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CHARM-EU – Recalibrated Mission (2026–2036)

A European University for a Sustainable, Democratic and Resilient Future

1. Mission and vision

CHARM-EU is a university alliance that stands for and fiercely defends European values around a sustainable democratic world through collaborative cross-boundary educational offerings grounded in science, research, and academic freedom. We tackle societal challenges such as environmental and climate issues, health and societal well-being, social and democratic governance and technological sovereignty.

In an era of accelerating geopolitical, technological, environmental, and societal disruptions, CHARM-EU commits to developing a deeply integrated transnational university ecosystem capable of generating transformative knowledge, high-quality education, and societal impact across borders. We seek to create new arenas for dialogue, academic curiosity, and disagreement, and develop skills of critical thinking and communication, among others.

Building on its original mission, all CHARM-EU partner universities jointly commit to a long-term, structural and systemic transnational cooperation aligned with the European Education Area and European Research Area.

This expanded mission reflects:

- our foundational values and long-term commitments,
- the achievements of CHARM-EU to date,
- the expectations and priorities of the European Universities Initiative, including inter-university campus development, joint innovative education, flexible learning pathways, institutional transformation, and deep cooperation across the knowledge square,
- the need to generate value for its key stakeholders (students, university staff and society), and
- our ambition to shape Europe’s role in the world over the next decade.

By 2036, CHARM-EU aims to be recognised globally as:

- A fully interoperable European inter-university campus, enabling seamless movement of students, academics, researchers, and staff; joint educational offerings,

shared infrastructures; joint digital ecosystems; and coherent quality assurance practices.

- A model of connected high standards, linking education, research, innovation, and service to society through mission-led, transdisciplinary approaches addressing pressing European and global challenges including climate and biodiversity crises, sustainable prosperity, digital transformation, public health, democracy and governance, and societal cohesion.
- A civic-driven and inclusive community, where all learners—traditional, non-traditional, lifelong, part-time, professional, and adult learners—find flexible pathways, personalised curricula, multilingual opportunities, and inclusive support structures that remove barriers to participation.
- An engine of talent, innovation, and competitiveness, embedded in regional innovation ecosystems across all partner countries and contributing to Europe's priorities by developing and circulating the high-level skills and competencies needed for Europe's green, digital, and industrial transitions.
- A trusted governance model rooted in our robust institutional cooperation, and interoperable digital services. .

2. Foundational Principles and Values

CHARM-EU's recalibrated mission is anchored in the core values reaffirmed during the 2024–2030 strategic process. These values guide all strategic decisions and are essential for achieving our mission of building a truly European, integrated, transformative university alliance. They are both aspirational and operational:

- Student-centred and co-creation with learners at all levels,
- Social responsibility, aligning all strands of our activity with societal needs,
- Transdisciplinarity, integrating academic disciplines and societal knowledge in joint problem definition, learning processes and solution development across education, research and community engagement,
- Sustainability in environmental, economic and social dimensions,
- Transparency, open science and open education,
- Innovation in pedagogy, research, governance and technology,
- Inclusion and diversity, ensuring equitable participation and success, and
- Interculturality, rooted in the diversity of our nine member institutions and associate partners.

Together, these values ensure that CHARM-EU operates not only as a network of cooperating institutions but as a shared knowledge-creation environment addressing complex societal challenges.

3. Enablers for Mission Delivery

This recalibrated mission incorporates the following four enablers with the aim of making CHARM-EU's actions operationalizable, scalable and sustainable:

- A robust yet flexible governance framework supporting long-term sustainable cooperation.
- Participative and agile ways of working involving internal and external communities.
- Technological leverage to enhance education, research, innovation and administrative efficiency.
- A culture of diversity and inclusion permeating all levels of CHARM-EU.

4. Our Strategic Pillars (2026–2036)

Drawing on the 2024–2030 Strategic Planning and the value propositions and enablers validated by the Strategic Board, CHARM-EU will pursue the following strategic targets which we cluster into four pillars:

Pillar 1. A Deeply Integrated Inter-Institutional Campus and Integrated Governance

CHARM-EU will strengthen its institutional integration and continue developing a European inter-university campus with shared course catalogues, digital and quality management tools, and joint innovative learning environments organised along the following targets:

- Embedded mobility for all through physical and blended mobility and virtual exchanges.
- Automatic academic recognition and standardised students' records exchanged through an improved interoperability of digital systems and data architectures.
- Catalyst for the creation of an enlarged academic community by fostering meaningful collaboration among its member universities, associate partners, and wider external stakeholders, aligning diverse interests around shared European values, mutual learning, and collective impact. Developing advanced shared governance structures, supporting effective decision-making and equitable participation of all partners.
- Promoting inclusive and transparent governance mechanisms with meaningful student representation.
- Integrating administrative structures, enabling resource pooling (human, financial, digital, physical). Fostering continuous staff development, supporting training, mobility, and career progression and enhancement for academic, research and administrative staff.

Pillar 2. Innovative Joint Education and Lifelong Learning for a Changing Europe

CHARM-EU will mainstream its educational innovation activities, including lifelong learning, through the following four actions:

- Shared joint study programs and joint curricula, including pathways ready for the European Degree framework.

- Innovative pedagogies, including challenge-based learning and research-enriched curricula, with a special focus on inclusion and widening participation strategies.
- Personalized learning pathways supported by strong pedagogical and technological innovation.
- Scalable lifelong learning and upskilling offerings through modular courses and micro credentials aligned with regional and European skills agendas and accessible to diverse learners.
- Enhancing employability, creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, critical thinking, AI literacy, sustainability competencies, and transversal skills.

Pillar 3. Transdisciplinary Research, Innovation & Societal Engagement

Aligned with the European Universities' role as drivers of innovation ecosystems, this pillar includes the following actions:

- R&I research joint activities aligned with the European Research Area priorities and anchored in mission-oriented challenges based on CHARM-EU's shared strengths: climate neutrality, planetary health, digital transformation, and democratic resilience, among others.
- Transdisciplinary research communities co-producing knowledge with external stakeholders.
- Challenge-driven collaborations linking students and academics with public authorities, companies, SMEs, start-ups, NGOs and citizen groups.
- Shared infrastructures and data spaces, promoting open science and collaborative research through matchmaking services.
- Civic engagement as a core feature, reinforcing democratic participation, inclusion, and science diplomacy.

Pillar 4. Strategic Engagement & Global Partnerships

In alignment with both CHARM-EU's original vision and EU priorities, the alliance will:

- Strengthen community engagement by connecting regional and local stakeholders - citizens, public authorities, civil society organisations, and socio-economic actors - to the alliance's educational, research and innovation activities, ensuring mutual learning between European and global contexts.
- Act as a lighthouse for the sector, sharing prototypes, models, tools and evidence with universities, policymakers and society across Europe and beyond.
- Engage with diverse global partners aligned with EU values and academic standards.
- Contribute to Europe's global scientific and diplomatic engagement, especially in areas such as sustainability, democracy, and technological sovereignty.

5. Long-Term Transformation and Impact

CHARM-EU's recalibrated mission is explicitly transformational with the aim of:

- contributing to the realisation of the fifth freedom (free circulation of knowledge and innovation) through deep, structural integration,
- providing models for the future joint degrees, interoperable campuses and joint academic structures,
- strengthening Europe's democratic, economic and social resilience,
- shaping the global role of European universities through partnerships aligned with EU values and knowledge security principles, and
- serving as a lighthouse for other alliances, sharing tools, frameworks and prototypes for transnational education and research governance.

6. Endorsement and Long-Term Commitment

The Rectors as legal representatives of all CHARM-EU partner universities confirm:

- their full endorsement of the CHARM-EU Joint Long-Term Mission Statement (approved by the CHARM-EU Strategic Board 12th of November 2025),
- their commitment to the alliance for the full duration of the 2026–2036 strategic horizon,
- their intention to continue the support of shared structures (and implement new ones if needed), governance mechanisms, academic activities and interoperability developments described herein, and
- their joint responsibility for advancing European integration, academic excellence and societal impact.

Barcelona, February 23rd 2026

Prof. Joan Guàrdia Olmos
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Coordinator of CHARM-EU