



unite!

University Network for Innovation,
Technology and Engineering

Unite! Mission Statement 2030





Our commitment

“Now is the time to find new ways to work together for the common good. Our challenges are interconnected, across borders and all other divides. These challenges can only be addressed by an equally interconnected response.”

From: *Our Common Agenda* by António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations and alumnus of the Instituto Superior Técnico in the Universidade de Lisboa, 2021.

We, the University Network for Innovation, Technology and Engineering, are highly motivated by this plea for action on the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. We are deeply committed to working together, with Europe and beyond to help achieve the UN Sustainability Goals through the twin digital and green transition. We strive to build together a dynamic and inclusive university alliance, which on its multilingual trans-European campus will train the experts and leaders that will drive this transition. Firmly grounded in the European core values, we want to pave the way for the excellence in research, innovation and education that is essential to meet the challenges of our age.

Our Mission Statement 2030, which gives substance to these commitments, is the outcome of a concerted effort of the entire Unite! community, involving students, academics and staff, the governing bodies as well as external stakeholders. The Unite! Governing Platform and the Unite! Academic Forum approved this Mission Statement on 8 and 9 March 2022, and the rectors and presidents of the Unite! universities signed it.

Tanja Brühl, President of TU Darmstadt

Ilkka Niemelä, President of Aalto
Korkeakoulusäätiö SR

Sigbritt Karlsson, President of KTH Kungliga
Tekniska högskolan

Luís Ferreira, Rector of Universidade de
Lisboa

Daniel Crespo, Rector of Universitat
Politècnica de Catalunya

Pierre Benech, President of Grenoble INP-
UGA

Guido Saracco, Rector of Politecnico di
Torino

Harald Kainz, Rector of TU Graz

Arkadiusz Wójs, Rector of Politechnika
Wrocławska

Identity – Vision – Values – Mission

1. Identity and Profile

Unite! aims to be

- a **model for a European University of innovation, technology and engineering**, assuming the leadership among universities to address the Sustainable Development Goals through the twin digital and green transition
- a **strategic alliance of universities** that is based on shared values, with a common vision and mutual trust, agile and dynamic, committed to sustained long-term collaboration and progressive integration
- a **bustling and inclusive community** of students at all levels, academics and staff, including the regions and partners of the member universities, with a strong sense of belonging
- a **trans-European meeting place of academic cultures**, spanning across Europe and having a global reach, imbuing its member universities with a rich diversity.

Unite! stands out

- as a strong driving force for **technology and innovation** advancing a green and digital Europe
- for **transformative transdisciplinarity** that draws from engineering, science and the full range of multidisciplinary of the member universities
- for **distinctive focus areas**. Unite! will strengthen its leadership in its established focus areas Sustainable Energy, Artificial Intelligence, Industry 4.0, Entrepreneurship. It will define new areas for which the alliance can achieve high visibility.

2. Vision and Values

Unite's ambition is to

- realise **excellence in education, research and innovation** by creating unique new opportunities for students, academics, staff and further ecosystem partners
- create and disseminate, jointly with the other European University alliances and with stakeholder organisations, pioneering innovations for the **European Education and Research Areas**.
- actively contribute to **European citizenship**, as well as to European attractiveness, resilience and competitiveness on a global scale.

Unite! is committed to

- the **European core values** of academic freedom, human dignity, liberal democracy, the rule of law, and social inclusion, as key constituents of the European way of life

- **ethical, safe and sustainable** technology and innovation, tackling climate change and its impacts, serving society, in line with fair and open science
- **diversity, inclusion, equity**, and the well-being of students and staff.

3. Mission

Unite!

- pursues a **forward-looking strategy**, focusing on high-quality, high-impact activities that become systemic and structural
- is **agile** in identifying and seizing new opportunities, in reacting promptly to serious disruptions and in directing priorities and funds accordingly
- is **key to the member universities' strategies**, combining top-level commitment with broadly shared dedication
- implements **good governance** of the alliance and ensures accountable leadership, broad participation and supportive conditions for bottom-up initiatives.

Unite! creates

- the **hybrid** (virtual, physical and blended) **and multilingual Unite! trans-European Campus** with easily accessible joint educational offerings, shared and pooled resources, efficient services and green mobility
- **state-of-the-art learning opportunities** with innovative pedagogies for challenge-based approaches, student-centred learning, and high-quality interaction in digital, hybrid and face-to-face learning environments
- a platform for the **open exchange and the free circulation of talents and ideas**, strengthening key skills and competencies, supporting diverse research and professional careers based on reformed research assessment, and offering unique opportunities for contributions
- a **community** that engages students as equal partners, enables staff to collaborate and participate in professional development all across Europe, and integrates citizens, entrepreneurs, start-ups and innovators into co-creation, knowledge exchange and joint actions within the alliance.

Unite! Ambition 2030

1. Unite! Key Facts and Figures

The nine Unite! member universities have combined

- **280,000 students** (2021)
- **53 Double/Dual/Joint Programmes** ongoing among the Unite! partners (2022)
- **77,300 graduates** per year (2020, without PhD)
- **2.630 PhD graduates** per year (2020)
- **497 million Euros** income from competitive calls (2020)
thereof **164 million Euros** income from EU calls (2020)
- **223 ERC grants** awarded (2007-2021)
- **40 joint EU research projects** and **15 joint Erasmus+ projects** ongoing among the Unite! partners (2022)
- **31.000 journal and conference papers** published per year (2020, Web of Science)
- **799 start-ups** founded within the last five years (2017-2021)

Unite! key achievements 2019 - 2022

- **Five Unite! Dialogues** took place as semi-annual meetings of the Unite! communities and governing bodies since 2019, with an average attendance of more than 250 participants per dialogue
- **A piloting alliance** (together with three more alliances) in the EUNIQ project to develop a comprehensive quality assurance of European Universities, 2020 to 2021
- **Unite! Metacampus** established as the digital teaching and learning as well as interaction platform (Learning Management System) for Unite! joint and shared courses, events, and initiatives
- **Four new Unite! joint Master programmes** in the Unite! focus areas currently under development, one new programme started since 2019
- **23 virtual language and cultural competencies courses offered** to students from all seven universities by the Unite! Multilingual and Multicultural Training Centre as part of its 2022 programme
- **27 seminars for teachers and academics** from all seven universities in the Teaching and Learning Unite! programme (2020-22)
- **Piloting and roll-out** of innovative interdisciplinary challenge-based project courses for students from all current seven universities (TUDa-Inspired since 2020, UL-Ulisses since 2021, KTH-Inspired starting 2022)
- **Piloting virtual exchange credit programme (VECP)** in Energy since 2020 (spring 2022: 23 courses) and roll-out under way (since 2021: VECP Architectural Engineering)

- **Dynamic Unite! Research and PhD Community in Energy** established across all seven universities (spring schools, lecture series, joint MSCA Doctoral Network proposal under review, etc.), reaching out to education (see VECF Energy)
- **Network of Regional Innovation Ecosystems** with more than 50 partners from our ecosystems involved
- **Ambitious goals to develop R&I collaboration** through the Unite! H2020 project (Support for R&I Dimension of European Universities), by defining a common research agenda, a joint approach to open science, sharing of infrastructures and boosting academia-business cooperation and societal outreach
- **Strategic communication and broad dissemination** of the Unite! opportunities, achievements and identity through the Unite! website, Unite! webpages at each institution, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, the corporate design, and public sessions as well as a branding event at the Unite! Dialogues
- Broadening Unite! by **including two additional full partner universities** (from autumn 2022) – Wrocław University of Science and Technology, and Graz University of Technology – ensuring a balanced geographical coverage of Europe
- **Strong contributions to European policy-initiatives**, e.g. joint statements of European University alliances (including Erasmus Without Papers, European Degree, roll-out of the initiative), active support for the European Universities Community initiative to strengthen the voice of European students.

Institutional agreements among the Unite! partners

- From the CLUSTER-network (concluded before 2019):
 - Agreement on Automatic Mutual Recognition of Degrees
 - Dual Master Framework Agreement
 - Dual Doctorate Framework Agreement
- New Unite! agreements since 2019:
 - Unite! Charter (signed 1 Nov 2019 by rectors and presidents of Unite! members)
 - Unite! Charter on Inclusion and Diversity (Unite! Governing Platform approval 8 March 2021)
 - Unite! Criteria for Joint Master Programmes (Governing Platform approval 8 March 2021)
 - Framework Agreement for Digital Courses and Virtual Exchange (signed 30 Sept 2021 by all Unite! members)
 - Quality Management Manual (Unite! Governing Platform approval 29 Nov 2021)

2. Unite! Key Objectives 2030

1. Strategic long-term collaboration (*quality of the alliance*)

Unite! stands out as an alliance committed to **strategic long-term collaboration**:

- a) The governance structure of Unite! ensures transparent decision-making processes and allows for broad student and staff engagement.
- b) Unite! is equipped with an efficient management and an effective internal communication.
- c) Unite! implements best-practice alliance-level quality management of a European University.
- d) Unite! makes agile and programmatic allocations of shared resources for supporting thematic collaboration, community building, and for initiating teaching and learning collaboration.
- e) Unite! has a dissemination strategy targeting the key internal and external stakeholders and target groups; the Unite! brand is highly visible and attractive for students as well as academics.
- f) Unite! works, jointly with the other European University alliances and with stakeholder organisations, to the further development of policy initiatives of the European Research and Education areas, with particular focus on European degrees, quality assurance, doctoral education and reformed research assessment.

2. Strong and inclusive community (*individuals*)

Unite! continues to build a **strong and inclusive community** promoting free circulation of ideas, broad participation and equal access to its offerings:

- a) Unite! engages in building bottom-up communities consisting of students, staff, and academics.
- b) Unite! enables and promotes the emergence of thematic communities in its focus areas and beyond.
- c) Unite! fosters the building of an open innovation community.

3. Innovative teaching and learning opportunities (*education*)

Unite! educates highly qualified future European and global experts and responsible citizens with key skills for the twin digital and green transition by providing **innovative learning and teaching opportunities**:

- a) Unite! develops well-constructed and strongly built programmes.
- b) Unite! pioneers new ways for joint programmes.
- c) Unite! boosts innovative pedagogies.

4. Trans-European Campus (*structures and programmes*)

Unite! continues to build and expects to realise a well-developed **multilingual, virtual, physical, and blended trans-European campus** with seamless mobility:

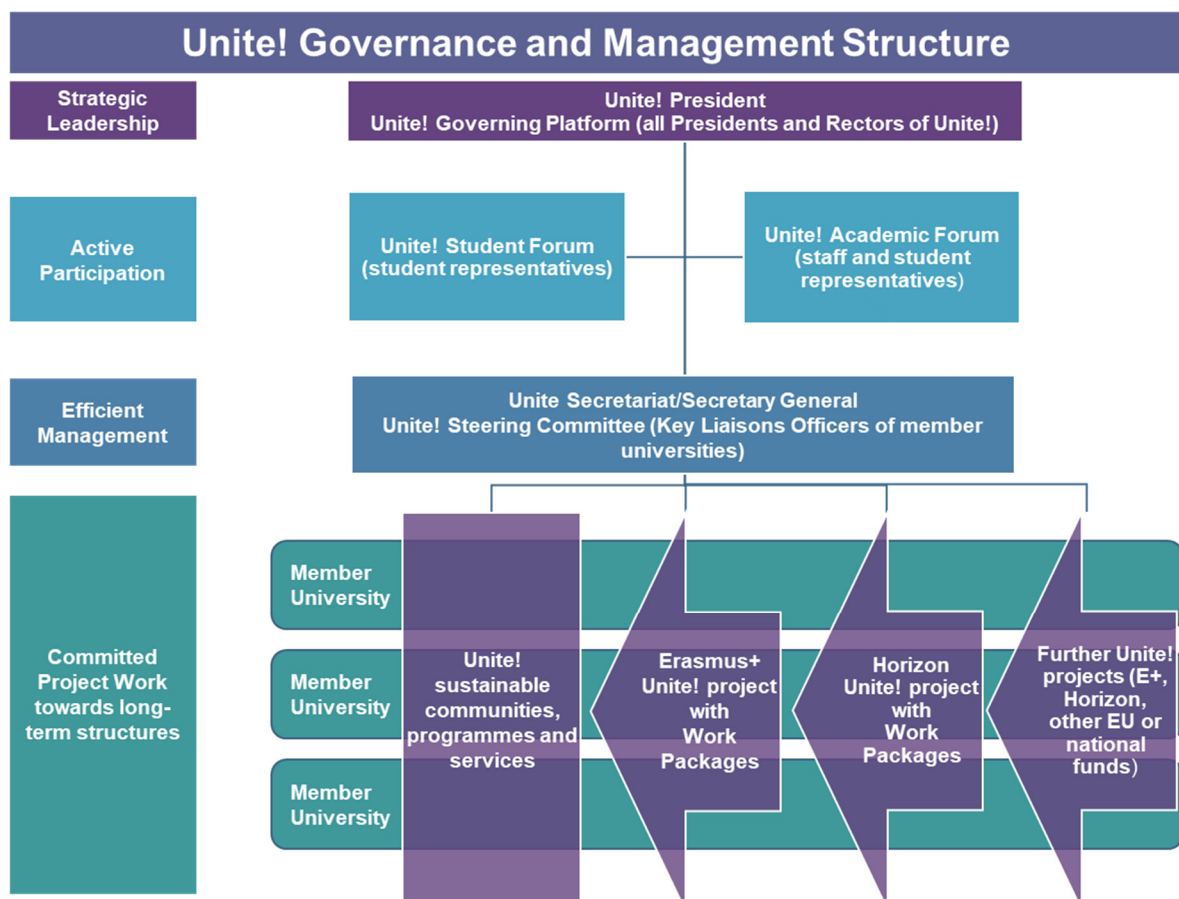
- a) Unite! trans-European campus provides efficient, digital Erasmus compliant service processes.
- b) Unite! trans-European campus gathers the Metacampus M4U, the tailor-made platform uShare, relevant IT as well as access opportunities to research infrastructure.
- c) Unite! trans-European campus offers and supports multilingualism and multiculturalism, alternative ways of mobility, and makes the sustainable and green campus a reality.

3. Key structural elements to realise the Unite! vision

As a strategic alliance of universities, Unite! is committed to sustained long-term collaboration and progressive integration. The following five structural elements of Unite! will drive, catalyse and imbue change in our universities and across our alliance and turn our long-term vision into reality:

1. A **governance and management structure** which interconnects strategic leadership, active participation, efficient management and committed project work
2. A **quality management** which links strategic goals with activities and ensures the high quality and added value of programmes and services
3. **Seed funding** to support community formation and focus area development
4. Strong **student participation and involvement**
5. **Dissemination and interactive outreach**, which includes a targeted and comprehensive approach to external communication and collaboration with the regional innovation ecosystems as well as the European Education and Research Area and beyond.

1. Governance and Management Structure



Since 2019, Unite! has established bodies and procedures which ensure responsibility, representation and effectiveness in its governance and management:

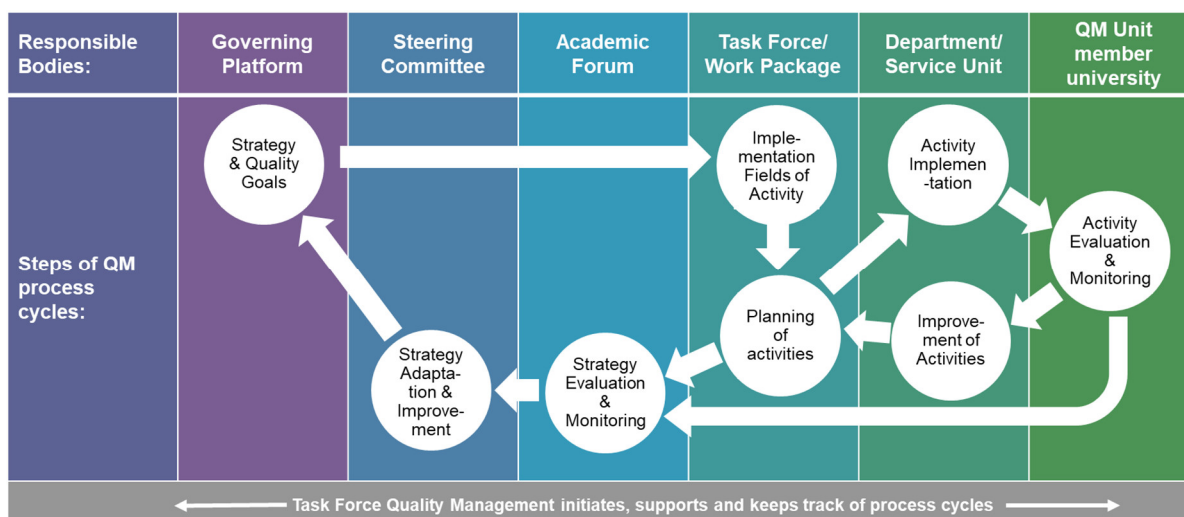
- The Unite! **Governing Platform** of all rectors and presidents of the member universities with the elected Unite! President stand for strategic and accountable leadership of the alliance

- The students of Unite! are represented in the **Unite! Student Forum SURE!**, giving the student perspective a central position in the alliance governance
- The Unite! **Academic Forum** assembles academic, student (from SURE!) and staff representatives from all member universities to realise active participation and provide input to the further development of the alliance
- The Unite! **Steering Committee** (Key Liaisons Officers of the member universities and Unite! Secretariat), headed by the Unite! Secretary General, are responsible for the efficient management of the alliance affairs
- The numerous **Unite! work groups** and project teams in the E+ and H2020 Unite! projects as well as in further projects are key drivers of the alliance development in its fields of activity. Work groups and teams have been and will be developed into sustainable communities, programmes and services of Unite!, building up the long-term working structures of Unite!

2. Quality Management

Unite! has designed its **quality management**

- to ensure the **high quality and added value** of the Unite! collaborative programmes and services
- to **link systematically** the overall strategic and quality goals of the alliance with the specific activities
- to **improve activities** and adjust strategies quickly from the experiences gained
- to contribute to the evolving quality management practices of European Universities and thereby to the development of the **European Higher Education Area**



Unite! quality management model process (from the Unite! Quality Management Manual)

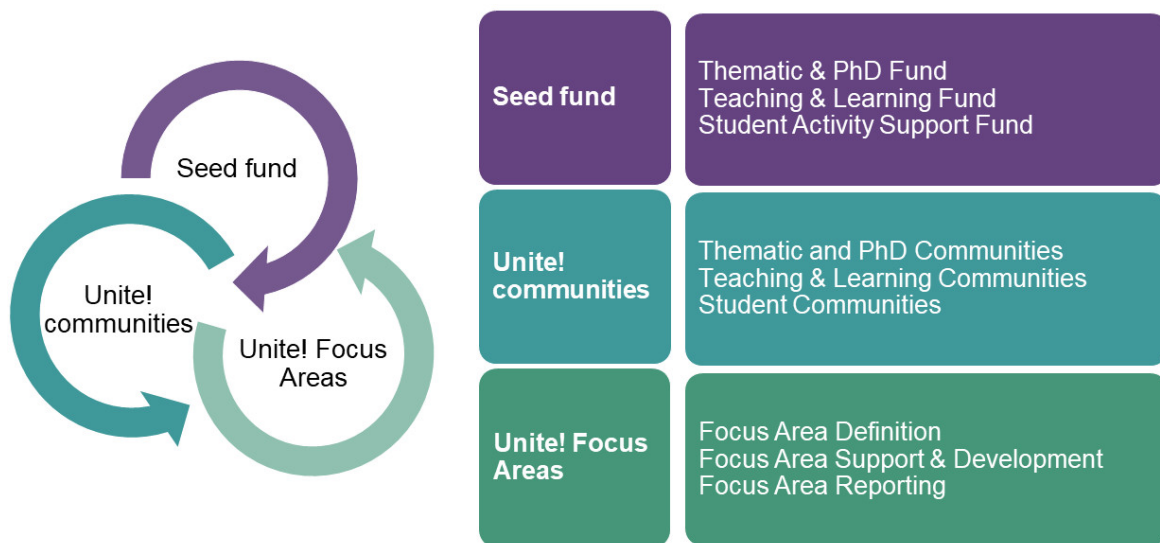
The **principles** of the Unite! quality management, as established in the Quality Management Manual, are:

- link **strategy and activities** of Unite! through Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycles (see figure)
- use **existing quality management instruments** of the member universities
- focus on the **added value** that Unite! pursues in its quality goals

- promote a **quality culture** that strengthens responsibility of staff and students, involves stakeholders, and benefits from diversity within Unite!

Within the next years, Unite! will **implement quality management processes** for key activities in its Work Packages, making sure that activities meet **high quality standards across our alliance**, are aligned with the overall strategy of Unite! and are, moreover, highly reactive to upcoming challenges.

3. Seed Funding to Support Community Formation and Focus Area Development



Unite! will establish dedicated seed funding with the aim to

- **activate** and stimulate Unite! members to form communities bottom-up and seize new opportunities in research, teaching, learning, and student activity – through competitive calls for proposals
- **support** the community initiatives financially for a limited period of time through seed projects
- **raise** additional funds from Erasmus+, Horizon Europe and other EU and national sources for follow-up projects, thus leveraging the seed finances
- **develop** sustainable communities with long-term commitment of their members through joint activities (study programmes, follow-up projects, etc.)
- **highlight** the Unite! focus areas as the most comprehensive, visible and active communities which cover several areas of activity; they are supported through a dedicated focus area management, can apply for seed funding projects and report periodically on their activities to the Academic Forum

4. Student involvement and engagement

Unite! engages students as equal partners into co-creation and activities of the alliance. Student involvement and engagement is realised by

- **Student representation** in the Unite! bodies, as established with SURE! and in the Unite! Academic Forum (see governance and management)
- **Student involvement** in the Unite! working groups, which is standard in Unite!

- Support for **student driven activities**, through the Student Activity Support Fund (see Seed Funding) as well as dedicated actions in the different work packages
- Establishing **student liaisons** at each university as dedicated contact and support points for student activities and involvement

By creating a culture of broad student participation and activity, a bustling and inclusive community of Unite! students will develop with a strong sense of belonging.

Unite! student involvement and engagement



Student representation in Unite! bodies



Student involvement in Unite! working groups



Student activities support



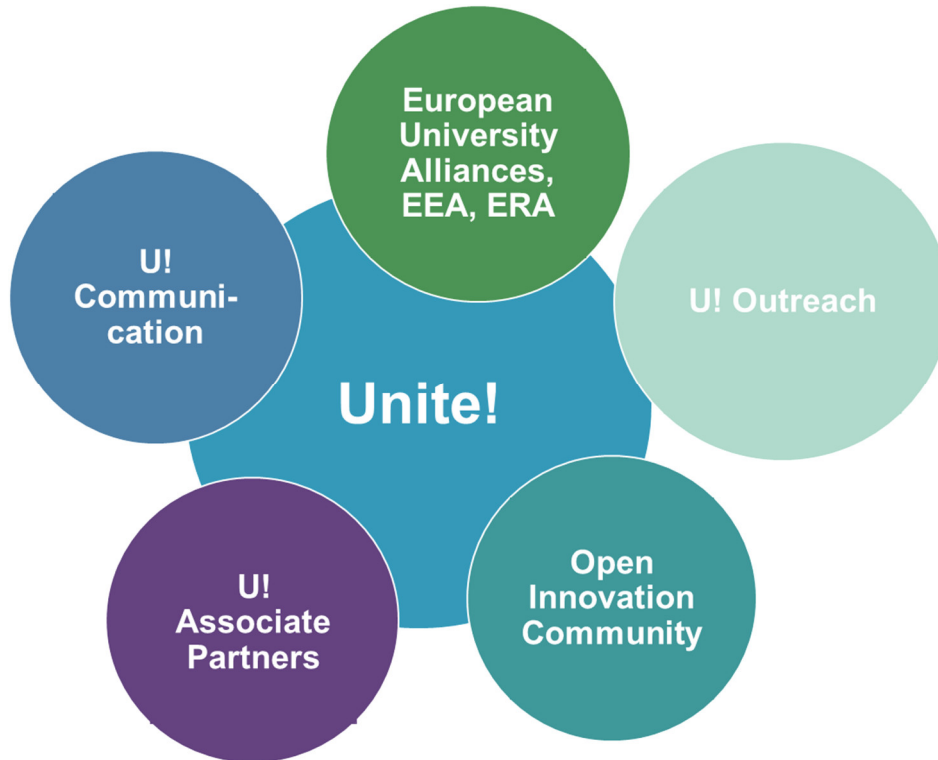
Student liaisons at member universities

5. Dissemination and interactive outreach

Unite! develops in permanent interchange with a broad spectrum of regional, academic, political and societal partners, stakeholders and audiences:

- Strategic Unite! **Communications** coordinates our targeted and comprehensive approach to dissemination
- With the Unite! **Associated Partners**, we aim to leverage our impact and attract support for our activities
- Unite! works, jointly with other European University alliances (e.g. FOR-EU) and with stakeholder organisations, to further develop policy initiatives of the **European Education and Research Areas**
- In the **Open Innovation Community**, Unite! joins forces with incubators, start-ups and further regional ecosystems partners for the co-creation of innovations for the twin digital and green transition
- The Unite! **Outreach** activities engage broad audiences, from local to European, in two-way communication about issues with high relevance to the values and mission of Unite!

Through ongoing interaction in the various dimensions, Unite! will both receive and create the impulses that are crucial to be relevant, adequate and effective in pursuing its vision, values and mission.



Unite! underway to reach the next level of institutional cooperation

Together, these five structural elements will ensure accountable leadership, efficient management, broad participation, and engagement of students as equal partners. They will create supportive conditions for bottom-up initiatives, give rise to a bustling and inclusive community, ensure the high quality of our programmes and services, include regions and partners of our member universities, and create a strong sense of belonging throughout the alliance. The member universities commit themselves substantially, for example concerning governance, organisational structures, pooled financial contributions and shared resources, programmes and partnership development, to make Unite! sustainable. Unite! will reach the next level of institutional cooperation as an agile, dynamic and resilient university alliance which is on a clear path to becoming structural and systemic.