

# Governance & Deployment Public Report

## 2019-2022

### Work Package 2



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## INTRODUCTION

CIVIS was among the 17 first alliances selected in July 2019. In their Mission Statement the partners of CIVIS envisioned their “*European Civic University as a space for innovative and responsible teaching, research, cultural exchanges and citizen action within Europe from the Baltic to the Mediterranean Sea, while engaging with the world, its inhabitants and its institutions.*”

Another CIVIS specificity is the special focus on the Mediterranean area and Africa: “*The Mediterranean area and Africa will be at the core of our global strategy. We firmly believe that the future of Europe and Africa is interconnected.*”

Our Mission Statement also addresses the Governance issue: “*CIVIS will have a governance structure based on a participative principle that ensures that each partner university has shared responsibility. Our governance structure will evolve through time in the various phases of the building of our alliance. The structures we envision should enable everyone to contribute to the definition of the alliance’s orientations and activities. Thus, all the stakeholders involved in the life of our universities: students, academics, researchers, administrative staff, non-academic partners, etc.*”<sup>1</sup>

In our proposal, CIVIS governance was announced to be deployed following a step-by-step approach in order to build “*a strong, integrated and legitimate governance.*” The idea was to start with a light governance structure, and then progressively transform it into a long-term governance structure. Since an important issue is that all the communities could take ownership of the project, this governance was planned to rely on two complementary legitimacies: Political legitimacy, and Academic legitimacy.

Political legitimacy was planned to be reflected in all governing bodies while academic legitimacy was more specifically envisioned at the hub level through the hub councils and their chairs. The Board of Rectors was foreseen to “*monitor the overall process in order to ensure that both legitimacies are taken into consideration during all phases of the establishment of CIVIS, as well as in the long run*”

In the present report, we will detail the different governance bodies of CIVIS, as they were planned and as they have been implemented and eventually modified, and also select important issues discussed within the governance of CIVIS and describe the way this has been done.

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<sup>1</sup> CIVIS Mission Statement

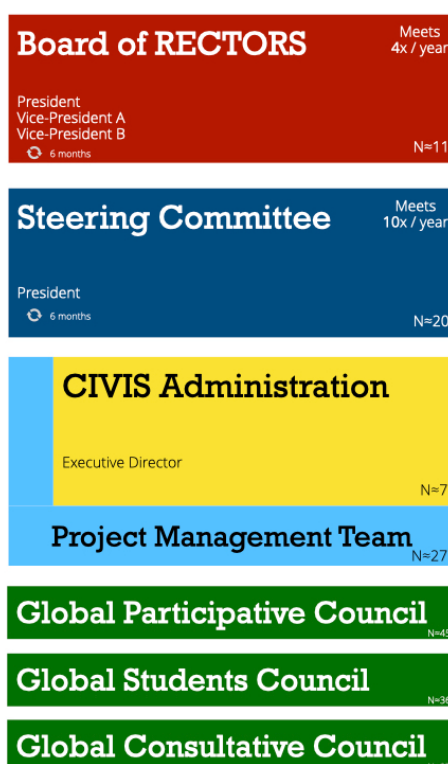


## STATE OF CIVIS GOVERNANCE BODIES AND THEIR EVOLUTION OVER THE FIRST THREE YEARS

CIVIS has designed and successfully implemented an efficient set of structures and procedures to ensure that decision-making is achieved in ways that are inclusive (all members must be heard), respectful of differences in uses, governance culture and laws, and efficient at reaching decisions fast enough to provide CIVIS with the reactivity that is required. To ensure this smooth deployment, two universities co-led the Work Package on Governance, namely Aix-Marseille Université and Université libre de Bruxelles.

One specificity of the CIVIS governance bodies is that they rely on two complementary legitimacies: Political legitimacy, reflected in all governing bodies; and academic legitimacy, more specifically envisioned at the level of the hubs through the hub councils and their chairs.

The other key element of the CIVIS governance is its bottom-up approach. This bottom-up approach is directly linked to a) the challenge-based approach materialised by the interdisciplinary hubs which are at the heart of CIVIS, and b) the civic engagement mostly implemented by the Open Labs. Both function essentially from the local level to the global level.

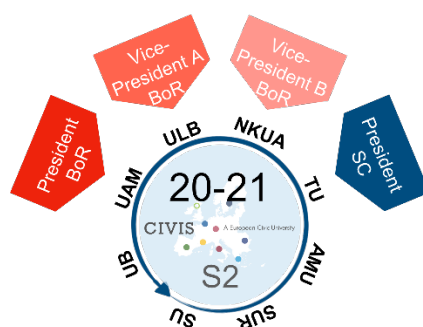


## Board of Rectors (BoR)

One of the characteristics of CIVIS is the very strong involvement of the Rectors. It has been true during the preparation and writing of the proposal (one presential meeting a month between September 2018 and February 2019, and two other meetings in April and July 2019)

Board of Rectors (BoR): Responsible for major decisions, including budget, changes in governance, the roadmap of the five hubs, the political agenda, strategic alliances, and other matters subject to internal approval in the participating universities, the BoR is the main governing body of CIVIS. It is composed of the Rector from each member university and meets, virtually or physically, 4 times a year. In addition to the Project Coordinator, up to three additional representatives/university (of which one is administrative) can participate as advisors. Only the Rectors or, in case of absence, their official representative, have voting rights.

The six-month rotation of the presidency of CIVIS is smooth and the transitions well organized with the help of the coordination team. The presidency rotation of CIVIS, and therefore of the BoR, is synchronized with the presidency rotation of the SC, and everything is planned until 2023.

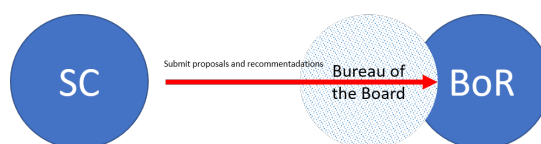


The six-monthly rotation among member universities for chairing the main governance bodies of CIVIS has proved adequate and efficient for the Board of Rectors and the Steering Committee. It proved less efficient for the Global Consultative Council and the Global Participative Council whose meetings have been too sparse for a biannual chair rotation to make sense.

All meetings have agendas sent well in advance and reports are systematically produced and circulated. Although all main decisions, although prepared by the SC, were supposed to be taken by the BoR, after a year it appeared that they were too numerous. Adjustments were prepared to improve the agility of the decision-making process through the identification of delegations from the BoR to the SC which meets much more frequently.

## Bureau of the Board (BoB)

at the start of the project, a BoB, composed of the President of CIVIS, two Vice Presidents and of AMU President and AMU Project Coordinator (the latter with consultative voice) was created. His role, described as such in the application, was to prepare the Board of Rectors meetings, coordinate the work of the Steering Committee, oversee the work of the administration, and propose the political agenda and the budget to the Board of Rectors. However, It rapidly appeared that the BoB could not be the executive body described In the application and that Its role was limited to to fix the agenda and eventually start discussions in order to save time during the BoR meeting. Since all of the Items brought up before the BoR had been debated at the Steering Committee It was decided at the beginning of 2021 not to convene the BoB any more, the agenda of the BoR being establish by the presidents of CIVIS (and BoR), of the SC and the project coordinator.



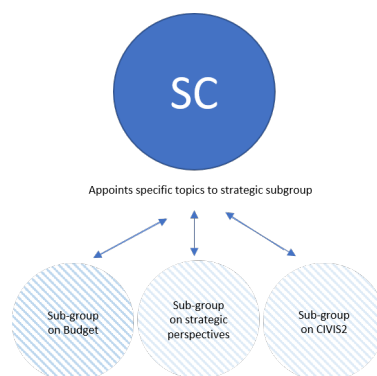
*Scheme representing the discontinuing of the BoB,*

## Steering Committee (SC)

The SC exists in the structure foreseen in the application (2 members per university including at least one political, and the project coordinator) since the beginning of the project. It is chaired by a rector, or his/her representative, on the six-month rotation system (see scheme above). No meetings frequency was indicated in the proposal but the SC is the body which meets the most frequently, once a month. The SC works in close coordination with the administrative team of CIVIS, following the work of the different WP and hubs, preparing the decisions that must be taken by the BoR and following the implementation of the various actions. The SC is also free to invite additional experts with consultative capacity (no vote); among these experts, two representatives of the Student Council have been systematically invited during the third year of the project. As a consequence, the SC is the political body that is most aware of the day-to-day life of CIVIS, and therefore it can be seen as the political executive body of CIVIS. All important decisions taken by the BoR have been prepared, sometimes during more than one meeting, at the SC level. However, there was initially no formal delegation between the BoR and the SC. This was pointed out by the external evaluators and has been corrected, the BoR dealing with only strategic issues.

Unplanned events always happen during a project, it is in the essence of a pilot initiative like the EUI, this is why it needs a robust steering body which

will be able to absorb the shock, process it and adapt in line with the course of the initial project objectives. Given this, we notice that the appointment of specific and flexible thematic subgroup has been the main tool of the Steering Committee to solve these issues, while still being able to steer the CIVIS ship.



*Presentation of the “subgroup” strategy structure*

For other governance issues, like the integration of the University of Glasgow as an associated partner or the creation of a Students Council, preparation work was done by WP2 contacts or by ad-hoc subgroups commissioned by the Steering Committee.

### **Participative Council (PC)**

The Global (at the level of the entire alliance) PC has been constituted as foreseen in the proposal (5 members per university representing the different communities: 1 teacher, 1 researcher, 1 administrative staff and 2 students), each university designating its delegated in complete autonomy. It is chaired by one Vice President of the BoB and is co-chaired by a student. It is designed to allow representatives from different university communities to express their needs and ideas in view of advising, feeding and challenging the BoR and the SC. To encourage local and global support from each university, a local PC can be established at the level of each University. These local PC or their equivalent can make suggestions to their university and assist in the implementation of projects.

However, in addition to the fact that the pandemic did not allow us to organise face to face meetings for the first half of the project and that online meetings are not the best way to start productive collaboration, it appeared that the members of this council were not sufficiently involved in CIVIS to be able to contribute in a significant way. To correct this drawback, we have proposed an evolution and in our second phase, the members of this council will be chosen among colleagues, academics and staff, and students involved in CIVIS structures (excluding governance bodies) or in CIVIS projects. We

expect that this modification will result in a better contribution of this body which is important for the creation of a community, both at the level of each university and at the level of the Alliance.

### Consultative Council (CC)

Initially the CC was supposed to gather 32 members (2 members nominated by each of the eight universities + 16 more by the BoR) Including representatives of the 8 regions and various stakeholders, companies, associations, museums... The idea was that the CC could provide ideas and proposals to the BoR, can assist in the implementation of projects and participate in the CIVIS days. However, it Immediately appeared that the composition described in the proposal was too large and the designation procedure too complex to achieve. WP2 worked on a solution that was proposed to the SC and then validated by the BoR: the composition of the CC has been modified in the following way: 8 rectors (or their representatives) + 16 stakeholders. Among the 16 stakeholders, 8 are representatives of the regions or equivalent local authorities, and 8 are chosen by the BoR among the propositions made by each university trying to have businesses, civil society organisations and museums. The first meeting was held in October 2020 and a second one in September 2021. However, these stakeholders were rather diverse and it appeared to be difficult to organise discussions and even more actions on that basis.

Taking Into this difficulty we moved in two directions:

a) To induce local support from societal actors we decided to encourage the creation of **Local Consultative Councils** involving a wider range of stakeholders. Depending on local contexts, member universities of the Alliance have chosen either to create new entities or to rely on existing ones to fulfil the role. We were much more successful with theses LCC since it was possible to involve some of the stakeholders into projects funded by the CIVIS Open Labs.

b) To propose **thematic networks** within the CC. One on museums arose from this reflection, many universities having a museum already involved in their Local Consultative Council and proved to be efficient since this network was in capacity to contribute to our application for CIVIS 2 with a statement in January 2022 and met in presence, during the CIVIS days in Athens in May 2022. Since other stakeholders seemed to be interested by this network organisation, we decided to transform the Consultative Council into a Partner Council organised in that way. This will be implemented in the second phase of CIVIS starting October 2022.



## Hub Councils (HC)

With the Hubs Councils, the CIVIS governance commits toward academic legitimacy. There is a Hub Council for each of the 5 CIVIS Hubs, steered by high level experts on the relevant Hub theme involved in the related multidisciplinary fields, chosen from among the participating universities for their ability to stimulate excellent research and education within the multidisciplinary framework of the hubs, and their involvement in partnerships with external stakeholders at local, European and/or Mediterranean and African levels. The HC are composed of representatives of the programs (including students), labs and organisations involved in the WP3, WP4 and WP5 projects. Supervised by the SC, they are in charge of implementing the CIVIS Challenge-based approach through call for projects, and evaluating the application sent by CIVIS academics.

## Student Council (SC)

Initially, the participation of the students to the governance bodies of CIVIS was foreseen through their presence in the Participative Council (2 out of the 5 members per university) and in the hub councils. However, the student members of the PC rapidly asked for a specific student body having in mind that it would be easier for them to deliberate and share their point of view if they could gather among themselves. That request was seen as a positive sign that students wanted to become more involved in CIVIS and its creation was decided by the BoR in September 2020. The Student Council proved to be very active and to work on very serious grounds. It met three times in person during the third year (in Brussels, Athens and Bucharest), twice on the occasion of the CIVIS Days (in November 2021 and May 2022) and, through that presence, contributed very significantly to the success of these events. In September 2022, members of the CIVIS Student Council and CIVIS Ambassadors gathered at the University of Bucharest. The meeting was an opportunity for these student representatives to plan their future work and collaboration in the framework of the European University. It also marked the formal handover from October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, of the Presidency of the CIVIS Student Council based on the results of the elections held during the CIVIS Days in Athens in May 2022.

## Towards more territorial anchorage of CIVIS

One of the main territorial anchorage's features of CIVIS is its local to global strategy, especially towards associated partners. What better than the Open Labs, Hubs and Consultative Councils to offer the opportunity for collaborations with other stakeholders from the public or private sectors? Like City or Region councils, museums and companies. They can be members of the GCC or not, and they are often involved in Local Consultative Councils (one

for each partner) and/or in the Open Labs (also one at each member university). However, because of the pandemic, the Global Consultative Council only met formally two times. Since initiating collaborations between organisations and people not knowing each other only through virtual meetings is very difficult, it was challenging. Nevertheless, the involvement of the GCC members in each Local Consultative Councils in the interval allowed to articulate the discussions at the local level, and a number of themes have emerged as potentially mobilising museums, local or regional governments and local actors of the health sector.

Only one event involving Region and/or City Council representative has been organised in presence before the pandemic, the Mayors Day on the 6th of December 2019 in Brussels (organised by ULB and hosted by the EC).

### **A sense of agility and resilience**

Even with the mind focused on laying the foundation for proper operating bodies, the governance reacted efficiently once the Covid-19 situation began. The steering committee subgroup strategy and the dismantle of the Bureau of the Board simplified and streamlined the governance at the right time. Furthermore, the governance seized the new opportunities given by the budget reallocation to not open only 3 but 4 and even, ultimately, 5 Hubs. With this attitude, the governance showed resilience at a difficult time and allowed at the same time a smooth development of the Hubs, core of the alliance.

### **To progressively convert into a long-term structure**

The streamlining of the governance at such a hard time gave the BoR a chance to keep the head above water and focus on the future of the alliance. The involvement of universities' authorities is very positive in spite of 5 new Rectors being elected during that time. The Alliance has been expanded and welcomed the University of Glasgow as a new member in January 2021, and the Paris-Lodron University Salzburg in July 2021. These two universities have been involved in CIVIS activities and CIVIS 2 reflexions since then, even without being included in the CIVIS budget (or to a very little extend for PLUS). CIVIS has contributed to the different working groups of the network of European University Alliances (FOR-EU) thus contributing to the ongoing dialogue between the Alliances and the European Commission authorities for their further deployment.

### **Experimenting with simultaneous interpretation**

Promoting multilingualism and overcoming language barriers is high on the agenda of CIVIS. Yet the governance and management, and to a large extent, most of the activities of CIVIS rely on English as a lingua franca. This might deter some from getting involved, or at least from expressing themselves with the same nuance that they would in their mother tongue.

A first experiment in providing simultaneous interpretation was conducted during the meetings of the Board of Rectors and of the Global Consultative Council that took place in Madrid in September. A professional team of conference interpreting was brought in to provide simultaneous interpretation from English to French and French to English, both in the room (with IR headsets) and on Zoom (for remote participants). That first test was successful enough to encourage similar efforts during meetings of the Board of Rectors and the Steering Committee for the next semester.

## IMPORTANT TOPICS DISCUSSED

### **A- Integration of new members**

Over the three years, there have been discussions to Integrate, either as full member or as associated members, three different universities, the university of Glasgow, the Paris Lodron University Salzburg and the University of Lausanne. For all these discussions, the following criteria, important to keep CIVIS coherent, were put forward: civic engagement, interest for the Mediterranean area and Africa, high research profile, complementary strengths and disciplinary potentials, existing collaborations...

#### **The University of Glasgow as Associated Partner**

The integration of a British partner is an “old story” in CIVIS discussions. Indeed, the question has been raised even before the final constitution of the alliance in 2018 when the first members were thinking of additional members. It was finally decided not to go towards that direction and the alliance was constituted with the initial 8 known full members. Although the subject has not been discussed any more during the final months of 2018 and in 2019, it was not forgotten. It came back on the agenda in early 2020 and the BoR of March 2020 validated the idea of a British, or English speaking, partner, despite the foreseen difficulties of the Brexit. Each university proposed 5 possible partners with respect to the above mentioned criteria, and it appeared clearly that the university of Glasgow was both a very good and consensual candidate. WP2 co-leaders were charged to contact the University of Glasgow about the possibility of joining CIVIS as an associated partner. The answer was very quick and to say the less, clearly positive. The BoR of July 2020 validated the idea of Glasgow joining the alliance. After additional discussions to see what could be the input of UofG within CIVIS and what CIVIS could brought to the UofG, the proposition of associating the university of Glasgow to CIVIS as an associated partner was made to the BoR of September 2020, and validated. The official demand was made to the commission and the positive answer, much to our delight, arrived in December 2020. Since January 2021, the university of Glasgow participates to all governance bodies of CIVIS, including the Student Council.

## **The Paris-Lodron University Salzburg as Full Partner**

As part of the discussions on the future of CIVIS, the eventuality of welcoming a 9<sup>th</sup> full member was raised (the University of Glasgow, unfortunately, could not be counted because of the withdrawal of the UK from ERASMUS+). After a benchmark on the universities that could be interested to join an alliance, PLUS appeared to be a very good possibility for CIVIS, and a positive answer was given on the principle by the Board of Rectors in July 2021. Fruitful discussions were immediately initiated (with the help of the University of Tübingen), to verify that the priorities of CIVIS and those of PLUS were aligned. An agreement was reached which allowed the BoR, held in Madrid in September 2021, to officialise the enlargement of CIVIS to the University of Salzburg. After the decision was taken, CIVIS officially asked the European Commission to approve an amendment to the partnership agreement so that PLUS becomes officially a full member within the terms of the Erasmus+ funded project. The enlargement of CIVIS to PLUS was officially confirmed from March 2022. Meanwhile, representatives of PLUS were invited to send representatives to the full range of governance and consultation bodies of CIVIS to ensure that a deep integration within CIVIS began immediately. This decision enabled PLUS to be included in all CIVIS governance bodies, to participate to some activities, and more importantly to be involved from the beginning in the preparation of the next application for the full rollout of the European universities.

## **Université de Lausanne**

Following up on an initiative by the Swiss authorities encouraging Swiss universities to become involved with the European Universities Initiative, CIVIS was contacted by the Université de Lausanne. Many CIVIS member universities knew this university well and had long-standing collaborations at many levels. Université de Lausanne is also well known by the six CIVIS member universities that are also members of UNICA. It soon appeared that Université de Lausanne would be a very good fit for CIVIS and the Board of Rectors decided in February 2022 that Université de Lausanne should be mentioned as Associated Partner in the application for CIVIS2. This will make CIVIS an Alliance of 11 universities, 2 of which (University of Glasgow and Université de Lausanne) being “associate partners” within the 2022-2026 project funded by Erasmus+.

## **B- Legal Entity**

Chaired by the WP2 co-leaders a Legal Entity Task Force (LETF) was launched in February 2020. It was constituted by one member per university member of CIVIS. The work has started with a benchmark, each partner working on the various legal entity possibilities taking into account their own

national legal constraints. This was done on the basis of a common questionnaire, in order to ease the comparative work. All universities produced a comparative table of the different possibilities and in May 2020, the LETF was able to recommend a more detailed study of two possibilities, the AISBL (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif) of Belgian law and the EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation). The advice was followed by the SC in June 2020 and validated by the BoR in July 2020. Two sub-groups of the LETF worked over the summer on those two possibilities and enabled the TF to come with a clear recommendation in favor of the AISBL frame.

Such recommendation was made essentially on grounds of relative simplicity of the implementation and also on the possibility to "transfer" that legal entity into, when available, the common one the EC is working on for all European universities. This recommendation was approved by the BoR in September 2020. Based on that important decision the LETF was then given the mandate to work on the general structure, including the various governance bodies and their competences. Eight sub-groups were constituted and they produced an important work which enabled the TF to propose, taking into account the legal constraints of an AISBL, a general structuration of the future CIVIS-aisbl legal entity to the SC and the BoR of March 2021. Another important objective of this work was to stick as close as possible to the way CIVIS was governed so far since there are not significant criticisms on the way things are run. The BoR validated the structuration and gave mandate to the LETF to continue his work by drafting the statutes, insisting that these ones must be discussed in detail with all partners and CIVIS bodies. However, this work was suspended in the summer of 2021 until more information was available on the future requirements and the possibility of a specific legal status for the European universities.

## **C- Student Council creation**

Initially, the participation of the students to the governance bodies of CIVIS was foreseen through their presence in the Participative Council (2 out of the 5 members per university) and in the hub councils. However, as mentioned above, the student members of the PC rapidly asked for a specific student body having in mind that it would be easier for them to deliberate and share their point of view if they could gather among themselves. That request being seen as a positive sign that students wanted to become more involved in CIVIS, and being also supported by a note from ULB, WP2 was charged to discuss the format of such a council with student representatives. After a second discussion within the SC in June 2020, the subject was brought to the BoR of July 2020 which gave a go on the principle. Further discussions, between WP2 and student representatives, on the composition and the role of this council during the summer enabled the BoR to decide in September

2020 the creation of a Global Students Council (32 members: 16 from the PC and 2 x 8 additional ones); local Student Councils should also be created in each university. Students from UofG and PLUS have joined in 2021 and beginning of 2022 and those from the Université de Lausanne will by the end of 2022.

## **D-Priorities and budget reallocation**

Mobility was a very important item in the initial budget of CIVIS, and it appeared quickly that the pandemic would have a strong impact on its execution. Therefore, in the last months of year one, the SC appointed a subgroup on budget that should, together with the coordination, estimate the mobilities that would most probably not occur and therefore the amount of budget that could be reallocated. In November 2020, it was estimated that around 1 M€ would not be spent as planned, and should therefore be reallocated in ways consistent with the objectives of CIVIS and the project agreement: budget reallocation should clearly help to reach CIVIS priorities. Independently, the lack of incentives, typically staff costs, in the budget of CIVIS has been identified in many universities.

Based on EC priorities and CIVIS initial priorities the SC discussed that matter in December 2020 and agreed to concentrate, for the second period of the project (M 19–36), on 4 main topics:

- Increasing mobility
- Digital Campus
- CIVIS modules and automatic recognition
- Joint teaching programs and degrees

Five meetings (one for each topic and one to synthesise the work) were held in February 2021 that enabled the SC to produce a note on the main priorities of CIVIS for the second half of the project. Based on the conclusions of the budget subgroup, the SC was also able to propose how to spend, in coherence with these priorities, the circa 1 M€ not used for mobilities. Both documents, on priorities and budget reallocation, were approved by the BoR of March 2021 and then have been accepted by the European Commission. In 2022, further budget reallocation had to be considered. The decision was taken to allocate more money to staff costs that were initially very low in CIVIS budget (for example, only 20% of a full time for the project managers of each university who have been working full time for CIVIS). However, this was done only after all selected mobility projects (numerous during spring and summer of 2022) were funded. That reallocation induced some variations in the budget distribution among the university partners and therefore in their co-funding.



## E- Preparing the future of CIVIS and the application for CIVIS2

In the spring of 2021, the Steering Committee created a subgroup to discuss strategic perspectives. The subgroup's work peaked during an in-person retreat in Brussels (2–3 July 2021). The Steering Committee then decided to create another subgroup to reflect on the future of CIVIS and begin the preparation and planning of the next application that the Alliance would prepare for the upcoming call for proposals for the full rollout of the European universities. The subgroup nick named "CIVIS2" met for the first time on 15 Sept. 2021 (online) and continued to work intensely during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the project. The activity peaked after the publication of the Call for proposals for a new period of funding (December). The Subgroup work very intensely, reporting at regular intervals to the Steering Committee and the Board of Rectors. Notwithstanding the various exchanges of messages, the Subgroup met 12 times during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year alone, sometimes for 3 days in a row. After the application was completed and turned in, the Subgroup continued its work to prepare the transition from CIVIS to CIVIS2.

## CONCLUSION

First generation European universities are pioneering a new form of inter-university Alliance. In doing so, they can rely on the experience, knowledge, and skills gathered by their member universities in previous endeavours of international collaboration. During their first three years, the first-generation Alliances have conducted a true pilot experiment whereby they had to establish the proof of concept while fine-tuning, on the go, many of the organisational structures and procedures that were planned in their initial application.

Of all facets of the consortium design, *governance* requires particular attention at the early stage of a European university Alliance. Structures and procedures must organise a setting where all partners feel safe and comfortable, while providing efficient decision-making processes. This requires a substantial understanding of the specific uses and institutional logics at play in each of the universities. Some idiosyncratic practices of governance have been identified and were taken into account from the design stage; others came to light fortuitously as functioning governance bodies encountered new situations and faced new challenges. The resulting iterative process led to adjustments both formal or informal and led to gains both in efficiency and in mutual trust among the partners and their representatives.

As the three-year pilot phase draws to an end, the governing bodies and procedures of CIVIS have reached maturity, and all together it can be said that the governance of CIVIS is functioning correctly. All the various bodies have



been created and some, BoR, Steering Committee, Student Council and Hub Councils have really contributed to the development of CIVIS.

Given the size of the alliance and the ambition of the project, it is indeed positive. Some modifications introduced during this first period contributed to the success:

- Introduce some delegations between the BoR and the SC
- Create the Student Council in order to enhance the belonging sense among the various university communities. The reactivity of the governance to answer to the students request for a specific council is a good indication of its agility.
- Involve students In the Steering Committee and the Hub Councils

However, we were not as successful with the Participative and Consultative Councils but changes, leading hopefully to improvements will be introduced at the beginning of the coming (2022-2026) phase. Indeed, the experience of the first 3 years and the lessons learned served as an invaluable input when adjusting the management and governance of the Alliance when writing up the application for CIVIS2 and the second funding period:

- Introduce networks (such as the museum network) within the Partner Council (formerly Consultative Council) to facilitate exchanges among stakeholders
- Chose colleagues and students involved In CIVIS projects and actions to be member of the Participative Council.



## ANNEX: THREE YEARS OF CIVIS IN NUTSHELLS

### Year 1 in a nutshell

In the proposal, the governance bodies foreseen for CIVIS were the Board of Rectors (BoR), the Bureau of the Board (BoB), the Steering Committee (SC), the Participative Council (PC), the Consultative Council (CC) and one Hub Council for each hub (HC). A Student Council has been added at the end of the first year. All these bodies have been created during year one. However, the Student Councils and Hub Councils were launched during year 2

The main decisions by the governance during the first year can be summarized as follows: Start hubs deployment with Hub “Climate, environment, energy” and prepare the next three hubs (“Society, culture, heritage,” “Cities, territories, mobility” and “Health”); creation of a Student Council which was not foreseen in the proposal; Integration of the University of Glasgow as an associated partner of CIVIS; choice of the AISBL framework should CIVIS decide to establish a legal entity; initiation of a reflection on budget reallocation.

### Year 2 in a nutshell

Governance structures and procedures were designed and implemented in the context of forming up and launching CIVIS. The second year was still marked by many processes and decisions related to setting up and launching structures and activities. Terms of references, compositions, calls for proposals, selection of proposals... all had to be organised, documented, discussed, and ultimately decided upon.

This context has led to an abundance of items to be processed and discussed in various bodies and assemblies. The resulting inflation in the number of meetings and in the number of items on the agenda of these meetings was legitimate and presumed temporary (until CIVIS gained momentum), but it was a matter of concern as it absorbed time and resources for rather administrative tasks.

Overall, the governance of CIVIS appears to function as planned. The various instances and assemblies managed to organise the work, deliberate, and take the necessary decisions while maintaining a remarkably consensual and constructive climate among representatives of the member universities.

Due to the pandemic, but also to concerns about environmental impact, most of the meetings have taken place online. However, starting in 2021, a few



face-to-face meetings have been organised for those who could travel, while leaving the possibility to participate remotely (blended format meetings).

### **Year 3 in a nutshell**

The **third** year of CIVIS is characterised by the stabilisation of governance structures and processes. The entire flow has gained in efficiency from the planning of the meetings to the time management of the discussions, from the writing-up of the agenda and the minutes to the preparation and distribution of the supporting material.

The stabilisation of the governance is a sure sign of the maturity of the Alliance itself. Member universities and the project coordination have developed a more proactive and efficient approach to management and governance, while the accumulated shared experience feeds a virtuous cycle of increasing trust and understanding among partners.

This led to a deliberate, gradual shift of some decisions from the Board of Rectors to the Steering Committee. The choice was made to progressively transform the Board of Rectors, from its initial role of ultimate decision-taking body, to an assembly where the heads of institutions of the member universities could focus their deliberations and decisions exclusively on the most strategic topics. In addition to these adjustments on the relation between the BoR and the SC, we have also worked on possible improvements of the other governance bodies of CIVIS. This was done while preparing our new application and will therefore be implemented for the 2022-2026 period.

Meanwhile, the Hub Council of the fifth interdisciplinary hub (“Digital and Technological Transformation”) was established, thus bringing the final touch to a set governance bodies now complete.