

II Unite! Branding Event:

Inspiring People – Sparking Innovation

25 September 2024

Darmstadtium Science & Congress Centre

Darmstadt, Germany



Welcome to Darmstadt

The City of Science

Since its inception in July 2019, the European Commission has been steadfastly propelling the [European Universities Initiative](#), envisioning university alliances as key contributors to a more united and strong Europe. [Unite! \(University Alliance for Innovation, Technology, and Engineering\)](#) stands proudly among the inaugural 17 European university alliances established in 2019. As a strategic, agile, and dynamic consortium comprising [nine esteemed European universities](#), Unite! is founded upon shared values, a clear vision, and mutual trust. Our collective aspiration is to serve as a catalyst for technology and innovation, aiming to establish a multilingual trans-European educational campus that nurtures professionals and leaders equipped to drive digital and ecological transformations towards a sustainable future.

This year, delegates from all nine Unite! universities and its partners will convene in Darmstadt, Germany – renowned as the “City of Science” ([Wissenschaftsstadt Darmstadt](#)) and home to the coordinating institution, [Technical University of Darmstadt](#). Under the overarching theme “**Inspiring People – Sparking Innovation**,” the aim is to reflect on and underscore the pivotal role of inspiration and innovation in fostering sustainable advancements in European higher education and research. In addition, by showcasing the achievements and successes of the alliance, the event highlights the importance of collective efforts, exchange, and societal outreach in shaping a promising future for Europe and beyond. Consequently, several distinct formats are tailored to address diverse stakeholders and objectives:

- **Unite! Branding Event** for external visibility, and
- **Unite! Dialogue** for internal exchange,
- a collaborative partnership with the **Startup & Innovation Day** fair, serving as a bridge to the regional startup and innovation ecosystem.

The **II Unite! Branding Event** is a dynamic conference, centred on fostering inspiration, innovation, and collaboration, and providing an exceptional platform for discourse on the achievements, challenges, and impact of our university alliance. With the aim to address challenges and explore aspirations, the event affords attendees a holistic understanding of the European University Initiative's influence on science, society, and business. The conference is expected to attract around 500 participants from the Rhine-Main region and other Unite! universities from Finland to Portugal, including high-level representatives of the European Commission, and will be broadcasted across Unite! media channels.

The **X Unite! Dialogue** serves as a forum for faculty, staff, students, and decision-makers to connect, collaborate, and deliberate on the progress and sustainable future of our university alliance. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in various management and working group meetings, including the interactive world café format, introduced for the first time to meet the growing demand for transversal exchange between the working groups. The event will also encompass transversal and plenary sessions, providing a comprehensive overview of the Alliance's communities, focus areas, and ongoing projects.



Key visual of the events

Startup & Innovation Day 2024 is an annual fair hosted by the **Innovation & Start-up Centre HIGHEST**, serving as a showcase for cutting-edge start-ups hailing from both TU Darmstadt and the broader Rhine-Main region. This event provides a platform for linking science, business, and industry through exhibition of ideas, innovations, products, and services, ranging from nascent concepts to market-ready ventures. In addition, several

Unite! universities and their start-ups will showcase their offerings, providing a valuable opportunity to network with key stakeholders in the region and join the vibrant entrepreneurial community propelling transformative ideas and ventures forward.

We are thrilled to have you join us for these events, aiming to inspire and energize you with the dynamic spirit of our vibrant Unite! community!



Darmstadt Science & Congress Centre

Photo: Darmstadtium

II Unite! Branding Event: Inspiring People – Sparking Innovation

25 September 2024

Conference Hall 'Spectrum A'

Darmstadtium Congress Centre, Schlossgraben 1, Darmstadt

Tram stops "Schloss" and "Luisenplatz", AirLiner stop "Kongresszentrum Darmstadt"

[🔗 Online streaming available](#)

In celebration of the fifth anniversary of Unite!, TU Darmstadt is hosting a public conference themed "**Inspiring People – Sparking Innovation**". The main aim of the event is to delve into the achievements and the potential of European Universities like Unite! – as sources of creative innovation for a sustainable future. The event also presents an exciting platform to showcase the importance of collaboration between research, innovation, and industry in addressing contemporary challenges.

The conference will kick off in a **hybrid format** with welcome notes by the hosts, followed by two panel discussions where researchers and students from Unite! will exchange ideas with partners from the region and beyond, to conclude with an inspirational lecture on collaborative spaces of inspiration. Short pitches and a poster exhibition will showcase the diverse range of offerings, opportunities, and activities within Unite!.

Programme

<i>Time</i>	<i>Event & location</i>	<i>Streaming</i>
09:00-09:30	Registration & Welcome Coffee Atrium / Foyer 1.05, Darmstadtium	
09:30-09:40	Inspiring People – Sparking Innovation Welcome Remarks Tanja Brühl Unite! & TU Darmstadt President	🔗



- 09:40-10:30 **Inspiring People - for Europe & beyond** (i)
Panel Discussion I
Moderation:
Andreas Winkler, Unite! Secretary General

Panellists:
Tanja Brühl, TU Darmstadt
Katarzyna Chojnacka, Wrocław Tech
Vanessa Debiais-Sainton, DG EAC (virtually)
Tyler Kraus, TUDSaT
Kai Sicks, DAAD
- 10:30-10:45 **Unite! Initiatives** (i)
Short Pitches I
Moderation: **Jana Freihöfer**
Unite! Key Liaison Officer at TUDa
- 10:45-11:15 **Unite! Poster Session**
Coffee Break
Foyer 1.05, Darmstadtium
- 11:15-11:30 **Unite! Initiatives** (i)
Short Pitches II
Moderation: **Jana Freihöfer**
Unite! Key Liaison Officer at TUDa
- 11:30-11:40 **Welcome Remarks** (i)
Timon Gremmels
Hessian Minister of Science and Research, Arts and Culture
- 11:40-12:30 **Sparking Innovation – for Europe & beyond** (i)
Panel Discussion II
Moderation:
Anshika Suri, Unite! Deputy Secretary General

Panellists:
Klaus Michael Ahrend, HEAG Holding
Maja Åstrand, SimulAir
Ana Prata, Ulisboa
Dunja Suttinig, Infineon Technologies Austria AG (virtually)
Thomas Walther, TU Darmstadt



12:30-12:50	Expanding Space(s) Inspirational Lecture Thomas Reiter Former astronaut of the European Space Agency	🔊
12:50-12:55	Closing Remarks Tanja Brühl Unite! & TU Darmstadt President	🔊
12:55-13:00	Group Photo <i>End of the Event</i>	
13:00-14:30	Unite! Poster Session Lunch Break Foyer 1.05, Darmstadtium	

Inspirational Lecture



Thomas Reiter
Former ESA astronaut
Photo: ESA - P. Sebiro

Thomas Reiter is among the most experienced European astronauts, with a deep expertise in aerospace technology. His career includes military jet training, test piloting, and involvement in ESA's Hermes and Columbus projects. Selected for ESA's European Astronaut Corps in 1992, he completed notable missions including Euromir 95 and Astrolab, spending a total of 351 days in space. After his career as an astronaut, he served in key roles at the German Aerospace Centre and ESA, contributing significantly to space research and technology.

Source: [ESA biography of Thomas Reiter](#)

Panel Sessions

Inspiring People - for Europe & beyond

Panel Discussion

This panel discussion underscores the crucial role of inspiration in sparking new ideas for the future. It reflects on the transformative journey that the European Universities Initiative (EUI) and Unite! embarked five years ago. Panellists representing the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport & Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), and members of the Unite! University Network for Innovation, Technology, and Engineering will delve into experiences and strategies related to developing long-term structural and strategic cooperation to promote research, development, and innovation. The panel will also explore the current impact of the EUI across societal, political, and economic dimensions. Through dynamic interaction and diverse perspectives, the discussion aims to reflect on the achievements of the Unite! Alliance and highlight collaborative efforts as drivers of positive change.

Panellists



Tanja Brühl
President of TU Darmstadt
Unite! President, TU Darmstadt
Photo: K. Binner



Katarzyna Chojnacka
Vice-Rector for external relations,
Wrocław University of Science and
Technology
Photo: Private



Vanessa Debiais-Sainton
Head of Unit Higher Education,
Directorate-General for Education,
Youth, Sport & Culture (DG EAC),
European Commission
Photo: EC



Tyler Kraus
Board Member,
TU Darmstadt Space Technology
e.V. (TUDSaT)
Photo: TUDSaT



Kai Sicks
Secretary General, DAAD - German
Academic Exchange Service
Photo: DAAD/Saenger



Moderation:
Andreas Winkler
Unite! Secretary General
Photo: TUDa



Sparking Innovation – for Europe & beyond

Panel Discussion

The plenary discussion, "Sparking Innovation – for Europe & beyond," addresses critical topics in research, innovation, and industry cooperation, highlighting the importance of collaborative efforts to meet contemporary challenges. Panellists include representatives from industry, startups, national and international research and innovation institutions, as well as university and non-university partners of the Unite! European University Alliance. They will explore the European Universities role in driving innovation and sustainability, contributing to global efforts to tackle pressing societal and environmental issues. Additionally, the panellists will reflect on the dynamic landscape of digital and green transformation. Through engaging dialogue and diverse perspectives, the plenary aims to inspire collaborative action and foster transformative innovation for a better future, both within Europe and beyond.

Panellists



Klaus Michael Ahrend

Board Member, HEAG HOLDING AG -
Investment Management of the
Darmstadt City of Science (HEAG)

Photo: HEAG



Maja Åstrand

Chief Executive Officer,
Start-up SimulAir,
Stockholm

Photo: Private



Ana Prata

Professor and Coordinator of
Innovation, Entrepreneurship and
Technology Transfer for Science
Students, University of Lisbon

Photo: Private



Dunja Suttnig

Funding Project Manager,
Infineon Technologies Austria AG

Photo: Private



Thomas Walther

Vice President for Innovation and
International Affairs, TU Darmstadt

Photo: K. Binner



**Moderation:
Anshika Suri**

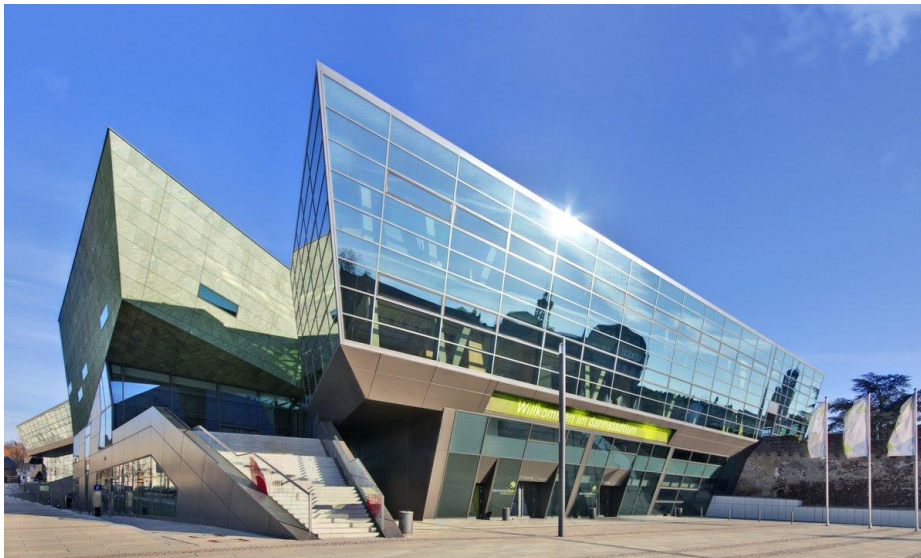
Unite! Deputy Secretary General

Photo: TUDa

Useful Information

Venue

The Dialogue takes place in the **Darmstadtium Science and Congress Centre** in the centre of Darmstadt and adjacent to the TUDa Campus City Centre and the Wissenschaftsschloss.



Darmstadtium Science
& Congress Centre –
Main entrance

Photo: Darmstadtium



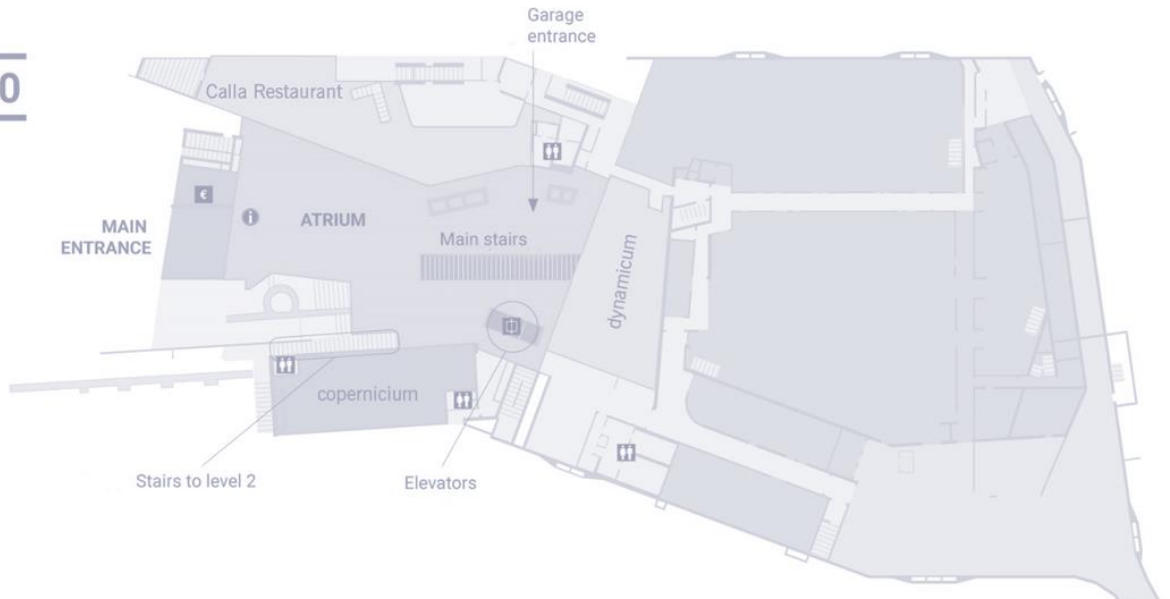
Darmstadtium Science
& Congress Centre –
Spectrum Hall

Photo: Darmstadtium

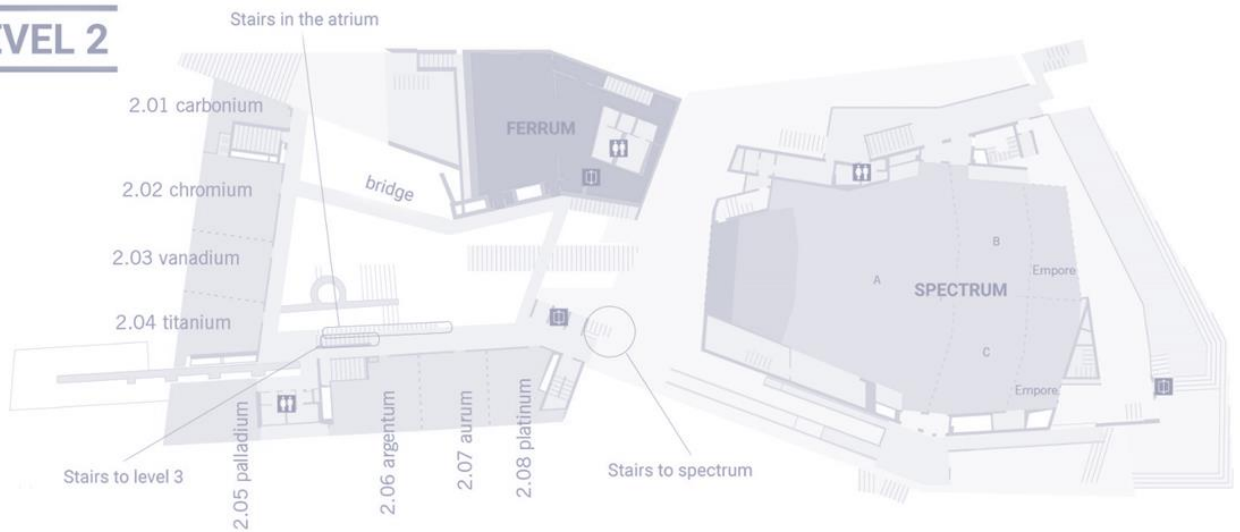


Darmstadtium Conference Rooms

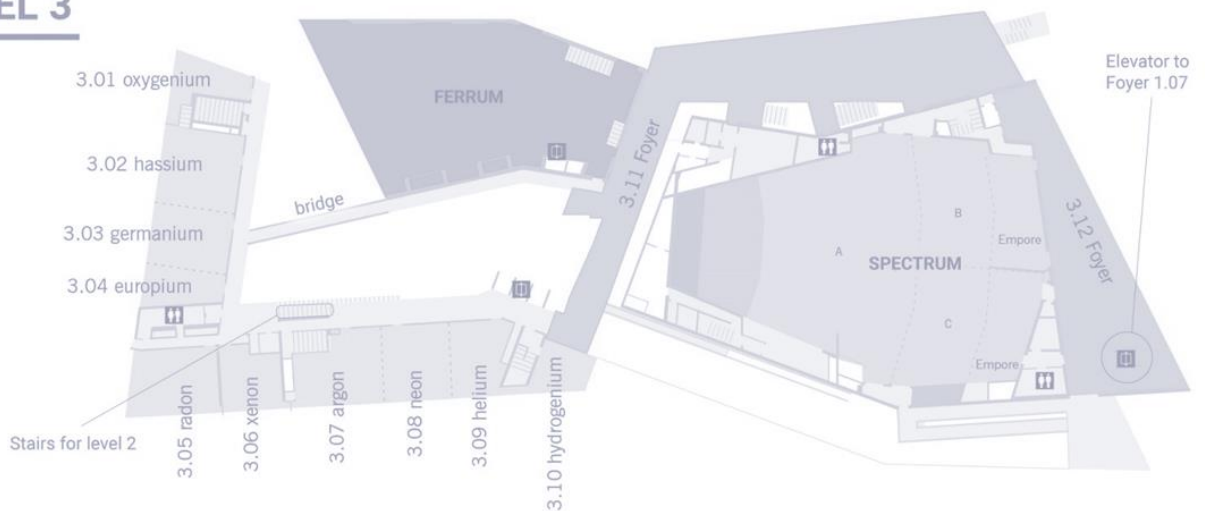
LEVEL 0



LEVEL 2



LEVEL 3



Lunch & Coffee Breaks

Lunch and coffee will be offered in the foyer of the congress centre. Participants are requested **to wear their badges clearly**.

Wi-Fi Access

Wi-Fi is available via **eduroam**.

Event Website

Please visit our event website to find information on everything you might need in preparation of your participation in the **Unite! X Dialogue and II Branding Event** at TU Darmstadt: www.tu-darmstadt.de/unite-dialogue

The website will be updated continuously.

Contact

Our dedicated team is available to assist you with any inquiries regarding the events. Your opinion and feedback are invaluable to us, and we eagerly anticipate hearing from you!

E-Mail: unite-dialogue@tu-darmstadt.de



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



unite! University Network for Innovation, Technology and Engineering

X Unite! Dialogue &
II Unite! Branding Event
**Inspiring People -
Sparking Innovation**

TU Darmstadt
24-26.09.2024

