

The logo consists of the text 'EC²U' in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a dark blue, stylized banner shape that has a slight curve and a pointed top.

EC²U

European Campus
of City-Universities

EC2U presents

Main achievements & perspectives

Learn more about the EC2U Alliance, its
community, activities and its future horizon.

May 2026



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The European Campus of City-Universities (EC2U) Alliance is a driving force for innovation and collaboration in European higher education. Between October 2023 and November 2025, EC2U achieved significant milestones **advancing joint academic programmes, fostering research excellence, and strengthening ties between universities and society.**

This booklet highlights the Alliance's key accomplishments, showcasing how EC2U turns shared vision into tangible impact. Each success story reflects the dedication of our students, universities, and partners in building a more connected and dynamic European Campus.

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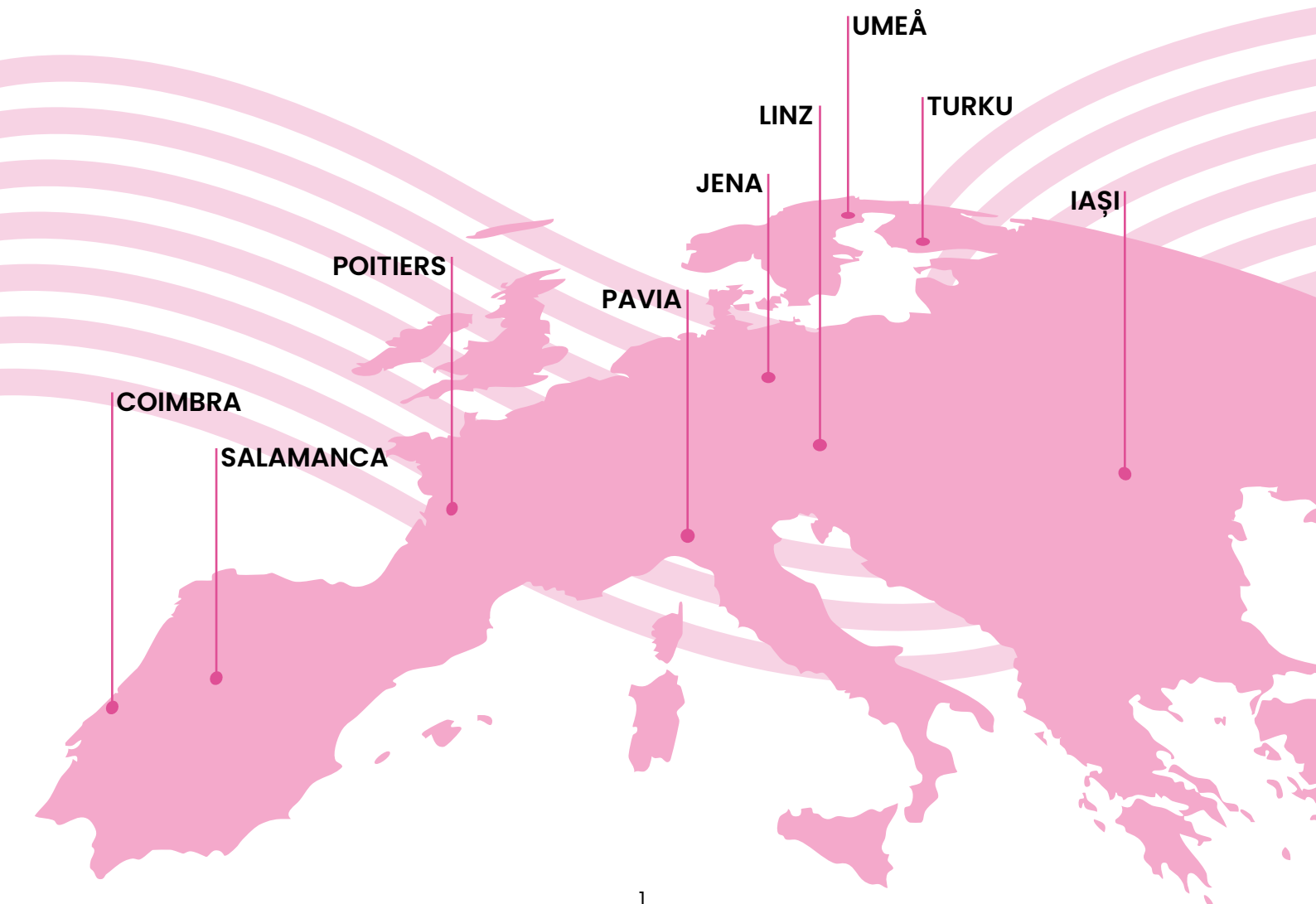
A VALUE-DRIVEN COMMUNITY



The EC2U Alliance unites **nine vibrant city-universities across Europe**: Coimbra, Poitiers, Salamanca, Pavia, Jena, Linz, Turku, Iași, and since 2025, Umeå. Together, they form a dynamic network rooted in academic excellence, cultural diversity, and shared ambition.

Its main activities revolve around **four United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** (UNSDGs):

- Ensuring good health and well-being (UNSDG #3),
- Fostering quality education (UNSDG #4),
- Promoting sustainable cities and communities (UNSDG #11),
- Advocating for peace, justice, and strong institutions (UNSDG #16).



The EC2U Alliance is a community of people who share the same objective: **a common European Culture**, with the aim of shaping the University of the Future.

KEY FIGURES

86%

OF WHICH

80%

of participants to EC2U events confirm that the Alliance contributes to a **sense of belonging to a European Community**.

of respondents are more likely to **promote European values or connect with a European network**.

“**European added-value is not a means, it is the essence of the EC2U Alliance.**”

Ludovic Thilly, EC2U Coordinator General

Johannes Kepler University Linz - 2024



COLLEGIALITY AT THE CORNERSTONE OF COOPERATION

At the heart of the EC2U Alliance lies a deep **commitment to collegiality**. Its effectiveness stems from inclusive stakeholder involvement and streamlined cooperation, ensuring that **every voice is heard and every contribution valued**.

Equal participation is the foundation of the Alliance: **each university plays the same role** in governance and management, and **contributes equally** to the realisation of its missions to strengthen a **collective impact**.



Johannes Kepler University Linz – 2024

COLLABORATION IN ACTION: FROM UNIVERSITIES TO CITIES



THE STUDENT COUNCIL

The EC2U Student Council, “**by students, for students, with students**” was created in 2023 and is composed of 20 Student Representatives.

The aim: **further ensure the student community’s voice is taken into consideration** within the EC2U Alliance. The role of the Student Council is central to the EC2U governance, with key recommendations presented on a regular basis.



KEY FIGURES

17 recommendations have been submitted by the Student Council, of which 80% of them have been concretely acted upon.

THE NETWORK OF ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

The EC2U Alliance has an **extensive network of 63 Associated Partners**. While a driving force of the EC2U Alliance is its embeddedness within its local community, notably via the tight-knit cooperation with its municipalities, the network of Associated Partners extends beyond.

In addition to all 9 municipalities, the Associated Partner Network involves a wide range of profiles: student associations, regional governments and agencies, science parks, socio-economic actors, the 9 University Hospitals, SMEs, and industry representatives. Moreover, since 2022, the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (IFNUL) joined the Alliance as an Associated Partner and its participation has gradually been institutionalised. Their involvement lies in **4 pillars**:

- **Participation in EC2U activities**
- **Contribution to student employability**
- **Collaboration in academia**
- **Building new partnerships**

CONNECTING EC2U COMMUNITIES



SHORT-TERM MOBILITIES: AN ATTRACTIVE STEP IN THE ALLIANCE

Mobility opportunities are a key factor in motivating students and staff to join EC2U activities, according to 91% of students and 88% of staff¹.

The EC2U Alliance has **embedded short-term mobility** throughout its activities, offering its community the possibility to join thematic summer schools, doctoral trainings, student events, and other programmes. A total of **1000 mobilities** occurred between October 2023 and November 2025.

EC2U has placed an emphasis on improving the overall mobility framework, making it **more inclusive, sustainable, geographically balanced**, and providing a programme meeting the needs and expectations of the participants.

AN APP TO FACILITATE MOBILITY EXPERIENCES

The **EC2U Mobile Application “My Mobile Tutor”** is a one-stop shop for all services across the Alliance, facilitating mobility and contributing to the sense of belonging to one campus.

It gives practical information on each EC2U city, from housing to transports, to local events, and keeps the user updated with the latest EC2U information.



*Click to
download
the app!*

¹Data collected from the 2024 Global Feedback Mechanism, which gathered 1600 responses from 8 EC2U universities.

THE EC2U FORUM: AN EXAMPLE OF A SUSTAINABLE RENDEZ-VOUS BETWEEN ACADEMIA AND CITIZENS

Each year, the Alliance organises the **EC2U Forum** to gather students, staff, citizens, and local authorities to **foster open dialogue on societal topics** and **share its results** and benefits with a wider audience.

As of October 2025, two EC2U Forums have successfully taken place: the first at the Johannes Kepler University of Linz on the topic of peace, the second at the University of Coimbra on sustainability.



My most important takeaway is related to the enrichment that these community and international exchange initiatives are able to provide to me, in terms of personal development, knowledge integration, making new friends and career inspiration.

A student participant



Johannes Kepler University Linz - 2024



University of Coimbra - 2025

I have the feeling that we are able to contribute to building a unique European spirit or identity on the basis of European alliances, and EC2U in particular.

A staff participant



BUILDING A VIBRANT EUROPEAN CAMPUS LIFE

Over the past two years, the EC2U Alliance has strengthened its integrated inter-university campus through a dynamic network of **common activities, joint cultural and sport events** for students and staff.

EC2U STUDENT EVENTS: A PLATFORM FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

The Alliance successfully organised two editions of the EC2U Student Event: in Iași (2024) and Pavia (2025). Open to all students from EC2U universities, these events are designed to **reinforce the vision of an integrated European campus** and **promote active citizenship**. Over 150 students participated, with feedback revealing a significant impact.



University of Pavia - 2025



University of Iași - 2024

“*In terms of personal development, it's been a good opportunity to gain soft skills and to see how I have applied the ones I already have.*”
A student participant

THE EC2U CAMPUS: A SPRINGBOARD FOR INNOVATION

Since 2020, the EC2U inter-university campus has evolved into a fertile environment for co-designing new collaborative initiatives. In 2025, two key actions exemplified this integrated approach:

- **EC2U Sports Campus Network:** this network aims to expand the Alliance's activities to include sports for health and recreation. By proposing joint initiatives and events, the network promotes physical well-being and community spirit across the Alliance.
- **Community of Practice on Culture:** launched in spring 2025, this expert group focuses on sharing best practices around culture within the EC2U Alliance. The group's first task was to map cultural initiatives across each university, ensuring access to culture for all students and staff.

ZOOM ON

THE EC2U AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME: PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION

Each year, two students from each Partner University are selected to serve as ambassadors, **promoting the Alliance's vision and activities** at their home institutions. The programme not only boosts local visibility but also provides ambassadors with transformative skills.

The programme's impact is undeniable:

- Launched in 2024, it attracted over **161 applications** for just 16 seats, with a **70% retention rate** in the second year.
- Ambassadors reached nearly **800 participants through in-person events** and engaged over **24000 people via social media**.



University of Poitiers - 2025

THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY EC2U JOINT MASTER'S PROGRAMMES



The **Joint Master's Programmes (JMPs)** were launched in 2022. These programmes, focused on EC2U's guiding UNSDGs, offer students **customisable training paths, multi-disciplinary courses and embedded mobility opportunities**. These 3 programmes are designed to foster not only academic excellence but also cultural immersion and global citizenship.

In 2024, the EC2U Alliance celebrated a landmark achievement: the graduation of the first cohort of students.

*Click to
learn more!*



“

One of the most impactful aspects of the EC2U Joint Master's Programme is the opportunity for cultural immersion through studying at multiple universities across Europe. This experience allows students to gain insights into different academic environments, teaching styles, and cultural perspectives. It enhances personal growth, adaptability, and a global mindset, which are invaluable in today's interconnected world.

A student from an EC2U JMP

”



Looking ahead, the EC2U Alliance continues to expand its educational horizons. **A fourth JMP is being developed**, focused on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (UNSDG #16).

Scheduled to welcome its first cohort in 2027, this programme will integrate Legal Science, Political Science, and Applied Ethics, preparing students to design, implement, and monitor policies and interventions in areas such as peacebuilding and human rights.

[Click to learn more!](#)



THE EC2U VIRTUAL INSTITUTES

LINKING EDUCATION, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND SERVICE TO SOCIETY



The **EC2U Virtual Institutes (VIs)** are **innovative spaces that gather knowledge** creating teams composed of students, teachers and researchers. They embed **educational activities** and provide a framework for **cooperative research** and **innovation**, as well as **service to society**. Each VI is centred around one of the EC2U's guiding UNSDGs.

KEY FIGURES

557

members are part
of the EC2U Virtual Institutes.

22

events were organised among
the EC2U Virtual Institutes.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF EXPERTS

Each VI has launched **EC2U PhD Networks**, creating a multi-disciplinary community of experts that fosters the **professionalisation of PhD students**.

Through targeted **doctoral workshops and training**, the VIs bring together academic and non-academic partners, ensuring that **research and innovation** are both **relevant and accessible**.

↳ For example, the **“Good Health and Well-being” (GLADE) VI**, has delivered **local training courses** across all Partner Universities, engaging over **60 stakeholders** in 2023-2024. In 2025, these activities continued to demonstrate their success, and the latest training course recorded that **84% of participants confirmed that they fostered an inter-sectoral community of experts**.

DRIVING SOCIETAL IMPACT

The VIs' focus on UNSDGs and challenge-based activities has spurred **new collaborations** within and beyond the EC2U Alliance.

↳ A standout achievement is the launch of the **EC2U Sustainable Campus Network** at the 2025 EC2U Forum. This initiative transforms university campuses into living, healthy, and accessible components of their cities, embedding sustainability in all its dimensions. By connecting universities, municipalities, and citizens, the network accelerates **the sharing of best practices and the implementation of Sustainable Development and Climate Action Plans**.

STEPPING OUTSIDE THE BOX: EXTERNALLY FUNDED ACTIVITIES

Activities of the VIs are going further the Erasmus+ project and financing, enabling the **co-funding of cotutelle PhD theses** and the organisation of **over 15 externally funded events** since 2023, including Blended Intensive Programmes and Living Labs.

ZOOM ON

New Virtual Institutes are in development to enhance the scope of **interdisciplinary research** within the Alliance.

They focus on:

- Quality Education – Education Sciences (UNSDG #4),
- Life on Land (UNSDG #15),
- Materials and Methods for a Sustainable Future (cutting across several UNSDGs).

University of Salamanca – 2025



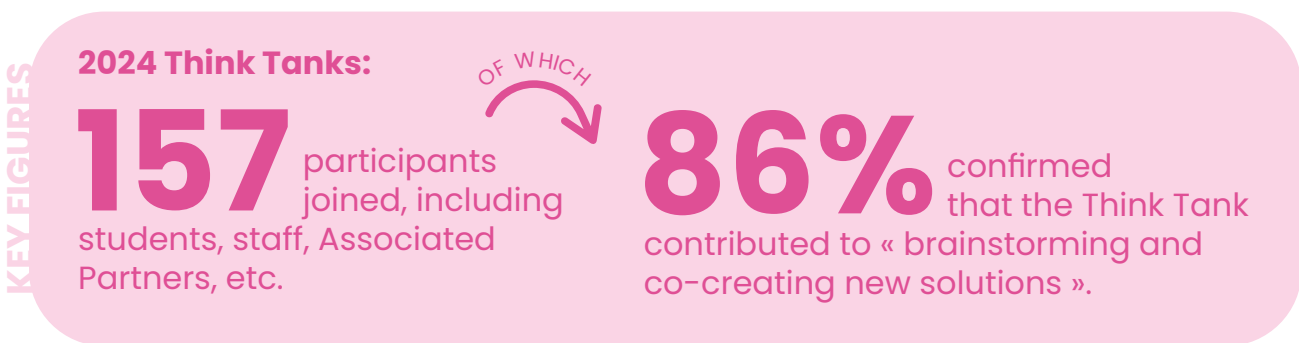
A EUROPEAN IMPACT ON SOCIETY



Beyond the intensified synergies between education and research, the EC2U Alliance has placed its focus on **developing people-centred solutions** for current societal challenges.

FROM THINKING TO DOING: THE EC2U THINK TANKS

EC2U Think Tanks are a pivotal activity to **enable the circulation of knowledge and solutions around pressing societal issues** by fostering dialogue between a wide range of stakeholders from citizens to policymakers. Organised on relevant topics related to EC2U's guiding UNSDGs, their results are translated into **concrete, implementable policy recommendations** that the Alliance can develop.



EC2U AS A DRIVER OF INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

The EC2U Alliance is fostering dynamic innovation ecosystems through its **EC2U Innovation Hub**, a central platform designed to **develop challenge-based approaches** that create tangible value for society and **accelerate collaboration and knowledge transfer**.

*↳ An example can be the work towards **connecting Living Labs across EC2U Campus**. A landmark event, the first Living Lab Networking Event in Salamanca (July 2025), brought together university representatives, municipalities, companies, NGOs, and external organisations from across Europe. This gathering underscored the pivotal role of Living Labs: **engaging with society and driving innovation**.*

The Innovation Hub also hosts key initiatives such as **the Entrepreneurial Academy and the Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Transfer Experts' Network (EITEN)**, both central to enhancing the Alliance's innovation and transfer capacity.

ZOOM ON

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT THE FOREFRONT

The **Entrepreneurial Academy**, a cornerstone of EC2U since 2020, remains a standout achievement. It **fosters challenge-based learning and entrepreneurial skills**, equipping students for a dynamic labour market and ensuring their adaptability and success.

↳ In 2024, the **EC2U Entrepreneurial Week** took place in Coimbra: 35 students, gathered to tackle real-world challenges in Health Innovation. The week proved to be a catalyst for personal and professional growth, as evidenced by the journey of “Sven,” a physics master’s graduate from Friedrich Schiller University Jena. For Sven, the week was a turning point: “Coimbra was where the idea of becoming a founder took root. I realised I didn’t need the perfect idea, I just needed to start.” Today, he is developing a 3D printing business for customised mechanical components, supported by a start-up prize from ThEx Enterprise. **“Without EC2U, I wouldn’t be here,”** he reflects.

DIGITAL CREDENTIALS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

The Alliance has achieved a transformative milestone with **the successful implementation of EDCL-compliant Digital Credentials²**, establishing a scalable infrastructure for **recognising learning outcomes across borders**. The issuance of 36 credentials for the AI in Higher Education workshop demonstrates the system’s maturity.

Integration with the **EC2U European Student Card** and collaboration on **micro-credentials taxonomy** further strengthen the ecosystem for **lifelong learning (LLL) recognition**. The digitalisation in LLL has resulted in a common courses database and a successful call for applications.

KEY FIGURES

100

students enrolled
in 2025/2026

77

lifelong courses
offered

²EDLC : European Digital Credentials for Learning

EC2U'S RIPPLE EFFECT

The EC2U Alliance does not just transform its academic communities, it creates a **multiplier effect**, sparking new collaborations and breaking down barriers across Europe.

NEW EXPERT GROUPS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

- **Erasmus+ Task Group**: since September 2024, experts from across the EC2U community have collaborated to design and launch innovative joint projects, making mobility and cooperation easier for students and staff.
- **Research Support Officers Task Group**: by exchanging best practices and tackling shared challenges, this group strengthens research support at each institution, fostering cross-border research cooperation.

ENHANCED COOPERATION AMONG ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

The EC2U Alliance's impact extends beyond universities, inspiring its Associated Partners, notably municipalities, to take action:

- **CHARME Project**³: a digital leap for cultural heritage, using technology to build a shared European identity and drive creativity and economic growth.
- **"Le Défi Europe"** (Poitiers): this initiative encourages sustainable travel to EC2U cities, with Linz (2024) and Turku (2025) as featured destinations.

DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR LIFE AND WORK

EC2U events are more than just gatherings, they are **catalysts for personal and professional growth**. According to annual feedback, **70% of participants in EC2U events say skill development is a key reason for joining**⁴. After attending, many report tangible benefits:

"I mainly improved my English, which allowed me to be more comfortable in many situations, both personally and professionally. I was also able to open up to connections with other students and teachers from other countries, which allows me to affirm today that I have real international friends, and I plan to use this network for potential internships in my studies."

A student participant

Improvement of my teaching capabilities, being able to replicate the new techniques and experiences acquired during the EC2U events to other events and to daily activities."

A teaching staff participant

³ Municipalities of Pavia, Coimbra, Iași, Poitiers and Turku are members of the CHARME Project

⁴ Data collected from the 2024 Global Feedback Mechanism, which gathered 1600 responses from 8 EC2U universities.

GLOSSARY

- **Blended Intensive Programme (BIP):** the Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme is an educational initiative under the Erasmus+ programme, which is a European Union initiative aimed at promoting international mobility and cooperation. A BIP combines both physical and virtual mobility elements.
- **Cotutelle PhD thesis:** a student in a cotutelle PhD thesis conducts research under the joint supervision of two advisors (or more), dividing their work between both countries according to the terms of a specific agreement.
- **Doctoral Training:** Doctoral training aims to provide doctoral students with skills that are useful for their work as young researchers and for the pursuit of their careers, broadening and deepening the knowledge of doctoral students within their research field.
- **EC2U Campus:** is to be understood globally, not only as a sum of all Partner University campuses but also as the result of the EC2U Alliance itself. Within the EC2U Campus, it is understood that staff members and students are central stakeholders.
- **Entrepreneurial Week:** events organised around relevant societal themes and hosted each year at a different EC2U university. Participants are students, who come together for a few days to celebrate transdisciplinary innovation, intercultural teamwork, and entrepreneurial experiences.
- **European Student Card:** establishes a common European identity for higher education students. Students can get their student status verified easily across Europe with their European Student Card. (Source: EU Commission)
- **EC2U Joint Masters Programmes (JMP):** a Master's Degree based on a joint programme offering students a personalised interdisciplinary curriculum and up to 4 semesters of mobility across the EC2U Alliance
- **Lifelong Learning (LLL):** is rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages, in all life-wide contexts (family, school, the community, the workplace, and so on) and through a variety of modalities, which, together, meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. (Source: UNESCO)
- **Living Labs:** are user-centred, open innovation ecosystems based on a systematic user co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real-life communities and settings (Source: ENoLL (European Network of Living Lab))
- **Micro-credential:** is the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. (Source: European Council)
- **PhD Network:** gathers the expertise of PhD supervisors and jointly supervised PhD students within the EC2U Virtual Institutes, bringing them together to create a multidisciplinary community of experts.
- **Summer School:** a Winter or a Summer School is a period where students meet for an intensive learning experience on a particular subject either physically in one of the EC2U universities or online.
- **EC2U Think Tanks:** are open, participatory spaces designed to tackle some of today's most pressing challenges. They bring together students, academic staff, university and city administrators, associations, businesses, and citizens across the EC2U partner cities. The goal: connect perspectives, foster collaboration, and spark transformative ideas for the future.
- **UNSDGs:** The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries –developed and developing– in a global partnership. (Source: United Nations)
- **Virtual Institutes (VIs):** Focused on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, EC2U Virtual Institutes are joint institutes that host interdisciplinary teams of students, teachers, researchers, and innovators from the universities of the EC2U Alliance. VI activities encompass education, research, innovation and service to society.

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Click to visit
the website!

EC2U would not exist without its community

