



RIS4CIVIS

Research and Innovation Strategy for the CIVIS Alliance

D 5.3 RIS4CIVIS Conference Report

Work Package: WP5 – Communication & Dissemination

Lead partner: Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)

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1. Introduction & Objectives

GENERAL COMMENT

As outlined in the RIS4CIVIS call for proposals, comprehensive communication and dissemination of our project progress will ensure that the lessons learnt can serve as inspiration to others, and that we can also learn from the successes of other Alliances.

We committed in the proposal to co-organise in the framework of FOR-EU a mid-term conference with the 17 first European Alliances in order to showcase the work done in the SwafS projects.

As the alliances in FOREU have postponed the conference to the end of 2022, we proposed to organize a dissemination event on March 25th as a means of raising awareness of our initiative and publicising initial results and progresses which could be of interest to an external audience.

In addition, we also participated to punctual conference initiatives organized by our Alliances pairs, namely CHARM-EU and 4EU+.

EVENT

The conference took place on the morning of Friday March 25th 2022 in Brussels (at the “Palais des Académies”), just after the plenary session of the European Parliament of the 23rd and 24th of March. The event will have a hybrid format with presentations, panel discussions and time for networking (coffee break and lunch).

We also invited other alliances like CHARM-EU and ECIU to have a mirror cooperation in building this discussion and share different/complementary approaches.

TARGET GROUPS

- Our respective R&I university communities
- Other universities, Alliances and networks
- European Commission, experts and agencies
- MEPs involved in relevant Committees (ITRE, CULT, REGI)
- Permanent Representations to the EU in Brussels from our respective countries
- Our local and regional Research and Innovation ecosystems

MAIN OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to share our experience, lessons learnt and first results from the transformational modules. Through the interaction with other alliances, we could learn about different outputs as alliances are piloting different models based on their individual strengths.





2. Promotion and Dissemination

In order to maximise the dissemination impact of the event, the CIVIS Communications Team and the ULB undertook a multi-channel 4-phase communications campaign:

PHASE 1 | Awareness

Goal: make people aware that the event is coming and what it is about

Announcement of the event: CIVIS newsletter + invitation mailings, event webpage on civis.eu website, social media posts

- **Key messages:** event + context « What is RIS4CIVIS? »
- Invitation to register for the public conference (in person or online)
- **Channels:** Social media (FB, IG, Twitter, LinkedIn), website, newsletter

PHASE 2 | Consideration and engagement

Goal: push our audiences to register for the Public Conference

- **Key messages:** more concrete call to actions (« only a few days left before the event », « register now », « share with your network », ...) and a narrower focus on the Public Conference programme
- **Channels:** Social media, website, CIVIS mailing

PHASE 3 | Live coverage on D-Day - 25 March 2022

Live communication during the event, e.g. highlights of the day

Channels: social media & web

PHASE 4 | Post-event communications

Post-event communications to share and celebrate highlights: photos, videos & a news article.

Channels: Social media, website, CIVIS newsletter

In Phase 1 we published the event listing on the CIVIS website, prepared graphic materials and made the initial announcement of the event in the CIVIS newsletter and on CIVIS social media.

In Phase 2, which was all about promoting the event and maximising the audience, we followed a dual strategy:

- To gather a critical mass of registrations for physical attendance, we used targeted mailings and word-of-mouth promotion towards relevant audiences – also by activating the ULB's extensive networks and contacts in Brussels.
- To promote the livestream and reach audiences across Europe, we activated the CIVIS Communications Taskforce. They promoted the event through CIVIS and member university channels (social media and internal/external mailings), using visual and text materials produced by the CIVIS Communications Team. A few days before the event, we sent a special edition of the CIVIS newsletter focusing on the conference and encouraging our audience to watch the livestream.

Although the event was of great relevance to internal audiences across the CIVIS Alliances, and we made sure to promote it internally, our key strategic priority was dissemination. We therefore made sure to promote the event in external channels such as the CIVIS newsletter and to invite relevant





external stakeholders to attend. The success of this strategy can be seen in the list of participants, which includes representatives of other European Universities Alliances, experts from the world of European Higher Education policy, and researchers from universities outside the CIVIS Alliance.

During the conference itself, in Phase 3, we used “live comms” in order to share impressions of the event with those who could not attend, encourage last-minute livestream views, and demonstrate RIS4CIVIS’ capacity to gather key stakeholders and lead the debate on these vital issues. On Facebook and Instagram, we used engaging stories to build interest and excitement, while on Twitter we “livetweeted” the conference with quotes from the speakers and information about the topics discussed.

In order to further exploit the event as a tool for disseminating RIS4CIVIS activities and outputs, Phase 4 gives the event “a second life”. We have made a recording of the first session, as well as a summary of the whole event, available through a news article on the CIVIS website. This article was then shared on social media and promoted in the CIVIS newsletter.

Online communications (CIVIS channels only. All figures harvested on 16/06/22.)

- [Event listing on CIVIS website](#): 686 page views on EN version of site (566 UPV)
- [News article on CIVIS website](#): 87 unique page views on EN version of site (74 UPV)
- [Public video of Session 1 \(published after the event\)](#): 16 views
- CIVIS Newsletter – 11 February 2022 (Event mentioned): 1487 opens
- CIVIS Newsletter – 17 March 2022 (Focus on this event): 1508 opens

Social media content

DATE	Facebook				Twitter		Instagram			LinkedIn			
	Reach	Like	Share	Link click	Like	Retweet	Reach	Likes	Saves	Like	Reach	Shares	Clicks
4 March 2022	5161	18	3	6	3	4	512	18	3	/	/	/	/
8 March 2022	259	5	1	2	4	3	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
17 March 2022	534	15	1	2	12	7	819	41	2	/	/	/	/
22 March 2022	3014	13	2	9	9	2	/	/	/	16	404	2	17
25 March 2022	1318	7	1	3	4	4	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
25 March 2022	2847	17	1	2	21	8	/	/	/	32	632	1	351
25 March 2022	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	2145	45	/	/	/	/
6 May 2022	1414	13	1	4	14	5	733	54	/	/	/	/	/

[Click here to view the entire table.](#)





Branded materials

The event also marked the launch of a coherent visual line for RIS4CIVIS, along with a brochure and infographic setting out the objectives and structure of the project. Background slides and roll-ups following the new visual line were produced and prominently displayed at the event, and copies of the leaflet were distributed to all participants.

The leaflet and infographic can be accessed on the CIVIS website, on the [RIS4CIVIS dedicated webpage](#) as well as on the [Resources webpage](#).



3. Conference Programme

RIS4CIVIS: “Cross-border R&I in the European Universities Initiative”

9:30 - 10:15

- **Welcome speech & Presentation of CIVIS**
 - **Annemie Schaus**, Rector of the Université libre de Bruxelles and CIVIS President (*excused*)
 - **Francois Heinderyckx**, Advisor to the Rector, Université libre de Bruxelles (*excused*)
 - **Anne Weyembergh**, Vice-Rector for External Relations and Development, Université libre de Bruxelles
- **Keynote speech on the state of play for research in Europe**
 - **Patrick Brenier**, Advisor for the European Research Area and Open Science, European Commission
- **Presentation of RIS4CIVIS**
 - **Philippe Delaporte**, Vice-Rector for Research, Aix-Marseille Université

R&I Roundtables

Panel 1 - European University alliances: a new nexus of innovation

10:45 - 12:30

- Moderator: **Stephane Berghmans**, Director for Research and innovation, EUA
- **Ciro Franco**, Head of Research Support Office, Sapienza Università di Roma
- **Jordi Garcia**, Vice-Rector for Research, University of Barcelona (representing CHARM EU)
- **Mirka Gottberg**, European Comision, Directorate General of Research and Innovation, Research and Technology Infrastructure Policy sector
- **Bruno Van Pottelsberghe**, Dean of the Solvay School of Economics and Management, Université libre de Bruxelles

Panel 2 - The European researcher: University alliances as a springboard to integrated mobility

- Moderator: **Marius Gilbert**, Vice-Rector for Research, Université libre de Bruxelles
- **Stijn Delaure**, Policy Officer for Universities, European Commission Directorate-General for Research & Innovation
- **Louise Wallenberg**, Professor and RIS4CIVIS Work Package Leader, Stockholm University
- **Olga Wessels**, Head of ECIU Brussels Office (representing ECIU)
- **Sara Wilmet**, Researcher Mobility Manager, Université catholique de Louvain





4. Audience and participants

The “Cross-border R&I in the European Universities Initiative” Conference was addressed to university leadership, European Universities members, and any actors engaged in R&I. It was also relevant for policymakers, as we could benefit from interactions with the European Commission.

We had the honour of receiving representatives of the European Commission, national experts on R&I and representatives of two European Alliances in addition to CIVIS (CHARM-EU and ECIU) to welcome the attendees and intervene in the different roundtables.

The attendance was in line with the target audiences identified during the planning of the event and targeted during the implementation of the communication strategy.

Attendance:

<i>In-person:</i> 50 persons	<i>Online:</i> 200 persons
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5. Conference Debrief

5.1 Open Ceremony / Welcome Address

- **Anne Weyembergh**, Vice-Rector for External Relations and Development, Université libre de Bruxelles

Also, given on behalf of (excused),

- **Francois Heinderyckx**, Advisor to the Rector, Université libre de Bruxelles
- **Annemie Schaus**, Rector of the Université libre de Bruxelles and CIVIS President

Mrs Weyembergh opens the event with a welcoming speech and short introduction on the role of Alliances for the future of the European Higher Education Area. She notably kicks this first session off by stressing how the establishment and development of transnational Alliances are fundamental for the future of our universities; as a fact, they support deep collaborations among partners and so contribute to the excellence of the education and research areas as an integrated system.

A presentation of the CIVIS Alliance’s early history and main features is then provided.

Currently in its 3rd year of funding, CIVIS is at its turning point: two-days ahead of today’s RIS4CIVIS dissemination event, the CIVIS governance submitted a new application – CIVIS 2.0, for the new Erasmus+ call dedicated to Alliances; the call officially opened in October 2021, few months after the European Commission announced the renewal of its support to Alliances. Four years back, the same Erasmus+ programme allowed CIVIS to be born. As a complement to it, RIS4CIVIS was successfully launched in 2021, with support from the European H2020 programme – dedicated to Research & Innovation. Since, both CIVIS and RIS4CIVIS are working hand in hand to a complete synergy of their universities’ education, research and innovation fields. Moreover, CIVIS





representatives regularly exchange knowledge with pairs of other Alliances, as well as with policy makers and actors of the civil society.

CIVIS is one of the 1st generation pool of European Alliances (17 in total), which was later on joined by a wave of 24 new Alliances. CIVIS at first consisted of eight universities, namely:

- ❖ National and Kapodistrian University of Athens,
- ❖ University of Aix-Marseille,
- ❖ University of Bucharest,
- ❖ Université libre de Bruxelles,
- ❖ Universidad Autónoma de Madrid,
- ❖ Sapienza Università di Roma,
- ❖ Stockholms Universitat,
- ❖ Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen.

Over the course of 2020-2021, the consortium was successively joined by the University of Glasgow, then shortly followed by the University of Salzburg and soon by Université de Lausanne. Altogether, the now ten CIVIS institutions host about +480,000 students, +700 research groups, and +68,000 staff members, into an integrated landscape made of 100+ Faculties and Schools, +500 Undergraduate and +1500 Graduate programmes (including +500 in English). This inspiring landscape provided a prolific framework to +200 ERC grants, and 38 Nobel Prizes. Moreover, no less than eight different languages are spoken within CIVIS.

CIVIS, in a nutshell, is built on four original blocks:

- The 'HUBS' – cross, interdisciplinary and challenge-based thematic research and education areas, at the core of the Alliance's structure. Four HUBS were so far launched,
 - ❖ Health,
 - ❖ Cities, territories and mobilities,
 - ❖ Climate, environment and energy,
 - ❖ Society, culture, heritageand a 5th HUB devoted to Digital and Technological transformation shall be open shortly.
- The 'Open Labs' – open and collaborative 'spaces' for co-creation, connecting CIVIS with local communities in all the cities and regions of its member universities and contributing to developing solutions to common challenges.
- A strong focus on civic engagement, to reach a continuum between education and research where each element feeds the other.
- A strong CIVIS-African-Mediterranean partnership.

In early March 2021, CIVIS welcomed in Marseille representatives from six African universities (listed hereafter) for the on-site event European Universities between territorial integration and global ambition, organized in the framework of the PFUE,

- ❖ Makerere University,
- ❖ Eduardo Mondlane University,
- ❖ Université Hassan II de Casablanca,
- ❖ University of Sfax,
- ❖ Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar,
- ❖ University of the Witwatersrand.





During the event, a common agreement was signed up between CIVIS and the invited African universities, along with the simultaneous release of a joint position paper aiming at encouraging European universities to open themselves to more partnerships with African institutions.

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5.2 Keynote Speech on the State of Play for Research in Europe

Mrs Weyembergh's introduction to CIVIS is followed by a speech on the missions of European Universities in the context of the ERA challenge-based perspectives by

- o **Patrick Brenier**, Advisor for the European Research Area (ERA) and Open Science, European Commission,

Mr Brenier starts by emphasizing the responsibilities of European Universities for producing knowledge and reinforcing the values of Europe, as a fully democratic initiative. These sources of knowledge are precious, especially for the fundamental role they play in supporting societies to face global to local challenges (cf. the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs), also including the fight against Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent world's recovery.

Europe is indisputably a worldwide leader in science. Altogether, the European Member States, the United-Kingdom and Switzerland, account for about 20% to 30% of the global investment in research, as well as in the global science outputs. Besides, Europe's contribution remained stable over the last 20 years, despite the rise of China and all other emerging countries, also compared to the U.S.A. where we saw it declined; Europe science seems therefore resilient. What's more, Europe is 'THE' leader in several domains, such as on sustainability, patenting, climate actions, environment, secure and renewal energy.

Where does this apparent performance come from?

This is a legacy of a long and strong scientific culture that we have all helped to nurture in universities, and research institutions. This is also the product of first classes High Education institutions, as well as the achievement of hundreds of thousands of researchers employed in the public and private sectors.

Of significance, this performance was made possible after the clear priorities stated at the level of the Member States, the regions, the European Commission in the framework of its programmes. Over the last years, the amount of funding allocated to R&I by Europe continually increased. Also, the Commission has been working in significantly improving the range of instruments at the disposal of research communities (such as the ERC) in order to increase universities' competitiveness in the international high education landscape. In order to illustrate the European Universities' presence at the global scale, Mr Brenier indicates that 50% of European universities' publications are internationally co-authored, 40% are in Open Access; among this production, there are constantly increasing amounts of publications dealing with global challenges, such as in the field of health or the twin (green and digital) transition – in short, the [EC's five main missions](#) that were just launched.

Yet, several improvements are still to be engaged to continue reinforcing the European scientific and technological base. They regard four main challenges:

-The R&I performance is still heterogeneously distributed at the scale of the European continent.





Although advances were made in the recent years, there are still significant differences observed between the regional ecosystems (e.g., number of publications, patents: $\frac{3}{4}$ out of the total European patents are produced in one single region: innovation processes occurring only at a very small level). Efforts must be pursued to reach a good balance and reach more inter-connections between regions.

-Europe is still under-investing in R&D – in both the public and private sectors, compared to its main partners (e.g., China), and that despite a long-standing commitment formulated about 20 years ago to reach the 3% by nowadays.

In 2019, the amount of European R&D investment was of 2.3% - so far from the original goal. This result is notably a sign of the innovation divide observed in Europe. In the public sector, this is especially a consequence of the repeated crises Europe has experienced for the 20 last years with the budgetary deficits that they have created.

Europe has also a private expenditure deficit. This observation is strongly correlated to the structure of its economy which, as a matter of fact, cannot lead to the reach of 3%. It also reflects the lack of European leadership in the digital economy.

-Europe is not yet using the full benefits of its leadership.

Investments remain unbalanced. As an example, a lot of it currently goes to American unicorns (startup company with a value of over \$1 billion). Meanwhile, knowledge transfer is not yet ideal between the universities and actors from the private sectors (e.g., companies, industries). The need for a powerful single market involving all parties is indisputable, while more space to experiment new products also appears essential. The goal is not to feed or create collaborative 'hotspots' but rather work on spreading out excellence where gaps are observed; in short, act for an inclusive pan-European R&I landscape.

-Researchers in companies do not yet benefit enough from the ERA compared to their peers of the academia sector.

Four main priorities:

- 1-Deepening of the ERA;
- 2-Broadening the ERA;
- 3-Spreading excellence better across Europe;
- 4-Better aligning European priorities and investments.

To achieve the above objectives, The European Union has recently adopted a Pact for a R&I Europe that we hope to remain stable for ten years. This Pact captures what we consider as the ten most important values and principles that (should) underpin research in Europe.

+ Policy Agenda with 20 actions (for the next three years) which should shortly be reviewed along with the stakeholders and Member States. About half of Europe committed to deliver concrete outcomes by the end of 2024 through the implementation of these actions. The key messages for this Pact are inclusiveness and co-creation.

New way of working together: the ERA governance. More inclusive and co-creative, includes all the Member States and regions, but also stakeholders.





Moreover, an ERA Forum was created for the different entities' representatives to meet every 2-3 weeks and so dialoguing more systematically in order to achieve higher impact.

In addition, a [European Excellence Initiative programme](#) was launched to improve competitiveness of European universities and empower them so that they can better adapt to the changing societies. Events such as the Brexit also contributed to fragilize Europe at a time where collaborations are more than ever necessary to sustain the European values.

**

5.3 Presentation of RIS4CIVIS

- **Philippe Delaporte** – Vice-Rector for Research, Aix-Marseille Université, closes the introductory session by providing a presentation of the RIS4CIVIS 'Research and Innovation Strategy for CIVIS' project.

Mr. Delaporte starts his presentation by recalling the audience the four main pillars at the base of the nowadays universities' missions: Education, Research, Innovation, and the links to Society (quadruple-helix model). The challenge-based CIVIS HUBS (previously introduced by Mrs. Weyembergh) are the crossroads of this model.

The [RIS4CIVIS project](#) – Research and Innovation for CIVIS - integrates the six following dimensions (namely Modules 1 to 6) as key areas where to accompany significant transformation in universities for the success of their R&I communities' excellence and intra-cooperation, as well as their dialogue and collaboration with the non-academic spheres.

- Module 1: Developing a Common Research and Innovation Agenda,
- Module 2: Sharing infrastructures,
- Module 3: Reinforcing Academia-Business R&I Cooperation,
- Module 4: Strengthening Human Capital,
- Module 5: Mainstreaming of Open Science,
- Module 6: Embedding Citizens and Society.

RIS4CIVIS workplan – built up over a total of three years - includes three successive stages:

- Benchmarking (January-July 2021), which consisted in establishing an inventory of current practices and resources of our different CIVIS institutions while identifying the barriers that could enhance suitable and fruitful cooperation.
- Consensus-building (Fall 2021-March 2022), which consisted in selecting shared priorities and mapping ways to achieve them jointly.
- Validation through Case studies (April 2022-towards the end of 2023), which consists in implementing a selection of programmes, policies or tools jointly designed during, at least, the second half of the RIS4CIVIS lifespan; in short, this phase will be decisive to define the essential aspects to focus on the design of a shared CIVIS R&I strategy.

The Case Study stage was actually launched yesterday, on March 24th, 2022, in Brussels!

Defining a common CIVIS R&I Strategy is our ultimate goal, and such a process requires engaging all our institutions at different organizational levels, and at the very first the research communities. But to engage researchers in such an enterprise is a challenge!





By essence, scientists do seek challenges, they like their curiosity to be fed, their practical and financial needs to be addressed. In CIVIS, we have already developed significant actions to engage our researchers.

In 2021, we experimented the [Cups and Cakes webinar series](#): a discussion forum for researchers to connect and get an overview of what is happening in other CIVIS partner universities. In the longer term, these exchanges were meant to foster exchanges and develop potential collaborations within the CIVIS Alliance. After half a year or so, we have learnt from this first trial and noted the lack of commitment from the researchers to participate and follow this program; they in fact receive too much solicitation, especially since the pandemic and the increase in the online supply. We are currently brainstorming about ways to improve our approach.

In parallel, the CIVIS3i initiative - The CIVIS Alliance Programme for International, Interdisciplinary, Intersectoral Research and Training for Experienced Researchers, was launched. CIVIS3i is a COFUND project supported by the EC and which gathers four of the ten CIVIS Universities (namely: AMU, UAM, UB, and SUR). It aims to increase the attractiveness of these particular universities for post-docs, while facilitating their mobility and training at the scale of the whole CIVIS network. The project will allow recruiting a total of 32 post-docs over its lifespan and through two distinct calls. The first call – which opened in July 2021, was a real success: indeed, nearly 300 applications from all around the world were received; they address many different fields of research. The evaluation process of the eligible projects is underway and shall be completed soon.

Also, worth mentioning: CIVIS3i, as well as RIS4CIVIS, emerged both from the active screening and expertise of the CIVIS Task Force on European projects (so-called ‘CIVIS TF HEUR’). This group was born in 2020 in the framework of CIVIS. Coordinated by the Head of the R&I EU office at Aix-Marseille University (itself part of the AMU’s Directorate for Research and Valorization), the CIVIS TF HEUR involves representatives of all the R&I EU-offices of the CIVIS member universities. All the participants work in synergy to promote R&I European programmes to the CIVIS research communities, and so to provide information and direct assistance to them so that they are better equipped to build up new consortia and benefit from EU-funded opportunities. As a positive consequence of their joint actions, the Task Force members also regularly exchange about their respective practices and how to reinforce their already existing synergies.

Supporting researchers in their needs and new collaborations in the CIVIS landscape is the RIS4CIVIS guiding objective. Now starting its third stage, RIS4CIVIS will create and experiment new joint initiatives at the scale of the whole Alliance such as e.g., opening and promoting its Research Infrastructures, working towards the definition of a CIVIS Innovation Strategy, create a new Career Development program targeting CIVIS early stage researchers, create new tools to encourage Open Science and Citizen Science practices among CIVIS research communities.

Because more than ever we need to keep societal challenges in the scope of our actions, we must continue to support interdisciplinary and to engage all types of actors at the regional ecosystem level, and – this ending point is very crucial: to never forget to keep our students at the heart of these interactions.





5.4 R&I Roundtables

Panel 1 – European University Alliances: a new nexus of innovation

*Moderator: **Stephane Berghmans**, Director for Research and Innovation, European Universities Association (EUA)*

- **Ciro Franco**, Head of Research Support Office and RIS4CIVIS Module Leader, Sapienza Università di Roma
- **Jordi Garcia**, Vice-Rector for Research, University of Barcelona (representing CHARM EU)
- **Mirka Gottberg**, European Commission, Directorate General of Research and Innovation, Research and Technology Infrastructure Policy sector
- **Bruno Van Pottelsberghe**, Dean of the Solvay School of Economics and Management, Université libre de Bruxelles

Stephane Berghmans (*Moderator*) paves the way to the debate.

The European University Association published in 2021 a paper on the future of European Universities: [Universities without walls: A vision for 2030](#).

Universities are open and engaged with societies, so very much in line with CIVIS. European universities will clearly transform the space for common knowledge production, at the crossroads of research, innovation, education, and citizens. Besides, collaboration is clearly a nexus for innovation. For instance, European Alliances are engaging processes to align with cities' local challenges to transform the space to common knowledge production. What is of interest, is notably how the innovation today developed in the framework of Alliances is going to be brought to the level of all universities across Europe. Originally, Alliances were born with the major goal for education. Very shortly, research came along. Synergies between the two are very important.

Knowing this context, **Stephane Berghmans** asks the different panelists their respective inputs on what European Alliances are currently aiming at to achieve this goal; from the European Commission's perspectives on the one hand, and the universities on the second hand.

Mirka Gottberg indicates that Alliances are indeed very good examples of how European Higher Education could work in the future as they are all exploring ways of closer transnational cooperation. Deepening the sense for common values is a step towards this process. Besides, reaching critical mass is also crucial to ensure productive collaboration, especially in the context of recovery that we are facing.

Ciro Franco

The development of concrete tools to better connect the European Research Area and European Education Area is key. At Sapienza Università di Roma, and more broadly at the CIVIS scale, we observe very fruitful collaborations between the two areas through the sharing of knowledge, facilities, etc. In fact, and from an operational point of view, we are achieving very concrete results.

Bruno Van Pottelsberghe

The European Universities framework encourages us to new ways of working. As Philippe Delaporte pointed out in his presentation, instigating research collaboration is one of the biggest challenges our universities are addressing. Besides, stronger links with the business sector are still to develop.





Jordi Garcia

It is of importance for Alliances to regularly exchange about how to reinforce links between researchers and the society.

Stephane Berghmans (*Moderator*)

The complexity of collaborating implies the notion of ‘competing’. How can the two can go hand in hand without being armful to each other?

Ciro Franco

Indeed, the challenge is to find the best compromise between collaboration and competition, which may be driven by a good integration and optimization of resources. The European Commission has a role to play for integrating these two concepts.

Bruno Van Pottelsberghe

Competition is not at the level of the universities, but very often at the national level. There are indeed differences in the way countries function (e.g., policies, financial resources, GDP).

Mirka Gottberg

Developing skills of the administrative staff involved in the process of the European Alliances initiative is clue; at this stage, the need for financial experts in the Alliances’ administrative offices is therefore crucial. In this regard, the Horizon Europe programme will provide complementary funding support. In the short-term, this support will aim at rising the excellence of the Alliances in their cooperation process; in the longer-term, it will push the Alliances to a further level allowing them to cooperate with the Member States in the co-design of supportive programmes, also in compliance of policy frameworks at both the regional and national levels (cf. new [ERA forum](#)). Develop European universities so they can be more armed and competitive at the global scale is the ultimate objective.

Stephane Berghmans (*Moderator*) asks the panel members to what extent the tools they are currently developing will impact the future of universities in general.

Bruno Van Pottelsberghe

He is convinced that the impact will be significant - “When there is a wheel there is a way”. The different tools in development will naturally contribute to foster the universities who want to work together.

Jordi Garcia

He provides the very concrete example of the Master degree the CHARM-EU universities jointly created, stressing that although this step was clearly a challenge, it contributes to reinforce their partnership.

Stephane Berghmans (*Moderator*) knows for a fact that the Spanish Parliament is currently looking into reforming its policies about Spanish Higher Education system. How can this affect the contribution of Spanish institutions in existing Alliances?



Jordi Garcia

Although not originally enounced, the government is now considering the European and International frameworks to reform the system.

Ciro Franco (to pursue on the impact the tools developed by the Alliance will have in the future).

The six main aspects of RIS4CIVIS are essential drivers for current collaboration; they should feed the changing processes of national and European policies.

Mirka Gottberg

It is very crucial for the Alliances to largely disseminate about the Best Practices they have identified through their respective structuring processes. It is also of importance to make sure the tools issued (may they be new or improved) remain interoperable to ensure their suitable circulation.

She finally indicates that a research platform is being thought by EOSC to be used as a common tool, as a concrete illustration of her recommendations.

Ciro Franco

In RIS4CIVIS, the different Modules groups are working on providing sets of recommendations and indicators which will be at the service of the European Commission. Reaching a common methodology at the European level is essential. Also, to produce indicators which can measure the degree of integration.

Stephane Berghmans (*Moderator*) refers to a survey recently issued by the EUA about the innovation landscape; based on it, strong links are observed between universities and public organizations for innovation in sustainability; when we talk about digital innovation, links are by comparison more developed between universities and companies. How would we explain these indicators?

Ciro: A cluster between Alliances would be interesting to form so that what the different Alliances are achieving could be compared and discussed; also, this would allow reaching a common language.

Stephane Berghmans (*Moderator*) asks if, among the tools being created, some will aim to incentivize researchers.

Jordi Garcia

At CHARM-EU, there is a process engaged in how to promote the people involved in the Alliance's progress. The real challenge is actually in how to fund – and not necessarily at the EU scale, the incentive schemes we may have identified.

Coming back to the tools to develop, he suggested that a more advanced recipe to the 'RIS4CIVIS Cups&Cakes' initiative could be made, this time by opening it to different types of stakeholders than the universities themselves.

Bruno Van Pottelsberghe

It seems important to disseminate about the Alliances' case studies, especially if those turn out to be success stories. Also, the administrative staff who make them will gain in benefiting from their pairs' practices and skills.





He directly stressed to the Commissioner the significance to create a common pension scheme in support of professors.

Mirka Gottberg

The Council will soon adopt a recommendation in building bridges between the countries' respective policies, so that Member States can lift their administrative barriers in favor of more staff exchanges and harmonized funding mechanisms.

Ciro Franco

He agrees that a coherent framework must be reached at the institutional level; this may be monitored through a performance plan to (for instance) yearly update.

He provides the example of several Ph.D. programs at Sapienza Università di Roma that were open to the all CIVIS community, so illustrating the good level of compliance between the institution and the Alliance's plans.

Two last questions were asked by **Reding Laurin** – as representative from SwissCore present in the audience:

How CIVIS and CHARM-EU are working together, also with their respective associated partners?

Jordi Garcia indicates that – as CHARM-EU currently participate to this RIS4CIVIS event, CIVIS was involved and participated in the last TORCH event. What's more, there have been exchanges between the two Alliances about how to link research with society.

Ciro Franco adds that in addition to Alliances' inter-cooperation, the involvement of external stakeholders or communities to the Alliances' development is a significant driver that needs to be continually reinforced.

To the European Commissioners: What is the new timeline for funding mechanisms (including new joint funding ones) in support to European Alliances?

Mirka Gottberg stresses that the topic currently remains difficult to handle at both the Member States and European Commission levels; work is in process.

Bruno Van Pottelsberghe: As Switzerland invests massively in its universities (such as Nordic countries do), this can bring new partners to the level of European Alliances.

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Panel 2 – The European Researcher: University Alliances as a springboard to integrated mobility

*Moderator: **Marius Gilbert**, Vice-Rector for Research, Université libre de Bruxelles*

- **Louise Wallenberg**, Professor and RIS4CIVIS Work Package Leader, Stockholm University
- **Stijn Delaure**, Policy Officer for Universities, European Commission Directorate-General for Research & Innovation
- **Olga Wessels**, Head of ECIU Brussels Office (representing ECIU)
- **Sara Wilmet**, Researcher Mobility Manager, Université catholique de Louvain (representing CIRCLE-U)





Marius Gilbert (*Moderator*) launches the debate with the current statement that there were recent changes in the students' views about what they now consider important in the future, and that these reflections are contributing to shaping the modalities of mobility.

Sara Wilmet

Virtual mobility is convenient under several aspects (e.g., costless, environmentally sustainable) and so is necessary; but it is still not easy to adopt when people do not know each other. Indeed, people like first to see each other before they collaborate.

As part of the MSCA framework, UC Louvain launched an on-site initiative, which shall be complemented by virtual actions.

In support, the European Commission is actually thinking of balancing mobilities in the MSCA programme.

Olga Wessels indicates that she participates to this event as representative for ECIU, but also as representative for FOREU-1, a working network of [41 first-generation Alliances](#).

There were numerous collaborative initiatives between the European Alliances during the pandemic. In such a context, digital mobilities rapidly moved forward. Yet, she agrees that physical mobility cannot though be fully replaced by virtual mobility. The European Commission aims for student mobility to reach 50%, which is in practice very challenging.

Louise Wallenberg

She shares about her own experience as a Professor during and after the pandemic. She came to the conclusion that meeting in virtual is not the same as meeting in a classroom. Yet, the pandemic has helped her reflecting on her previous way of living: since she became a small traveler, favoring train options when possible; she has also learnt to slow down, as a researcher, this way to avoid burn-out.

Stijn Delaure

A few years back, we could not imagine meeting virtually (e.g., such as in the MSCA framework), but with the pandemic our practices have significantly changed. He also agrees that virtual mobility definitively has its own values.

But it remains of importance for researchers to get together to make the universities initiatives sustainable. The European Commission is remaining supportive of this need.

Marius Gilbert (*Moderator*) likes the idea of 'slow' science. Also, it is true that once physical relationship is established, then virtual mobility can be more easily settled.

He then underlined to the panelists that in the current landscape of mobility, there is not only academia, but also academia and the rest of society.

Stijn Delaure adds to this line by placing the different non-academic actors as key drivers to the European economy. In parallel, researchers must open their mindset and develop their entrepreneurial skills. One challenge is currently how to better connect talented researchers to their ecosystems; smoother flows must be set up between the different sectors. This process has to involve the Human Resources Offices of universities: they have a role to play in providing guidance to their research staff, as well as offering them – especially the early career ones, a training program to gain on entrepreneurship and innovation competencies.





The knowledge though must remain balanced across Europe, and this is possible while having ‘strong’ partners sharing with ‘weaker’ ones; the Alliances can make a significance difference in this system.

Louise Wallenberg

As she has experience only with the public sector, Louise mentions cases of students’ mobility to museums supported by State funding. At the CIVIS scale, she is currently trying to build up an educational course which could be used as pilot case by the European Commission to learn from.

Marius Gilbert (*Moderator*) asks the different panelists whether they believe Open Science and digitalization permeability to facilitate mobility or not.

Olga Wessels

Cultural change in open Science practices is happening, in particular thanks to the new rewarding system that is under construction. All the actors are on board of this process, and this is certainly going to impact the society. In ECIU, for instance, a mobility program to encourage cooperation with industry was born. Moreover, the ECIU’s challenge-based vision shall be published later this year, while the objective of building bridges with the society will be the Alliance’s agenda.

Marius Gilbert (*Moderator*) explains that senior researchers sometimes have a hard time to find their ways in the Alliances’ frameworks. How can we get their interest? And eventually have them contributing?

Sara Wilmet

She strongly advises to promote the MSCA programme initiatives with the Alliances, also putting the light on the positive impact it has on staff mobility, in particular to the non-academia sectors (indeed, the MSCA integrates an intersectoral mobility dimension).

In CIRCLE-U, they have set up different actions: for instance, there is one aims to develop researchers’ entrepreneurial skills with support from businesses partners, another to draft a career plan for researchers.

Marius Gilbert (*Moderator*) reminds the gender dimension to consider in Alliances’ plans. Can we eventually envisage a common vision on the practices to adopt?

Sara Wilmet

She is not the one in CIRCLE-U who does directly deal with this challenge. The HRS4R label provides an excellent framework for addressing the topic. There are still progress to make in this regard, in particular on how to support women in conciliating their career mobility and personal/family life. When you are a woman, maternity leave is present in almost every European country; yet, having a child in a foreign country remains a challenge for most.

Stijn Delaure agrees: a lot can be still done at the EC level. There was significant progress made in the Horizon Europe or Erasmus+ programmes though: indeed, this is now mandatory to include a gender equality plan in your proposal.

He then reflects on the job precarity observed in research. The European Commission is fully aware of this fact; however, there are indisputable challenges in addressing this issue. What may be recommended is to more largely train and sensibelize the advisors on the crucial role they play in their





mentees' career plans, while creating a favorable ground to help with the mentees' career transition – when needed, without ignoring the additional challenges women may face.

The European Commission has considered, in the current MSCA programme, the limited number of job offers for early stage researchers: now and then, researchers are not allowed anymore to apply for a MSCA initiative eight years after they completed their Ph.D.

Louise Wallenberg

On the gender question, she indicates that in Sweden, they are working toward reaching the 50%-50% balance between women and men in academia and like in other European countries, progress still needs to be made.

Marius Gilbert (*Moderator*) qualifies her statement of interesting because Sweden is often described as a 'good' example in Europe in this field.

Olga Wessels

She highlights the usefulness of Gender equality plan issued by the EC. Yet, changes are moving slowly in this field. Moreover, reaching a good balance must not only regard the gender dimension, but also at the benefit for disadvantage people and towards a better inclusion of diversity in general.

In ECIU, they opened a physical mobility programme on which they observed a gender balance of 50-50% within the pool of applications they received.

One last question was asked by **Janssen Anne-May** – as other representative from the CIRCLE-EU (AURORA project) present in the audience:

To the commissioner: Since a scheme for interruption in research is sometimes necessary for women what could be the future European initiatives to support a returning to academia?

Stijn Delaure takes the MSCA programme again as an example, precising that the eight years rule previously mentioned does not actually include the maternity break leave – if there is one. The MSCA programme also gives possibility for an extension – 6 months extra, under the condition that the fellowship is spent in another sector than academia. Finally, a new scheme – the ERA talents - to be issued by the European Commission this year is underway. This scheme will support intersectoral mobility in its broader sense, while valuing each of the counterparts involved.




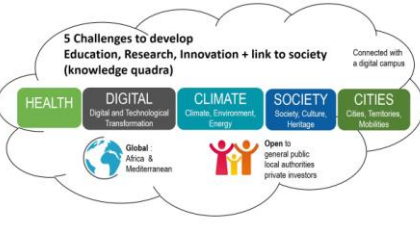
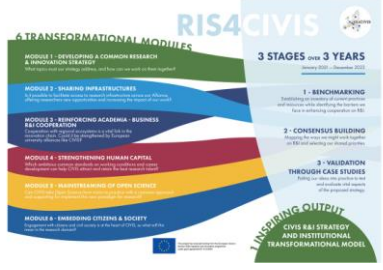




6. Annexes

6.1 CIVIS General Presentation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 480 000 Students 68 000+ Personnel (incl. over 30 000 teachers and researchers) 200+ ERC Grants 38 Nobel Prizes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Languages 100+ Faculties and Schools 700+ Research groups 500+ Undergraduate programmes 1 500+ Graduate programmes (incl. 500+ in English) 	<p>Challenge-based Interdisciplinary Hubs</p> <p>Open Labs</p> <p>Strong emphasis on Civic Engagement</p>
	<p>CIVIS A European Civic University</p>



6.2 RIS4CIVIS Presentation

 <h3>RIS4CIVIS: the Research & Innovation dimension of CIVIS</h3> <p>Cross-Border R&I in the European Universities Initiative</p> 	<h3>R&I : Pillars of the Universities</h3> 
<h3>RIS4CIVIS Organisation</h3> 	<h3>How to engage our Researchers?</h3> <p>Feeding their curiosity Addressing their needs</p>  <p>➢ In CIVIS, we have already developed significant actions and tools to engage our Researchers.</p>
<h3>Feeding Researchers' curiosity</h3>  <p>Cups & Cakes webinar series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion forum for Researchers to connect and get an overview of what is happening in other CIVIS partner universities. - In the longer term, these exchanges aim to foster exchanges and develop potential collaborations within the CIVIS Alliance. <p>https://civis.eu/cups-and-cakes</p>	<h3>Feeding Researchers' curiosity</h3> <p>CIVIS3i (COFUND EU-Programme, A*Midex)</p> <p>The CIVIS Alliance Programme for International, Interdisciplinary, Intersectoral Research and Training for Experienced Researchers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster mobility to enhance research collaborations within CIVIS. • Attract new talents from the International scene, support for research skills transfer. 
<h3>Addressing Researchers' needs</h3> <p>Task Force Europe Involves representatives of the nine R&I EU-offices of the Alliance's Universities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Conduct monitoring, networking and lobbying activities of the EU programs. ➢ Share good practices and reinforce synergies between the Universities EU-offices. 	<h3>Addressing Researchers' needs</h3> <p>Sharing resources, Best Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Significant research equipment and platforms. ➢ Local initiatives, programs and sites to support Academia-Business partnerships. ➢ Transferable skills trainings for Researchers' career development. ➢ Open Science supporting tools. ➢ Experience and methodologies in Citizens Science projects design and implementation. <p>...Towards a Common R&I Agenda</p>



CIVIS and the societal challenges

HEALTH	DIGITAL Digital and Technological Transformation	CLIMATE Climate, Environment, Energy	SOCIETY Society, Culture, Heritage	CITIES Cities, Territories, Mobility
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- Promote an interdisciplinary research
- Create an ecosystem of innovation
- Strengthen the links between academia and business
- Involving citizens in the process
- Education: Set the student at the heart of the interaction

