offer a scalable model for embedding collaboration within and across institutions—an essential dimension of European competitiveness.

Building on these foundations, CHARM-EU is now developing a set of follow-up initiatives to structurally anchor pilot impact. A micro-credential system will award digital badges to participants, and a Facilitator Badge will be introduced to recognize agile, community-oriented stewardship within the alliance. Additionally, a new publication series will consolidate interinstitutional insight and strengthen the visibility and viability of networking and community building as strategic instruments for transdisciplinary alliance improvement.

Taken together, these activities demonstrate how CHARM-EU is translating the broader ambitions of the EUI into practical, evidence-informed mechanisms for institutional integration, professional development, and innovation capacity. The approach not only supports CHARM-EU's long-term cohesion and resilience but also contributes to a more competitive and collaborative European Higher Education Area.

Diverse Views, Shared Insights: Medical Assistance in Dying Reflections in European Healthcare (EUroMAiD)

Dr. Dennis Demedts (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium), Prof. Dr. Greg Moorlock (University of Warwick, UK), Prof. Dr. Luis Lapao (Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Portugal), Prof. Dr. Marija Milavec-Kapun (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia), Prof. Dr. Maaïke Fobelets (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium)

The EUroMAiD project, funded by Erasmus+ KA2, brings together universities from Belgium, Slovenia, Portugal, and the United Kingdom to address the complexities of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) within the context of European healthcare education. Grounded in the EUTOPIA European University Alliance, this collaboration includes Vrije Universiteit Brussel, University of Ljubljana, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, and University of Warwick. Together, these institutions leverage their diverse academic strengths to co-create a blended, cross-cultural educational platform focused on end-of-life care.

The project's primary objective is to enhance evidence-based clinical reasoning, ethical preparedness, and cultural competence among nursing and healthcare students who will encounter MAiD in their future professional practice. Activities within the project include developing an online module covering legal, ethical, and intercultural perspectives on MAiD; producing interactive virtual simulations and a good-practice video; and organizing international student events that feature debates, role-play, and capacity-building exercises. Additional efforts focus on evaluating digital and pedagogical resources and exploring nurse leadership roles in MAiD.

EUroMAiD is embedded in EUTOPIA's Connected Community framework, which fosters distributed leadership, ongoing dialogue, and the integration of education, research, and civic engagement across its partner universities. Through sustained cross-border interaction among students, educators, healthcare professionals, and ethics experts, the project promotes a standardized and accessible approach to MAiD education across Europe.

Expected outcomes include heightened factual and ethical sensitivity toward MAiD, improved cross-cultural understanding, and strengthened capacity for evidence-based decision-making in healthcare. These efforts will contribute to broader European goals of educational inclusion and innovation. The project's activities will be widely disseminated via institutional and alliance platforms, public events, and conferences.

By advancing innovative pedagogical approaches and integrating them into curricula and policy frameworks, EUroMAiD aims to prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals for the ethical challenges of end-of-life care. The project's collaborative methodology and engagement within the EUTOPIA alliance position it as a driver of educational transformation, fostering a more connected, resilient, and socially engaged European higher education landscape.

Bridging Education and Employment: Connecting Students with the Labour Market

Heloise Zilotti, Erasmus Student Network

Recognising the challenge of preparing international students for an evolving job market requires a new model of education directly connected to the market's needs. By fostering collaboration between academia and industry, a learning environment can be created where students work on real-world problems, strengthen their employability, and actively contribute to Europe's digital and green transitions, allowing students to gain hands-on experience tackling societal and business challenges, while embedding innovation and business partnerships into the Erasmus+ Programme.

Encouraging the creation of sustainable cooperation models between universities and businesses can allow students to engage in challenge-based learning, directly addressing real-world issues posed by companies, while enhancing innovative educational methods.

Focused on fostering competencies in critical areas such as digital transformation, sustainable development, and social entrepreneurship (in accordance with the EU competence framework), we are developing in cooperation with key stakeholders around Europe an Erasmus Talent and Innovation Labs model which improves the employability of Erasmus+ students and Alumni.

This innovative vision contributes to wider European objectives: enhancing graduate employability, supporting sustainable collaboration across sectors, and contributing to Europe's competitiveness in a rapidly evolving global landscape. By positioning these Labs as a model of scalable and transferable practice, we engage in the discussion and propose an innovative solution on how internationalisation can be reshaped to better prepare students for the future of work.

Playing Out the Alliance: Gamified Pathways to Intercultural and Interinstitutional CHARM-EU Literacy

Nicolas De Keyser, researcher at Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences, Klara Schneider, educationalist at Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences, Julia Thalmann, professor at Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences

The European Universities Initiative seeks deeper cohesion and stronger global competitiveness by helping universities culturally understand one another, coordinate effectively, and act collectively. This poster presents two CHARM-EU game-based engagements used at Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences that render the Alliance's intricacies visible and discussable, inviting participants to explore—through play—how its structures, vocabulary, and mobility opportunities work in practice.

The first activity is a competitive, Monopoly-inspired game that swaps conventional property spaces for CHARM-EU locations and replaces standard event decks with terminology drawn from CHARM-EU. Players move through an Alliance-mapped board, encounter scenarios written in the Alliance's own lexicon, and confront the institutional trade-offs that accompany joint programs, mobility initiatives, open science efforts, and inclusivity aspirations. The second activity is a cultural game that uses short prompts and visual cues to suggest a CHARM-EU partner to visit. Used at internationally-oriented events, the quiz has supported dissemination and awareness-raising, prompted conversations about intercultural understanding and mobility, and provided an approachable point of entry for audiences unfamiliar with the Alliance.

In both instances the aim is to start to build Alliance literacy: a shared grasp of how roles, rules, and resources interact across institutions and cultures. Gamification translates complex organizational scaffolding into stories and choices that people can try out together, making it easier to compare expectations, notice bottlenecks, and surface assumptions. This approach follows a well-worn pedagogical tradition—particularly in economics and public policy—where games model incentives to illuminate real-world dynamics. In the Ruhr West context, playful formats have become catalysts for informed CHARM-EU participation, aligning everyday engagement with the broader strategic intent of transnational collaboration.

By raising awareness of how CHARM-EU operates and how its structures work, these games support the mission of the European Universities Initiative: a more coherent, innovative, and—through better understanding and shared meaning—more competitive European Higher Education Area. The poster will outline the design principles guiding both engagements, reflect on lessons from event deployments, and invite attendees to experience the short games and contribute ideas for adaptation in curricula, staff development, outreach, and other European University Alliances.

Facilitating EU-Competitiveness Every Day: The CHARM-EU Joint Virtual Administrative Office (JVAO)

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European University Alliances are catalysts for innovation, sustainability and competitiveness in higher education. This poster presents the CHARM-EU Joint Virtual Administrative Office (JVAO), a unique transnational team which operationalises a joint master's programme across nine partner universities which directly strengthens European competitiveness.

The JVAO drives innovation at the heart of daily work through eight interconnected areas:

- Orientation & Communication – hosting alliance-wide pre-arrival sessions and regular online meetings with students to create a seamless welcome and foster intercultural competencies.
- One Grading Scheme – One Degree – implementing a single joint diploma, aligned grading system and common policies that enhance academic quality and cross-border recognition.
- New Education – pioneering collaborative processes that bring academics, administrators and students together to design transdisciplinary, challenge-based learning for joint programmes.
- Student Involvement – embedding student voices in all boards and councils, collecting feedback and strengthening democratic governance.
- Time Management – coordinating an academic calendar across three time zones and nine institutions.
- Mobility – supporting Erasmus+ and intra-alliance mobility while integrating blended and virtual exchanges.
- Integrated Admissions – providing a single application and admission process to welcome a diverse European student body.
- Team Collaboration – sustaining a dynamic, cross-institutional office culture, exemplified by annual in-person strategy meetings.

By streamlining administration, enabling student mobility, and creating a genuinely joint academic environment, the JVAO enhances Europe's digital and green transitions, builds transversal skills, and supports innovation and entrepreneurship. It offers a scalable model for other alliances seeking to boost European competitiveness through cooperative governance and shared infrastructure.

This case study illustrates how a Joint Virtual Administrative Office acts as a backbone for transdisciplinary collaboration and a competitive European Higher Education Area.

Alliance-integrated transdisciplinary mentorship networks: leveraging EMJMD alumni and faculty for regional innovation and European competitiveness

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Regional innovation clusters are geographically concentrated networks of research institutions, start-ups, industry, and policy stakeholders that drive economic growth, knowledge transfer, and societal impact. While Europe hosts numerous such clusters, integration of globally mobile, transdisciplinary talent into these ecosystems remains limited. Erasmus Mundus Joint master's degrees (EMJMDs) attract highly skilled students globally, providing interdisciplinary training, international mobility, and intercultural competencies, yet structured pathways to embed this expertise into European regional clusters are often underdeveloped.

This poster proposes the need for creation of alliance-integrated transdisciplinary mentorship networks, leveraging CHARM-EU's multi-university alliance infrastructure to connect EMJMD students and alumni with faculty, teaching committees, and local cluster stakeholders. The network's goal is to transform student mobility and transdisciplinary training into measurable contributions to regional innovation and European competitiveness.

The initiative is anchored on five actionable components:

1. Structured mentorship chains: Students are paired with faculty, teaching committees, and regional cluster leaders to co-develop projects addressing concrete local innovation challenges.
2. Cluster focused project engagement: Mentorship activities target regional innovation needs, enabling students to contribute to R&D initiatives, prototypes, policy briefs, and start-up collaborations embedded within CHARM-EU partner regions.
3. Integration into regional ecosystems: Outputs from mentorship such as prototypes, research publications, and policy recommendations feed directly into local clusters, ensuring tangible regional impact.
4. Alliance-wide interoperability: CHARM-EU digital platforms facilitate cross-border coordination, resource sharing, project tracking, and collaboration across multiple institutions and clusters.
5. Evaluation metrics: Success is assessed through outputs (number of mentorship pairs, joint projects, prototypes) and outcomes (student employment in regional innovation initiatives, measurable contributions to clusters, enhanced transdisciplinary skill application, and cross-institutional collaboration).

For example, a student in an EMJMD health related program could collaborate with faculty and a regional biotech start-up to develop a diagnostic tool prototype for local disease surveillance, producing a policy brief to inform regional health initiatives.

In conclusion, by embedding mentorship activities within CHARM-EU regional ecosystems, network converts mobility and interdisciplinary expertise into strategic drivers of regional and European competitiveness, fostering innovation, intercultural collaboration, and sustainable integration of global talent. This approach directly addresses CHARM-EU priorities of mobility, employability, transdisciplinary collaboration, and regional development.

The CBL Game, from playful dialogue to purposeful CBL design

Sabine Uijl & Michèle Gerbrands (Utrecht University)

This poster presents The CBL Game—a facilitated serious game that helps educational teams design challenge-based learning (CBL)—and the workshop formats built around it. Play is essential to how we learn, grow, and connect. When we learn through play, we step into a safe space for exploration. CBL connects learning to authentic societal challenges, strengthens learner agency and collaboration, and leads to outcomes that transfer into practice. The design however is not standard. We aim to inspire teachers and help them along their CBL journey.

The CBL Game can be played in compact sessions (half-day or full-day), with teams of 4–20, who learn about designing CBL through three rounds of structured gameplay followed by a guided reflection step. Using curated prompts, participants negotiate design choices based on the design principles of CBL, as defined by the EWUU alliance.

The poster outlines the purpose, the game and the workshops. Expected outcomes—when the game is used in a workshop—are a shared CBL vocabulary and a context-ready blueprint to advance purposeful CBL design.

The workshops are offered through challenge-based-learning.eu. The game is powered by the alliance of Technical University Eindhoven, Wageningen University and Research, Utrecht University and University Medical Centre Utrecht.

Transnational Online Learning in the CHARM-EU Alliance: A Gateway to International Education

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The CHARM-EU Alliance offers transnational online courses that provide students with international learning experiences without physical mobility. Pre-participation surveys show motivations including career advancement, skill development, and flexibility. This initiative supports academic growth and professional development through transnational collaboration, preparing students for future global opportunities.

The CHARM-EU Alliance is piloting a transformative approach to international higher education by offering students access to hybrid and online courses across its partner universities. This initiative enables students to participate in international learning without physical mobility, making CHARM-EU's education more inclusive and accessible. This poster highlights student motivations for participating in transnational online learning, based on pre-participation surveys conducted in 2024. Many students are driven by a desire to gain international experience, improve their English skills, and engage with prestigious universities. Others seek career advancement, enhanced CVs, and professional credentials. Flexibility in balancing coursework with personal and professional responsibilities is key, with students valuing the chance to experience international education from home. They expect these courses to provide access to expertise and content not available at their home universities, thus enriching students' academic portfolios and broadening their opportunities.

This initiative is expected to support academic and professional development, helping students gain new skills, build intercultural connections, and boost confidence. This research offers novel insights into student motivations for transnational online learning, showing how hybrid and online models can enhance collaboration and support professional growth without requiring physical mobility.

Living Pasts, Exploring Futures: A Transdisciplinary and Community-Engaged Educational Experiment

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Founded in 2019, Living Pasts emerged at Utrecht University (UU) from a shared ambition among educators to rethink how students engage with the past through digital media and community collaboration. The course was designed around four core principles: design-based learning, transdisciplinary education, community engagement, and co-creation.¹ Students develop digital prototypes using design research methods over six weeks, culminating in the public presentation of their prototype projects. By working with external stakeholders such as archives, museums, and provincial organizations, students bridge academic inquiry with non-academic contexts, producing prototypes that hold tangible value for local communities.

In 2023, this educational model was extended to Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest through the CHARM-EU alliance. This marked a new phase of international collaboration under the title Living Pasts, Exploring Futures – Budapest Edition. Students and teachers from both universities connected digitally throughout the course, working together on shared heritage themes while exploring new pedagogical and intercultural modalities. Interaction took place in multiple formats, including group-to-group, one-on-one, and breakout-group sessions. These activities encouraged dialogue, peer feedback, and joint assignments. For many students, this was their first experience collaborating with international peers in such an integrative and digital learning environment. Beyond the student experience, the collaboration also fostered professional growth among teaching staff. Educators from both institutions experimented with facilitative teaching approaches, reflective practices, and cross-cultural course design. This experience not only deepened mutual understanding of the Living Pasts philosophy but also advanced shared pedagogical innovation across European higher education contexts.

The Living Pasts model demonstrates how co-creation, design thinking, and community engagement can be combined to foster inclusive and interdisciplinary learning environments that connect education, research, and societal impact. It helps students to explore the past while envisioning more connected and sustainable futures.