COMMUNICATION AND **DISSEMINATION** STRATEGY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This communication plan outlines the overall approach for communicating strategically about RIS4CIVIS. It outlines key objectives and goals, identifies key stakeholders and communication channels, and describes communication and dissemination guidelines, activities and how their success will be evaluated.

As all communication actions are iterative processes, the present communication and dissemination will majorly focus on actions to be taken during the first year of the project. Proceeding as such will allow WP5 for a regular reassessment of the tactics and strategies in place to update the plan to better cater to the target audiences' needs and to better adapt to the unfolding of RIS4CIVIS over the three-year funding by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement n°101016691).

The present communication plan is hinged on a *tailored* version of a classical conversion funnel, widely used in digital marketing and communication strategies. Admittedly, one must bear in mind that this model is but a framework within which RIS4CIVIS's communication plan is being integrated and that other pertinent RIS4CIVIS-related aspects will, of course, be included (e.g. internal ownership and understanding of the project, harmonised dissemination of results, content and outputs in all Member Universities, broad internal outreach, etc.). The RIS4CIVIS funnel is divided into **four main communication stages** that are closely linked to a communication and dissemination objective: (1) **awareness-raising**, (2) **acting as a catalyst in EU Universities and University Alliances cooperation and collaboration**, (3) **asserting our position as an Alliance to reckon with**, and (4) **further contributing to building the future of Higher Education**.

Each objective and funnel step is related to a series of actions to help achieve them. The funnel model will help us create more tailored content and adapt our strategies accordingly.

As such, the **first stage (M1-M6)** will be articulated around a pedagogical vision of the project to gradually convey an image of a recognized expert, while ensuring that awareness is raised on RIS4CIVIS. This first stage will set the foundation on which we will share and disseminate the project's objectives and outputs, to relevant audiences. While phase 1 will also help the CIVIS community understand the articulation between CIVIS and RIS4CIVIS, strong emphasis will be put on both sources of funding's opportunities (that is, Horizon 2020 for RIS4CIVIS, and Erasmus+ for CIVIS).

The **second stage** will be activated throughout **M6-M16** as the project will have already yielded tangible and exploitable results (namely WP1 and WP2 deliverables). The overall aim of the second stage is to deploy communication actions and dissemination activities that will allow for creating a bridge between the CIVIS Alliance, European University Alliances, and European Universities that are not yet part of the European University Initiative as a means to optimise the project processes and outputs through experience and best practices sharing (barriers, solutions, etc.). Results from these exchanges will be the backbone of the series of recommendations RIS4CIVIS will put on the table when engaging with various multi-level policy-makers and stakeholders at the latest stages of the project.

The **third stage (M16-M35)** will focus, after the completion of WP3 and the launch of WP4, on implementing means to share RIS4CIVIS's Institutional Transformation Model with other Universities and Alliances in order that they can benefit from it and, hopefully, apply it to their own institutions. Stage three will also be a catalyst for CIVIS/RIS4CIVIS-European Commission DGs and services (DG Research & Innovation but also EAC, CNECT, and REGIO) collaboration.

The **fourth and final stage (M35 onwards)** will be dedicated to the dissemination and exploitation of RIS4CIVIS outputs with a major focus on meaningful exchanges and engagement with national and European policy-maker. The overall objective of phase 4 is to consolidate CIVIS as a force of excellence to reckon with in tackling 21st century challenges and paving the way for the Higher Education sector of tomorrow.

Summary

PHASE 1

- **Objective**: Raise awareness on the project to have CIVIS and RIS4CIVIS communities understand and take ownership of the project.
- **Core messages**: What is RIS4CIVIS? Where is it going? What is in it for me?
- **Main targets**: CIVIS communities as a whole with emphasis on those already involved in R&I
- **Duration**: M1-M6

PHASE 2

- **Objective**: Catalyse enhanced collaboration between CIVIS, European University Alliances and other European Universities that are not yet part of the European University Initiative.
- **Core message**: What have we done and how can it be of help to other European Universities and Alliances?
- **Main targets**: Other European Universities and Alliances
- **Duration**: M6-M16

PHASE 3

- **Objective**: Lay the foundation, through collaboration and experience sharing, for RIS4CIVIS recommendations to policy-makers. Share our Institutional Transformation Model to relevant parties and assert CIVIS's position as a force to reckon with.
- **Core message**: How can we capitalise on the project's results to foster change?
- **Main targets**: Other European Universities and European University Alliances, regional, national and European policy-makers, media outlets specialised in EU Affairs
- **Duration**: M16-M35

PHASE 4

- **Objective**: Meaningfully engage with relevant external multi-level stakeholders and policy-makers through the dissemination and exploitation of RIS4CIVIS's Institutional Transformation Model and its numerous outputs and results.
- **Core message**: Our collaborative work can be used as a blueprint to remove legal and regulatory hurdles and barriers to R&I cooperation among European Universities Alliances.
- **Main targets**: Regional, national and European policy-makers
- **Duration**: M35-onwards

Key objectives

Internal objectives

- To **present the project, its unfolding, primary and final results, and the RIS4CIVIS strategy** to raise awareness, notoriety and multi-level engagement within CIVIS.
- To have people understand that RIS4CIVIS is embedded in CIVIS.
- To create a **sense of ownership and understanding** of RIS4CIVIS within CIVIS's relevant communities (researchers, PhD, Post-Docs) and parties involved in the project (WP leaders and Module leaders and their respective taskforces) and to showcase the breadth and depth of the advantages such project can provide.
- To **benefit from CIVIS's communication and dissemination channels, processes, guidelines and expanding communities** to communicate about RIS4CIVIS whilst exploring, where and when necessary or applicable, other innovative ways.
- To **ensure homogenous and balanced dissemination** of RIS4CIVIS content by all member Universities (full members or associate member(s)).
- To **strategically tap into each member Universities' communication strategies, networks and Technology Transfer Offices** to broaden our reach and engagement.

External objectives

- To build e**xternal awareness** on RIS4CIVIS.
- To **increase CIVIS's strike force** as other parties and various stakeholders are being brought to the project.
- To **catalyse new (or nurture already existing) collaborations and interactions** with other European Universities and European University Alliances, but also with multi-level policy-makers, whilst highlighting and exploring untapped potentials.
- To a**ssert the credibility of the Alliance and to act as a driving force** to be reckoned with in R&I in the European (Higher Education) ecosystem.

Target audiences

Internal targets

- Academic and research staff;
- Relevant administrative staff (*inter alia*: R&I, research and finance departments, liaison offices with the European Institutions);
- Member Universities' governing bodies (*inter alia*: Rectors and Presidents, Vice-Rectors and Vice-Presidents, Deans, Heads of Departments);
- Member Universities' external Research and Innovation ecosystems;
- Member Universities' local communities, partners and networks (civil society, political ties at various levels, businesses, hospital networks, etc.);
- Students and (future) PhD candidates.

External targets

- Other European University Alliances (pilots (17) and second wave (24));
- Other European Universities;
- Local, regional, national and European policy-makers and stakeholders;
- Media outlets and press organisations specialised in EU affairs, Higher Education, Industry, Business and R&I.

Communication and dissemination channels

Website
- www.civis.eu/ris4civis
- **Objective**: to provide up-to-date information about RIS4CIVIS activities and results, and provide direct access, when needed and allowed, to key documents and resources
- **Main targets**: all external and internal audiences

Facebook
- @CIVISEuropeanUniversity
- **Objective**: to bring attention to the broader community about RIS4CIVIS activities, outputs and key results
- **Main targets**: all internal and external audiences

Twitter
- @civis_eu
- #RIS4CIVIS
- **Objective**: to bring attention to the broader community about RIS4CIVIS general activities and updates
- **Main targets**: researchers, academics, key stakeholders (internal and external), media, etc.

Newsletters
- *CIVIS Info*: Informs, internally and weekly, on all project management and project development aspects: call for proposal, meeting invites, networking opportunities, etc.

- *CIVIS Highlights*: Summarize, every month, tangible, shareable and exploitable activities, outcomes and results to all parties directly involved in (RIS4)CIVIS.

- *CIVIS newsletters*: Showcase, quarterly, (RIS4)CIVIS activities, outcomes and results.

Embedding RIS4CIVIS in CIVIS Communication and dissemination channels

RIS4CIVIS on CIVIS Website

Key actions

As the CIVIS website has been designed to provide up-to-date general information about CIVIS, its objectives, its ongoing, past and future activities, and its results, it is a natural host for a RIS4CIVIS dedicated space.

As such, a **landing page** was created to fill it in and update it as the project unfolds whilst complying with the original scope of the website. This dedicated space will be used to provide general information about RIS4CIVIS as well as more tailored information and resources to RIS4CIVIS core audiences and is being complemented by the CIVIS Box (shared documents repository) whilst CIVIS Digital Campus and intranet platforms are under construction. This webspace will evolve as the project unfolds and the web strategy will be reassessed in M12 at the latest.

Note that RIS4CIVIS is highlighted on the homepage and researchers pages with strategically-placed shortcuts and that a "tag" on the "News" and "Event" sections has been created for immediate identification of all RIS4CIVIS content.

RIS4CIVIS on Facebook and Twitter

Key actions

RIS4CIVIS's presence on social media will be targeted to reach a range of different audiences, each using the most appropriate tools and channels. Successful social media activities will help increase RIS4CIVIS visibility and support its communication and dissemination plan. The overall idea behind our active social media presence is to **use these platforms to deconstruct the project and break it down to understandable and highly accessible content** (announcements, results, breakthroughs, etc.). Key content to be disseminated on social media includes, but is not restricted to:

- Presentation of RIS4CIVIS through a 360° content strategy
- Promotion of R&I-oriented activities, events, seminars, conferences, etc.
- RIS4CIVIS project milestones (as laid out in the four-phase communication plan)
- Data features to highlight the aggregate value of RIS4CIVIS
- Testimonies and success stories
- Promotion of relevant activities of the Alliance at large

A specific **editorial calendar**, **visual branding** and **hashtags** (#RIS4CIVIS esp. on Twitter) will support the immediate identification of RIS4CIVIS content, whilst sustaining the idea that this project is a part of CIVIS. No dedicated social media accounts will be created at this stage of the project to avoid mixed messages or a misunderstanding of how intertwined both initiatives are. Additionally, WP5 will maximise its social media efforts by tagging key accounts (e.g.**@MSCActions; @EU_H2020, @EUScienceInnov, @REA_research**) and using relevant hashtags (**#MSCA, #MSCAjobalert, #ResearchImpactEU, #H2020**) to maximise our reach out to a broader audience interested in R&I but have not yet heard of RIS4CIVIS and to the relevant European institutions. **RIS4CIVIS's Project Officer (PO) will also be notified, in advance, should an important campaign be launched** so he can ensure that key accounts from the European Commission support it and help RIS4CIVIS spread the word.

Whilst CIVIS's Communication Officer is to monitor RIS4CIVIS-related content and engage with it however s/he sees fit, CIVIS Member Universities are strongly encouraged to disseminate original content and interact with ours according to the collective dissemination of content agreement laid out in CIVIS communication and dissemination plan.

RIS4CIVIS in CIVIS newsletters

Key actions

At this stage, two emailing strategies have been put in place (an external newsletter (CIVIS newsletter) and an internal newsletter (CIVIS info)) and an additional one is underway (CIVIS Highlights):

- **CIVIS Info**: Informs, internally and weekly, on all project management and project development aspects: calls for proposals, meetings and workshops invitations, networking opportunities, etc.
- **CIVIS Highlights**: Summarize, every month, tangible, shareable and exploitable activities, outcomes and results to all parties directly involved in CIVIS.
- **CIVIS Newsletters**: Showcase, on a quarterly basis, CIVIS activities, outcomes and results.

The key action is to dedicate a **RIS4CIVIS section** on all three as well as the publication and dissemination of **"RIS4CIVIS in focus" reports** that will supplement the aforementioned newsletters. These reports will include in-depth coverage of specific aspects of the project implementation (milestone/deliverable- or outputs-based). All "RIS4CIVIS in focus" will be made available in a section on CIVIS's website (archives) and circulated to all 42 European University Alliances, to other European Universities, through RIS4CIVIS's University networks and on relevant social media channels (e.g. Yammer).

Specific actions will also be undertaken to enrich the existing subscription lists with key RIS4CIVIS contacts (see 1.4. target audiences). This database will also be populated from all Member Universities' contact lists and added to our mailing lists in a fashion and to the extent that is allowed by GDPR. Finally, Anticipating the creation of a newsletter dedicated to RIS4CIVIS, the subscription questionnaire to CIVIS newsletter will include a call to demonstration of interest.

Note

To ensure our GDPR compliance, all newsletters will only be sent to registered subscribers (which will include each Member University's authorities, communications department, and international relations department). Each Member University will then be at liberty to forward the newsletter to their registered audiences according to their internal mailing strategies.

To make up for the fact that the CIVIS Communication Officer is to select a limited amount of content in each newsletter, s/he will regularly send Member Universities content that did not make the cut (through the CIVIS Highlights). Each Member University is then at liberty to add them to their own newsletters and other dissemination channels.

To increase the CIVIS newsletter subscribers, each Member University is strongly encouraged to add, as and when they see fit, a newsletter registration call-to-action in their own mailing campaigns.

Outreach, dissemination and exploitation activities

Events
- RIS4CIVIS activities in Local and Global CIVIS Days
- FOREU Conference (M14)
- Closing Conference (M36)
- Participation in public events (e.g. R&I Days)
- Specific collegial awareness events for the academic community
- Specific collegial events for the CIVIS R&I community

Multi-scale meetings and networking
- (In)Formal group meetings with other European University Alliances
- Bilateral interactions and meetings with the European Commission (DGs Research & Innovation, CNECT, EAC, REGIO and DEVCO)
- Regular interactions with regional, national and European policy-makers
- CIVIS informal Group of MEPs in CIVIS countries (if applicable) in relevant Committees (ITRE, CULT and REGI)

Local initiatives
- Local initiatives aimed at presenting, promoting or showcasing RIS4CIVIS projects, objectives, outputs and results.

Dissemination-oriented levers
- Horizon Dashboard
- Horizon Result Platform
- Cordis
- Open Research Europe
- OpenAire
- Research and Innovation success stories
- Yammer

Outreach, dissemination and exploitation activities

To support communication efforts and to allow a wider community to benefit from our experience and results, to broaden RIS4CIVIS's visibility and to widely share research results with relevant external target groups (research communities, European University Alliances, European Universities, policy-makers, etc.), RIS4CIVIS will participate to and hold various events. These events will give an extraordinary edge to allow for, not only the mere sharing of our experiences, best practices and key results but also enable selected target audiences to learn, use, be inspired by and take them up.

Events

RIS4CIVIS activities in the CIVIS Days

CIVIS organises yearly events called "CIVIS Days", as a way to publicise its work and to generate a strong local dynamism around themes related to education, research and innovation. The CIVIS Days involve teachers, researchers, students, staff, and partners and focus on the interactions of the Alliance with the cities and the regions. These events involve both "Local CIVIS Days" in each Member University, and a large-scale "Global CIVIS Days" in the University chairing the CIVIS six-month presidency. These annual activities enable CIVIS to gain high visibility within our member universities and help focus the Alliance's dissemination and communication efforts over very specific periods, which enhances their impact.

The Local and Global CIVIS Days will be additional fora to support RIS4CIVIS's dissemination efforts. Not only will we hold R&I/RIS4CIVIS-oriented workshops, seminars, conferences, (in)formal meetings, but these events will be the ideal platforms for our internal and external R&I communities (end-users and relevant stakeholders and policy-makers to meet, exchange, take stock of results outputs and intelligence, and showcase RIS4CIVIS's expertise.

FOREU Conference (M14)

To meet RIS4CIVIS's objectives 1 and 2 (To optimise our project processes and outputs through the sharing of experiences and practices with other University Alliances and to share our experience, lessons learned and results, respectively), we, together with other Alliances, will be co-hosting and participating in a Forum of European Universities (FOREU) conference. This conference aims at discussing and sharing intelligence resulting from:
- the assessment of current and best practices;
- the progress made and our success stories implementing our long-term strategies;
- the identification of barriers - legal, financial and regulatory - as they present(ed) themselves at the local, regional, national or European levels.

Closing Conference (M36)

To mark the end of the project and to share our recommendations with national and European policy-makers (objective 3), we will organise a closing conference (M35) in Brussels· This event will bring together all the parties involved in RIS4CIVIS: European policy-makers concerned with Research, Digital, Education, Regional and other relevant sectoral policies, national and regional policy-makers, members of the CIVIS MEPs Group, other European Alliances and Universities. During the closing conference, we will not only share joint experiences and results yielded throughout the project, but this event will allow for an initial, informal review of the recommendations the Alliances are considering, and provide a forum to jointly consider how the various European funding programmes can be developed, and exploited, in a more synergistic manner.

Participation in public events (e.g. R&I Days)

Our participating in various public events, such as the R&I Days, European Researchers Night, or "Science is Wonderful", will allow us to reach as many people as possible, share our experience, emerging or completed results, engage in meaningful dialogue whilst asserting RIS4CIVIS's key role in co-building the European R&I landscape and its scientific excellence. Public events will also yield a positive public perception of our project and may lead to a wider engagement from external targets and end-users, thus paving the way for smoother exploitation of the results. We will also engage with various media outlets specialised in covering EU affairs, Higher Education, Industry, R&I and business (e·g. Politico, Euractiv, the Press Club, etc.) to participate and jointly host events (conferences, seminars, debates, etc.) to (1) talk about RIS4CIVIS and (2) share our expertise on R&I topics and the future of the European Research Area (ERA) and R&I in Europe.

R&I-oriented global events

WP5 will, in addition to other dissemination efforts, accompany module leaders and work package leaders in the promotion and hosting of specific collegial awareness events for the academic community (University communities at large) and specific collegial events for the CIVIS R&I community.

Multi-scale meetings and networking

RIS4CIVIS will thoughtfully engage in various meetings, some informal and some formal, with a wide array of key external stakeholders: from other European Alliances to European policy-makers. Amongst planned meetings are:

- Setting up (in)formal group meetings with other European University Alliances that will kick-off and nurture inter-university collaboration and dialogue. These meetings will allow for experience, lessons and best practices sharing and will help RIS4CIVIS frame its recommendations to the European Commission (and its relevant services) (phase 4);
- Regular bilateral interactions and meetings with the European Commission (DGs Research & Innovation CNECT, EAC, REGIO and DEVCO);
- Frequent interactions with regional, national and European policy-makers:
  - National Ministries, especially those responsible for Research, Innovation, Higher Education and Economy;
  - National agents in charge of the European Research Area (ERA) and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) agendas;
  - National and regional groups responsible for defining the national position on Horizon Europe and other relevant sectoral programmes;
  - Regional representatives and authorities managing the Structural Funds responsible for the Smart Specialisation Strategies and for implementing synergies between EU-funded schemes;
  - National and regional Permanent representations in Brussels.
- Setting up and chairing a "CIVIS informal Group of Members of the European Parliament" with representatives from all CIVIS countries (if applicable, i.e. Glasgow will not be represented). Carefully-selected MEPs will pertain to, be involved in, chair (be rapporteurs in relevant dossiers) pertinent Committees (i·e. ITRE, CULT and REGI). To complement these meetings, WP5 will also hold yearly events bringing together this core group of MEPs and some of their colleagues.

Local initiatives

Local initiatives dedicated to presenting, promoting or showcasing RIS4CIVIS projects, objectives, outputs and results: webinars, presentations, debates, seminars, conferences, campus tours, etc.

Dissemination-oriented levers

Other digital dissemination levers will be activated throughout the project, in line with the deliverables timeline, our objectives and outputs progress and completion.

We will explore the potential of EU-approved or suggested tools and platforms used by other previous EU-funded projects, their impact and reach is next to unparalleled and will help broaden RIS4CIVIS's reach and boost engagement around key results, whilst complying with the Open Science and FAIR essence of the project. Ensuring a digital presence on these platforms will also be an excellent way to engage with a larger scientific community potentially interested in discovering or taking up our results, to consolidate RIS4CIVIS's (and its internal communities') strategic position and to widen exploitation possibilities.

Examples of digital dissemination-oriented levers

- **Horizon Dashboard**: intuitive and interactive knowledge platform where one can extract statistics and data on EU Research and Innovation programmes – sorting by topics, countries, organisations, sectors, as well as individual projects and beneficiaries;
- **Success stories**: collection of the most recent success stories from EU-funded Research & Innovation projects;
- **Horizon Result Platform**: public platform that hosts and promotes research results. It helps to bridge the gap between research results and generating value for the economy and society;
- **Cordis**: multilingual articles and publications collection that highlights research results, based on an open repository of EU project information;
- **Open Research Europe**: public platform dedicated to the fast publication and open peer review for research stemming from Horizon 2020. Open Research Europe enables researchers to publish any research they wish to share, supporting reproducibility, transparency and impact;
- **OpenAire**: public platform that provides unlimited, barrier-free, open access to research outputs financed by public funding in Europe;
- **Yammer**: social network already used within CIVIS where an informal group of other European Alliances was set up;
- Any other appropriate means.

Promotional material

Graphic charter

- Logo in all formats
- Unified presentation templates
- Press release template
- Virtual conference backgrounds
- Email signatures

Presentation material

- **A set of presentations** will be developed to **introduce RIS4CIVIS** to various audiences (internal and external communities, directly-involved stakeholders) at various stages of the project
- **A set of slides** that briefly **outlines what opportunities (RIS4)CIVIS can bring** to researchers and academics will be created and be added by all Member University when presenting R&I opportunities (seminars, formal presentation, etc.)

Printed material

- General brochure, reports and leaflets
- Press kits, if and when needed
- Roll-up banners templates for all events (easily adaptable by all Member Universities)

Press releases

- Press releases will be published throughout the project's lifetime and will announce project activities, initiatives, events and relevant achievements.
- Available on the CIVIS website for download and sent out by all CIVIS member universities through their channels and media contact database

A FOURFOLD COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION ACTION PLAN

Phase 1: Awareness-raising campaign

The first stage (M1-M6) is articulated around a pedagogical vision of the project to gradually convey an image of a recognized expert while ensuring that awareness is raised around RIS4CIVIS. This first stage will set the foundation on which we will share and disseminate the project's objectives and outputs to relevant audiences.

Core objective	Presenting the project and the RIS4CIVIS strategy to increase awareness, notoriety and multi-level engagement.
Targets	**CIVIS Member Universities' academic** and **research** staff **CIVIS Member Universities' Administrative** staff **CIVIS Member Universities'** communities **Prospective PhD Candidates** (who will benefit from RIS4CIVIS transformation model)
Core messages	• RIS4CIVIS contributes to strengthening our R&I capacities but will also consolidate CIVIS as a European University that can significantly contribute to addressing major societal challenges, integrating research and innovation, in synergy with its educational dimension. • RIS4CIVIS enables the CIVIS consortium to contribute to the development of the European Research Area and future European Research and Innovation agendas. • RIS4CIVIS is built upon shared experiences, infrastructures and expertise. All academics, researchers and relevant administrative staff will play an essential role in its completion. • RIS4CIVIS is built on solid ground as CIVIS has achieved a great institutional environment for research and innovation. This is mainly due to the number of infrastructures that are and will be shared within the Alliance, such as Hubs and Open Labs, the scouting of funding opportunities such as CIVIS3i or MSCA, and the higher exposure to academia and other fields thanks to its commitment to interdisciplinary projects. • RIS4CIVIS benefits from CIVIS's considerable communication and dissemination efforts, reinforced by its link to society through Open Education, Open Access and Open Science. • RIS4CIVIS's impact and sustainability will also find their source in the extensive network of alumni and our commitment to deepen relationships with local communities and national as well as international policy-makers. • RIS4CIVIS will also benefit from CIVIS's transnational mobility and learning activities programmes to nurture the transfer of knowledge and amplify the opportunities for research collaborations, awareness and visibility.

Phase 1 of the communication and dissemination plan will be dedicated to raising awareness and enthusiasm around RIS4CIVIS. As such, WP5 will create various material and support RIS4CIVIS's internal communities' communication and presentation endeavours.

Visual branding

Visual branding is the cornerstone of RIS4CIVIS's awareness-raising campaign because not only will it give a tremendous edge in the European Universities Initiative landscape and other H2020-funded projects, RIS4CIVIS's brand strategy will help better understand it and distinguish it from other CIVIS content (as RIS4CIVIS will be embedded in the Alliance's communication and dissemination strategy). Our logo is visually impactful and a clear summary of who we are, where we are and what we do. Our graphic charter creates consistency and uniformity in all of RIS4CIVIS's communication actions, be they external or internal, whilst supporting the creation of a strong image that allows for easy recognition and top-of-mind notoriety.

Audiovisual promotion content

Creation of videos, infographics and articles on RIS4CIVIS (incl. interviews of WP and Modules leaders, "RIS4CIVIS at a glance", testimonies, position papers, etc. that will reflect the "What", "Why" and "How" of the project). The aforementioned communication channels will be activated, bearing in mind the selected target audiences at all time, and all Member universities will be asked to relay it on their respective channels, according to the institutional communication strategy in place.

Presentation material:

Creation of visuals (PowerPoint or similar) of a general and a more incentive and target-oriented presentation of the project that will be used by all relevant parties (Research departments, Project Managers, and others) for global and local initiatives.

Print material:

Creation of a leaflet/brochure based on the presentation material that will be easily available on the CIVIS website and shared amongst internal stakeholders. Whilst mainly digital, paper copies of all print materials will be made available to all Member Universities and handed out during on-site events (conferences, seminars, PhD Schools, and various information sessions). Infographics will also be created, mainly based on video interviews and shared on social media.

Newsletters

Content created for the awareness-raising campaign will be shared through existing newsletters (internal (CIVIS info and CIVIS Highlights) and external (CIVIS Newsletter)), where a dedicated section will be created to immediately identify RIS4CIVIS content and activities (calls, news article, funding opportunities, executive decisions, project results, audiovisual content, etc.).

Social media campaigns

Once awareness-raising content is produced, WP5 will launch different social media campaigns on Facebook and Twitter to present the ambition and relevance of the project; whilst asserting the consortium's expert position in paving the way for the future of the ERA and R&I in the European Union. Social media will also be leveraged upon the promotion of key public events, small or big, local or global, virtual or physical (e·g. weekly thematic seminars held by each Member University, Kick-off meeting highlights, etc.). Social Media Advertising will also be explored as a means to broaden RIS4CIVIS and CIVIS's digital strike force.

Website

The CIVIS website has been redesigned to provide up-to-date general information about RIS4CIVIS, its objectives, its ongoing, past and future activities, and its results: a landing page was created, which will keep on being updated as the project unfolds with general information about RIS4CIVIS, tailored information and resources. RIS4CIVIS is highlighted on the homepage and researchers pages with strategically-placed shortcuts and a "tag" on the "News" and "Event" sections has been created for immediate identification of all RIS4CIVIS content.

Internal presentations

Staring in March 2021 onwards, RIS4CIVIS will hold or co-organise, in collaboration with all Member Universities, virtual RIS4CIVIS presentation sessions. These sessions could be entirely or partially dedicated to presenting the project and will be recorded and accessible on the Website, shared in our newsletters and, if deemed relevant, disseminated on social media. Each Member University is also asked when presenting their University's international, research or funding opportunities to introduce the project and its numerous incentives for researchers and academics. The objective is thus to increase their understanding of RIS4CIVIS and their chances to take ownership of what the project can provide in the short, medium and long term.

Local and global activities

WP5 will also help to host, to increase visibility and exploit Member Universities' R&I or RIS4CIVIS-oriented initiatives: thematic webinars, workshops, conferences, etc. The material produced during these activities will be publicly available on our website and shared on relevant communication channels, as well as on each Member University's.

Previsionnal action plan

	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021

COMMUNICATION PLAN

VISUAL BRANDING
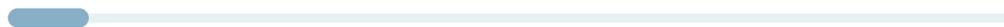
RIS4CIVIS logo
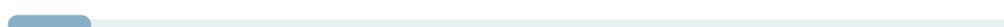
Templates for official documents
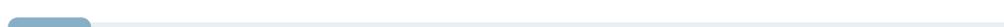
Templates for presentation material and virtual meeting backgrounds
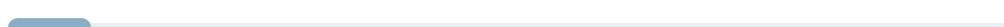
PRESENTATION VIDEOS

Contact modules and WP leaders

Recording interviews

Editing

Dissemination

KICK-OFF MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Editing

Dissemination
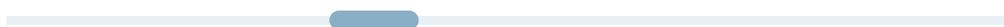
PRESENTATION MATERIAL

PRINT MATERIAL

Leaflets and brochures

Infographics

NEWSLETTER

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

WEBSITE UPDATES

Dedicated webspaces

Translation of static content

Filters on "News" section
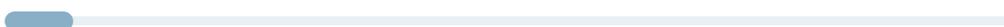
Creation of a "Resources" section

Creation of a "Benchmark" section
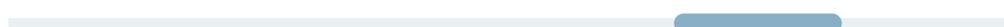
INTERNAL PRESENTATIONS

SEMINAR, CONFERENCE, WORKSHOP

Phase 2: Paving the way to an enhanced interuniversity collaboration on R&I

The second stage (M6-M16) will aim at promoting exchange and dialogue between RIS4CIVIS and external stakeholders to share solutions and practices, produce system-level impacts and potentially consolidate or coordinate policy recommendation, as the project will have already yielded tangible and exploitable results (namely WP1 and WP2's deliverables). We seek to deploy various communication actions and dissemination activities that will allow for creating a bridge between the CIVIS Alliance (and RIS4CIVIS) and other European Universities and University Alliances as a means to optimise the project processes and outputs through experience and best practices sharing (barriers, solutions, etc.). Results from these exchanges will be the backbone of the series of recommendations RIS4CIVIS will put on the table when engaging with various multi-level policy-makers and stakeholders at the latest stages of the project.

Core objective	Turning the RIS4CIVIS projects outputs (benchmark and consensus building) into a source of inspiration for other European Universities Alliances and engage meaningfully with them.
Targets	European Universty Alliances European Universities, that are not yet part of the European University Initiative
Sub-objective 1	To optimise our project processes and outputs through the sharing of experiences and practices with other University Alliances. We will 'compare notes' with the other Alliances on barriers we have identified and solutions we have found or are envisaging. This will allow RIS4CIVIS to be a force to reckon with, as well as a catalyst for inter-European University Alliances cooperation.
Sub-objective 2	To share our experience, lessons learned and results – in particular our Institutional Transformation Model – with other Universities and Alliances. We will ensure that all EU Universities and Alliances can benefit from our Model, gain inspiration from it and apply it in their own institutions, thereby building their capacities both in terms of R&I and in terms of European cooperation.
Actions	- Actively participating in formal and non-formal groups of European University Alliances (e.g. FOREU); - Widening CIVIS's Social Media presence and meaningfully tapping into other channels (see Dissemination-oriented levers section); - Including RIS4CIVIS in the Global CIVIS Days (autumn 2021 and spring 2022); - Organising specific events and activities for CIVIS researchers and academics (e.g. dedicated KOM, formal presentation, seminars, debates, etc.); - Organising specific events for our R&I communities to showcase the results yielded in WP1 and WP2; - Regularly updating web content on the "Resources" webpage (reports, position papers and other dissemination content, recordings of seminars, interviews, etc.).

Phase 3: Laying the foundation and be a driving force for recommendations

The third stage (M16-M35) will focus, after the completion of WP3 and the launch of WP4, on implementing means to share RIS4CIVIS's Institutional Transformation Model with other Universities and Alliances so that they can benefit from it and, hopefully, apply it to their own institutions. Stage three will also be a catalyst for CIVIS/RIS4CIVIS-European Commission DGs and services (DG Research & Innovation but also DG EAC, CNECT, and REGIO) collaboration.

Core objectives	• Providing recommendations on the removal of legal, regulatory or other obstacles to R&I cooperation between Universities • Participating in the design and implementation of the resulting legislative and policy agendas • Participating in the co-creation of work programmes and the design of more synergistic sectoral funding programmes

Targets	• Local, regional, national and European policy-makers and stakeholders:
	  ○ European Commission (esp. DG Research and Innovation, DG CNECT, DG EAC, DG REGIO, DG DEVCO);
	  ○ National Ministries (Research, Innovation, Higher Education and Economy) ;
	  ○ National and Regional groups responsible for defining the national position on Horizon Europe;
	  ○ Regional representatives and authorities managing the Structural Funds responsible for the Smart Specialisation Strategies and for implementing synergies between EU-funded schemes;
	  ○ National and Regional Permanent Representations in Brussels from our respective countries and regions;
	  ○ MEPs (ITRE, CULT and REGI committees) in each Member University's country;
	  ○ Any other relevant actors.
	• Media outlets specialised in EU affairs, R&I, ERA, Higher Education, business and economics, industry, etc.

Actions	• Co-organisation of a conference, with FOREU (M14), dedicated to assessing current practices, best practice and progress made/success stories implementing our long-term strategies; and identifying barriers - legal, financial and regulatory and the level at which they exist (local, regional, national or European). • Publication of project outputs and deliverables on all CIVIS channels (website, social media, newsletters and press releases); • "RIS4CIVIS in focus" reports publicly accessible (e·g. website section) and shared with all EU Universities (mailing and/or social media); • Delivery of project deliverables to the European Commission and beyond; • Bilateral interactions with the European Commission (DG Research and Innovation, CNECT, EAC, REGIO, DEVCO); • Participation in relevant public events (R&I Days); • Regular interactions with policy-makers (local, regional, national and European); • Organisation and chairing of a "CIVIS Informal Group of Members of the European Parliament"; • Publication of position papers.

Phase 4: Meaningfully exploiting RIS4CIVIS Model and asserting our expertise

The fourth and final stage (M35 onwards) will be dedicated to the dissemination and exploitation of RIS4CIVIS outputs with a major focus on meaningful exchanges and engagement with national and European policy-maker. The overall objective is to consolidate CIVIS as a force of excellence to reckon with in tackling 21st century challenged and paving the way for the Higher Education sector of tomorrow.

Core objective

To share our recommendations with national and European policy-makers.

Targets

- Local, regional, national and European policy-makers and stakeholders:
  - European Commission (esp. DG Research and Innovation, DG CNECT, DG EAC, DG REGIO, DG DEVCO);
  - National ministries (Research, Innovation, Higher Education and Economy) ;
  - National and regional groups responsible for defining the national position on Horizon Europe;
  - Regional representatives and authorities managing the Structural Funds responsible for the Smart Specialisation Strategies and for implementing synergies between EU-funded schemes;
  - National and regional Permanent Representations in Brussels from our respective countries and regions;
  - MEPs (ITRE, CULT and REGI committees) in each MU's country;
  - Any other relevant actors.
- Media outlets specialised in EU affairs, R&I, ERA, Higher Education, business and economics, industry, etc.

Actions

- Closing conference (M35) in Brussels, bringing together all core stakeholders and targets (specific focus on policy-makers), to share joint experiences and progress, to allow for an initial, informal review of the recommendations the Alliances, and to provide a forum to jointly consider how the various European funding programmes can be developed and exploited in a more synergistic manner.
- Publication of the last project outputs and deliverables on all CIVIS channels (website, social media, newsletters and press releases) and beyond.
- "RIS4CIVIS in focus" reports made publicly accessible (e·g. website section) and shared with all European Universities Alliances (mailing and/or social media).
- Publication of position papers based on exchanges with the European Commission, Members of the European Parliament and other multi-level policy-makers.

Evaluation process

1 Interim evaluation

Year 1 (M12)

First intermediary evaluation, situation assessment and improvement.

Interim evaluation 2

Year 2 (M24)

Intermediary evaluation, situation assessment and improvement. This evaluation will be complemented by the Interim report for the European Commission (M18).

3 Final evaluation

Year 3 (M36)

Summative evaluation to assess the communication activities' impact and outcomes.

EVALUATION, PERFORMANCE REPORTS AND DELIVERABLES

A trifold approach

Evaluation is the cornerstone of successful strategic communications and serves two equally important purposes: *accountability* (were the objectives met?) and *improvement* (how could the objectives be better met?). This section aims at outlining a three-step approach in a large-scale evaluation of RIS4CIVIS's communication activities.

Note: several small-scale evaluations will be conducted throughout the project lifetime, but will not be the object of a formal report.

Interim evaluation 1 + **Interim** evaluation 2	**Definition**	"Interim evaluations are intended to improve the decisions and actions of those responsible for communication activities. (…) Interim evaluations focus essentially on implementation procedures and their effectiveness, efficiency and relevance." Toolkit for the evaluation of the communication activities, DG Communication (2017)
	Time	Year 1 and 2 (M12 and M24)

The interim evaluation will allow for the provision of performance information on, but not restricted to, the following:

- Type and number of communication content developed and disseminated
- Relevance of, and demand for, each type of communication content and message
- Website traffic, access points, navigation patterns, sessions, etc.
- Earned media coverage
- Target audiences outreach
- Engagement with communication content

Final evaluation	**Definition**	"Final evaluations look at the implementation of the communication activity in order to draw conclusions about the results and outcomes of a communication intervention. " Toolkit for the evaluation of the communication activities, DG Communication (2017)
	Time	Year 3 (M35-36)

The final evaluation examines the outcomes and the causal relationship between them and the activities being evaluated. Generally speaking, the final evaluation measures, but is not restricted to, the following:

- Outputs (measurement of those directly reached by an activity, i.e. the number and type of participants to an event, people who have seen an ad, etc.)
- Outtakes (direct effect on the intended target audience, i.e. awareness, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour)

Key performance indicators per communication channel

Channel	Indicators	Use	Tools
Website	**Audience** • Device used to access the website • Demographics • Ratio new vs. returning visitors **Behaviour** • Pages views (broken down per page on the website) • Number of sessions • Median duration of session • Number of pages visited (main ones or other) • Bounce rate (and where it most frequently occurs) **Acquisition** • Traffic sources • Source/support	• Adapt the website responsivity • Assess if the real audience matches the one considered in the strategy • Check if the audience is captive or volatile. • Assess the sense of belonging to CIVIS • Optimise the Website (SEO) • Considering SEA strategies • Assess the validity of the social media strategy • Check if the other member universities actively contribute to the strategy	Google Analytics
Facebook	• Engagement rate and type • Reach and impressions • Community growth	• Assess the quality of the content strategy • Adapt the strategy according to the community's reactions (engagement) • Tap into unexpected potential (geographic, stakeholder, UGC, etc.) • Assess the integration of CIVIS into each member university's own communication strategy • Benchmark with "competitors"	Facebook Insights or Hootsuite
Twitter	• Engagement rate and type • Reach • Use of #RIS4CIVIS	• Assess the quality of the content strategy • Adapt the strategy according to the community's reactions (engagement) • Tap into unexpected potential (geographic, stakeholder, UGC, etc.) • Assess the integration of CIVIS into each member university's own communication strategy • Benchmark with "competitors"	Twitter Analytics or Hootsuite

Channel	Indicators	Use	Tools
Newsletters	• Opening rate • CTR • Bounce rate • Unsubscribing rate • New subscribers	• Monitor the contact list • Check pertinence of content and adapt the strategy accordingly (form and content) • Assess what content works best (and where on the template to better showcase news items)	The selected SAA's analytic tool
Press and media coverage	• Date • Country • Media name and type • Name of the journalist(s) • Headline • Type of article and position in the media • Key message(s) • Spokesperson mention • General tone of the article • Direct quotes • Visual impact and description	• Gauging the media and the press understanding of our messages • Verify if the message is not distorted • Assess the reach of the message • Evaluate the coverage-induced reaction	Manually, or using a paid-for tool
Events	• Events check-ins • Event surveys • Session Analytics, if virtual or hybrid event • Social media mentions • Social media engagement and outcomes	• Comparing the number of event check-ins with the total number of registrations • Knowing if attendees enjoyed the event • Assessing how many attended, average view duration, page views • Community growth, engagement rate and reach during the campaign (pre-, post- and during the event)	• Hosting platform insights or using a paid-for tool • Surveys

Deliverables

C&D PLAN

Communication & Dissemination Plan (C&D) setting out the overall strategy, objectives and audiences of RIS4CIVIS communication and dissemination, with a detailed description of activities to be implemented in Y1. The plan will be a work-in-progress throughout the project duration.

M2

M12

C&D REPORT

- Report on dissemination and exploitation activities in Y1;
- Analysis of impacts and results and if relevant, suggested changes to overall C&D Plan (strategy, objectives, audiences and activities);
- Detailed description of activities to be implemented in Y2.

FOREU CONFERENCE

Co-organisation of a conference bringing together the European University Alliances to share experiences and initiate a reflection on the Policy Recommendations.

M14

M24

C&D REPORT

- Report on dissemination and exploitation activities undertaken in Y2;
- Analysis of impacts and results and if relevant, suggested changes to overall C&D Plan (strategy, objectives, audiences and activities);
- Detailed description of activities to be implemented in Y3.

CLOSING CONFERENCE

Organised in Brussels, involving all target audiences in our Dissemination and Exploitation strategy and focused on policy-makers, and with the aim to disseminate and discuss our final project output.

M35

M36

C&D FINAL REPORT

Detailed report on dissemination and exploitation activities undertaken over the course of the project, with an analysis of their impacts and results.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS
AND INTERNAL PROCESSES

Roles and responsibilities

To guarantee the success of RIS4CIVIS dissemination and communication strategy and achieve its objectives and work package deliverables, the WP5 team members and CIVIS's Work Package Dissemination and Sustainability and the Communication Task Force will fully engage with shared collective responsibility. To this end, as Work Package leader, the Université libre de Bruxelles will design disruptive communication and dissemination activities and tools for RIS4CIVIS to best share and exploit results and outputs towards different target audiences over the project lifespan.

To ensure the successful implementation of the RIS4CIVIS Communication strategy, specific tasks and responsibilities have been defined for each team member:

WP5 leader (ULB)

The WP5 project leader has the general responsibility for the management, coordination and supervision of Work Package 5. His/her responsibilities include, but are not restricted to:

- Embedding communications about RIS4CIVIS in all CIVIS's communication activities and tools (CIVIS web site, CIVIS newsletters, CIVIS social media channels, CIVIS Days; as well as communication to external project partners in Africa or the Mediterranean, for example);
- Coordinating and keeping track of how RIS4CIVIS is included in other partners' communication activities, including through their respective networks and Technology Transfer Offices;
- Designing and coordinating the implementation of CIVIS communication activities aimed specifically at our internal research communities and local research ecosystems;
- Organising and animating an informal group of MEPs willing to support the implementation of the CIVIS R&I Cooperation Strategy;
- Together with the Coordinator, engaging with other European policy-makers, in particular the European Commission;
- Together with the Coordinator, engaging in the sharing of experiences and knowledge with other Alliances, including the Forum of European Universities (FOREU) and co-organising a conference, around M14, with this group;
- Organising a closing conference in Brussels (M35), involving all target audiences in our Dissemination and Exploitation strategy: European policy-makers concerned with Research, Digital, Education, Regional and other relevant sectoral policies, national and regional policy-makers, members of the CIVIS MEPs Group, other European Alliances and Universities;
- Coordinating the writing, publication and dissemination of "RIS4CIVIS in focus" reports, that supplement the CIVIS newsletters with in-depth coverage of specific aspects of the project implementation.

CIVIS's WP9 members and RIS4CIVIS Coordination Group

- Contribute to the implementation of the communication & dissemination plan at their own local, regional, national, and institutional level;
- Report to the WP leader on their communication & dissemination activities every quarter;
- Contribute, when needed, to the creation of RIS4CIVIS content such as promotional videos and other promotional materials and activities.

CIVIS Communication Officer

- Supports RIS4CIVIS's WP5 leader, as well as other WP and Modules leaders in their communication efforts;
- Contributes to the development of the RIS4CIVIS strategic communication plan and ensures visibility and dissemination of RIS4CIVIS content on CIVIS's channels;
- Helps coordinating RIS4CIVIS activities including the CIVIS Days.

General guidelines and internal processes

All CIVIS communication actions will be coordinated by the CIVIS Communication Officer, in collaboration with the WP9 task force, the Governance team (WP6) and the Research and Communication Departments in each Member Universities.

Member Universities, as well as CIVIS Communication Officer, are to respect the graphic charter guidelines in all communication activities.

Newsletters

1. The **(RIS4)CIVIS Communication Officer** is in charge of the **selection of the newsletter content**.
2. The **(RIS4)CIVIS Communication Officer drafts the newsletter** and sends it to the WP5 leader for approval.
3. Once approved, the **newsletter is sent to all subscribers**, Member Universities' communications, international relations or other relevant.

Note: Communications coordinators of each Member University are encouraged to:
- Add (RIS4)CIVIS-related items in their own newsletter, if applicable;
- Add a "Subscribe to the CIVIS newsletter" call-to-action in their own newsletter and other communication channels.

Web content

1. **Communications Coordinators, Project Managers, Modules and Work Package Leaders of each Member University** notify the (RIS4)CIVIS's Communication Officer of their communication and/or dissemination needs.
2. The **(RIS4)CIVIS Communications Officer** lays out a **dissemination planning of proposed content.**
3. The **(RIS4)CIVIS Communications Officer publishes the content** on the CIVIS website and **notifies the communications coordinators.**
4. **Communications coordinators** are strongly encouraged to translate new articles and **disseminate them** on their own communication channels.

Social media content

1. All **social media contents will be scheduled** and all coordination coordinators will be notified upon their publication;
2. **Communications coordinators** are strongly encouraged to engage with CIVIS content and (re)post it on their own social media account.

Note:
- The use of official hashtags (#RIS4CIVIS and #CIVIS_eu) is mandatory, as well as the use of the event-related hashtag(s).
- Member Universities are to tag the official CIVIS social media accounts when promoting a RIS4CIVIS content.

Meet the team

	Name	Position
WP5	• Céline Cocq (leader) • Jérémy Jenard	• CIVIS Assistant Project Manager • CIVIS Communication Task Force Coordinator
CIVIS	• Ulla Härmälä	• CIVIS Project Manager and Work Package Dissemination and Sustainability leader (WP9)
	• François Heinderyckx	• CIVIS Advisor to the Rector (ULB) and CIVIS Work Package Governance co-leader (WP2)
	• TBD	• CIVIS Communication Officer

RIS4CIVIS