2025 EUA STATUTORY MEETINGS & ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Connecting the dots on sustainability and resilience

9-11 April 2025, University of Latvia, Riga - All times are EEST (Eastern European Summer Time)

While sustainability is about building a better future, resilience is about overcoming internal and external challenges. Crucially, both elements are needed for universities to succeed in today's world.

The 2025 EUA Annual Conference, hosted by the University of Latvia in Riga from 10-11 April, will strive to define what sustainability and resilience, as multi-faceted concepts, mean for universities. By 'Connecting the dots on sustainability and resilience', this event will explore how universities can contribute to a more sustainable future, both on and off campus, while strengthening institutional and societal resilience. So, how can university leadership and communities best pursue sustainability and resilience as key objectives of institutional missions, strategies and activities?

To reflect on this, the 2025 Annual Conference will explore what sustainability means from the point of view of funding, digitalisation, academic careers and university leadership. Sessions will also shine a spotlight on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), showcasing how they can be put into action by universities. At the same time, participants will reflect on how institutions can become resilient without turning inwards on themselves, in sessions dedicated to knowledge security and inclusion.

Wednesday 9 April

10.00-12.30: **EUA Board Meeting** (closed meeting, registration required)

12.30-13.30: Lunch for EUA Board, Council and Secretaries General

13.30-15.30: **EUA Council Meeting** (closed meeting, registration required)

15.30-16.00: Coffee for EUA Board, Council and Secretaries General

16.00-18.00: **Leadership Roundtable** (invitation-only, registration required)
Dealing with crisis: a peer-exchange session

Crisis management is becoming an ever more important aspect of leading a university. Be it Covid-19, natural disasters, large-scale campus protests, cyber-attacks, foreign interference cases or drastically declining funding, crises come in many guises. What they share is their highly disruptive nature and the prospect of causing considerable harm to an institution. What is more, crises today appear to be multiplying, accelerating and even overlapping. Overcoming them or, perhaps, learning to operate under the new circumstances they impose is therefore an imperative for university leadership. A dedicated team, effective structures, quick decision-making processes and a sound crisis communication plan are generally seen as key to successful crisis management.

During this Leadership Roundtable, which is reserved for the executive heads (rectors, vice-chancellors and presidents) of EUA members, participants will be invited to share their experiences of managing different crises affecting their

institutions. Drawing on a number of practice cases, participants will reflect on how risk assessment and crisis preparation can be used to strengthen institutional resilience and discuss which tools, structures and processes they have deployed to deal with crises effectively.

Furthermore. the 2025 EUA Leadership Roundtable will provide an initial opportunity for the top-level leadership of EUA members to provide structured input into the revision process for EUA's Strategic Plan.

16.00-18.00: **Meeting of EUA Secretaries General Forum** (closed meeting, registration required)

18.00-19.00 **Leadership Meet & Greet**

Thursday 10 April

08.00-09.00: Registration for General Assembly
Main hall, Academic Centre House of Science
08.30-17.15: Registration for Annual Conference
Main hall, Academic Centre House of Science

08.30-09.30: Welcome coffee
Room Delta & Omega

09.45-12.00: **General Assembly** (open to EUA members & affiliates, registration required)
Room Alpha

12.00-13.00: Lunch
Room Delta & Omega

13.00-13.30: **2025 EUA Annual Conference - *Opening***
Room Alpha

- **Josep Maria Garrell**, EUA President
- **Gundars Bērziņš**, Rector, University of Latvia and FORTHEM Alliance
- **Jānis Paiders,** Acting State Secretary, Ministry for Education and Science, Republic of Latvia
- **Roxana Mînzatu**, Executive Vice-President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness, European Commission (video address)

13.30-14.40: **Plenary Session 1 - *Universities' role in and for sustainability***
Room Alpha
Universities are central actors for sustainability. They are centres of knowledge creation and debate, they play an important part in innovation ecosystems, and they cultivate and transfer critical and creative thinking as well as concrete skills. Ten years after the Sustainable Development Goals were set by the United Nations, (how) have universities contributed to achieving them? This plenary session explores how universities are approaching this challenge at the institutional level, giving voice to university leaders and key partners.

- **Enrico Giovannini**, Professor, Tor Vergata University of Rome, Italy
- **Daniella Tilbury**, Professor, UN Economic Commission for Europe, UK
- MODERATED BY **Amanda Crowfoot**, EUA Secretary General

14.40-15.10: Coffee break
Room Delta & Omega

15.10-16.10 : **Breakout session 1A | *Inclusion through digitalisation***
Room Beta & Gamma
The integration of digital technologies in education has the potential to transform experiences in teaching and learning. As tools become more accessible, intuitive and adaptive, the possibility of tailoring content and personalising learning pathways to meet the needs of the individual learner becomes more easily achievable. This session will demonstrate how new technologies can transform traditional practices, thereby creating opportunities for participation among a more diverse profile of learners and enhancing universities' role in providing quality education for all. Participants will respond to (video) presentations from EUA members, which will showcase how digitalisation has supported inclusive learning spaces and environments.

- **Sarah Dégallier Rochat**, Head of Humane Digital Transformation, Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland
- **Boris Janča**, Director, Support Centre for Students with Special Needs, Masaryk University, Czechia
- MODERATED BY **Wim van de Donk**, EUA Board member

15.10-16.10 : **Breakout session 1B | *Scholar-led publishing models: a risky business***
Rooms 301 & 401
The landscape of scholarly communication is undergoing significant transformations driven by digital advancements, evolving business models and a growing emphasis on openness. Navigating this moving landscape is challenging for universities, because of inherent tensions between different – and sometimes incompatible – demands. This session will address pressing issues for universities when it comes to scholarly communication, such as rising costs, mandates for open access by policy makers and research funders and a research culture still driven by the 'publish or perish' mantra.

In order to facilitate an interactive and lively discussion, participants will split into two groups.

- **Pastora Martínez**, Commissioner for International Action, Open University of Catalonia, Spain
- MODERATED BY **Marcin Pałys**, EUA Board member

- **Sara Decoster**, Expert on Open Science, KU Leuven, Belgium
- MODERATED BY **Astrid Söderbergh-Widding**, EUA Board member

15.10-16.10 : **Breakout session 1C | *Leading sustainable transformation***
Room Alpha
This breakout session will examine the pivotal role of transformational leadership in guiding universities' shift towards a comprehensive approach to sustainability. By addressing concrete leadership dilemmas, it will explore how institutions have reimagined their vision and governance structures, moving towards a transversal institutional strategy. Drawing on the experiences of university leaders, this session will focus on how leaders can align their institutions with new sustainability goals, navigate tensions and engage stakeholders at all levels, as well as how their universities have restructured governance models, allocated additional resources (financial and human), or created new leadership roles and bodies to holistically address sustainability across the university.

- **Sargis Asatryants**, Vice-Rector for Internationalisation and Reforms, National Polytechnic University of Armenia
- **Helen Sooväli-Sepping**, Councellor for Rector, Sustainable Development and Green Transition, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia
- MODERATED BY **Eeva Leinonen**, President, Maynooth University, Ireland

16.10-16.50: Coffee break
Room Delta & Omega

16.50-17.50: **Plenary session 2 - *Towards attractive and sustainable academic careers***
Room Alpha
Sustainable and attractive academic careers are a cornerstone of competitive higher education and research. This plenary session will include an exclusive presentation about EUA's forthcoming key principles for sustainable and attractive academic careers, created by a dedicated task-and-finish group over the course of the past year. Participants will have the opportunity to learn more about the principles and engage in a discussion about how they can be implemented in a context-sensitive way.

- **Gundars Bērziņš**, Rector, University of Latvia and FORTHEM Alliance
- **Finn-Eirik Johansen**, Board Member, University of Oslo, Norway
- **Manuela Raith**, Vice-Rector, University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna & Vice-Rector, Montanuniversität Leoben, Austria
- MODERATED BY **Ivanka Popović**, EUA Vice-President

19.30-22.00: **Networking Reception and Dinner**
Radisson Blu Latvija Conference & Spa Hotel

Friday 11 April

09.30-10.30: **Breakout session 2A | *Risk and resilience in knowledge security***
Room Beta & Gamma
Discussions on knowledge security have ranged from the culture of risk awareness in universities to frameworks and tools for managing risks in balanced, yet effective ways. As policy makers explore ever more targeted measures to ensure security and autonomy in key R&I areas, the university sector faces critical choices in terms of capacity building for responsible internationalisation. As these choices bring major consequences for institutional resilience and the sustainability of scientific partnerships, this session will assess how universities are managing risks and threats to their knowledge assets.

- **Ineta Dabašinskienė**, Institutional Coordinator, Transform4Europe Alliance, Rector-Elect, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
- **Mykola Trofymenko**, Rector, Mariupol State University, Ukraine
- **Koen Verlaeckt**, Secretary General, Flemish Interuniversity Council, Belgium
- MODERATED BY **Anne Lequy**, EUA Board member

09.30-10.30: **Breakout session 2B | *Sustainable income diversification strategies***
Room Alpha
Many universities set up strategies to diversify their income sources, and therefore lessen their financial dependence towards a single funder (most often, public authorities), whose reliability can no longer be taken for granted. However, income diversification comes with its own set of challenges and demands adequate risk management strategies. This session will address how universities must take various risks into account, such as volatile political and economic environments (e.g. risks connected to attracting foreign students), ethical questions (from whom do we accept funds), financial risks (co-funding) and the perceptions of different communities (staff, students and partner organisations).

- **Robert Grey**, Chancellor, University of Warsaw, Poland
- **Andrea Silvestri**, General Director, University of Turin, Italy
- MODERATED BY **Astrid Söderbergh-Widding**, EUA Board member

09.30-10.30: **Breakout session 2C | *Beyond greening: putting the SDGs into action***
Rooms 301 & 401
Sustainability is high on the agenda of European universities. Institutions frame sustainability in diverse ways, with some focusing on greening, and others taking a much

broader view. There is also much to be learned from how the higher education sector addresses sustainability in day-to-day activities, across all university missions. Through a peer learning approach, this session will explore how universities are currently translating their strategies on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and greening into concrete actions.

In order to facilitate an interactive and lively discussion, participants will split into two groups.

- **Julia Ayuso**, Director, School of Sustainability, European University of Madrid, Spain
- **Tove Holm**, Local Manager, SEA-EU Alliance, Nord University, Norway
- *Moderated by* **Maurizio Tira**, EUA Board member

- **Ainur Algash**, Senior Manager Internationalization, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan
- **Renārs Kairis**, Head, Sustainable Development and Eco-Council, University of Latvia and FORTHEM Alliance
- MODERATED BY **Monika Steinel**, EUA Deputy Secretary General

10.30-11.10: Coffee break
Room Delta & Omega

11.10-12.10: **Plenary Session 3 - *Universities and the future EU programmes for a sustainable and resilient Europe***
Room Alpha
2025 is set to be a pivotal year for research, innovation and higher education in Europe, as the European Commission will present its proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), setting the EU's budgetary priorities for 2028-2034. Alongside this, the Commission will outline the future of programmes critical to universities, notably Horizon Europe and Erasmus+. With various priorities competing to shape the EU's political agenda into the future, this session will explore possible directions for the next generation of EU funding programmes in research, innovation and higher education. Through a panel discussion, speakers will reflect on how upcoming EU policy priorities and funding programmes can adequately address the needs of universities in these areas to empower them to continue playing their critical role in fostering a sustainable and resilient Europe.

- **Stephan Geifes**, Director, National Agency for Erasmus+ Higher Education Cooperation, Germany
- **Anu Noorma**, Director General, Estonian Research Council & Member of Science Europe Governing Board
- **Colm O'Reardon**, Secretary General, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Ireland
- **Agrita Kiopa,** Vice-Rector for Research, Riga Stradiņš University, Latvia
- MODERATED BY **Paul Boyle**, EUA Vice-President

12.10-12.30: **2025 EUA Annual Conference Closing**
Room Alpha

- **Josep Maria Garrell**, EUA President
- **Guntars Kitenbergs**, Vice-Rector for Science , University of Latvia
- **Fatma Yeşim Ekinci**, Coordinator of International Academic Relations, Yeditepe University, Türkiye

12.30-13.45: Lunch
Room Delta & Omega