

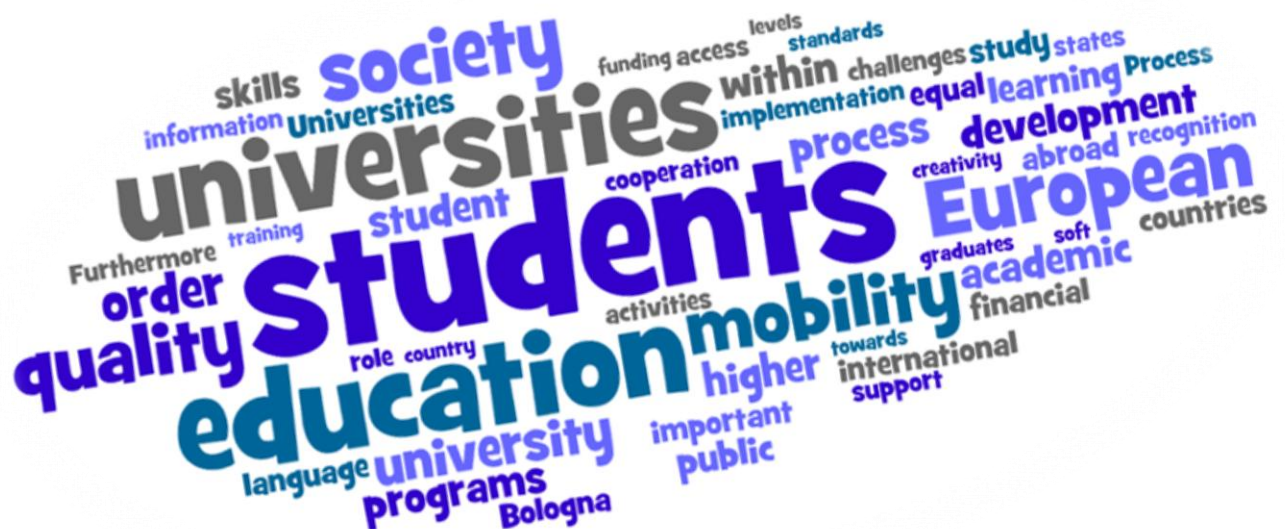


Network of Universities
from the Capitals of Europe

UNICA Student Conferences

Brussels, August 2009

Updated in November 2011, November 2015 and March 2017



UNICA Student Conferences

I. Introduction and short history 2000-2016

II. Preparation

1. Who is who
2. Preparation of participants

III. Contact and useful links

I. INTRODUCTION AND SHORT HISTORY 2000-2016

Initiated by Freie Universität in Berlin, the Conference has aimed to bring together the students of UNICA universities, let them examine, debate and share their views on Europe's most pertinent issues, but also to encourage them to formulate their opinions and recommendations that could give birth to new exciting initiatives. The meeting's objective has also been to provide the participants with new skills, such as an ability to work in a multinational and multicultural team, to share and defend one's own ideas and to negotiate.

1. Berlin 2000: The Making of Europe

Freie Universität in Berlin was the first university to advocate the involvement of students in the activities of the UNICA network. For the first UNICA Student Conference, 21-24 November 2000, it gathered more than 230 students representing 26 universities from 23 European capitals. The objective of it was to develop a memorandum entitled "*The*

Making of Europe - Guidelines of European Policy in the 21st Century", in which the



participants were to present their ideas concerning European identity and its constitution in the 21st century. The conference guests were trying to provide answers to questions such as: Does a European society exist? Should Europe be defined in terms of geographical boundaries, political views, social ideas, economic interests, or common values? The conference had a format of a European student parliament: in 10 committees, the students were debating on a given topic related to European policy, and then composing the corresponding chapter of the Memorandum. At the end of the Conference, the Memorandum was adopted through a vote during a plenary session. In order to take part in a debate entitled "*The Idea of Europe*", the students formed national delegations to express their opinions as representatives of their nations.

2. London 2002: The future of Europe

The conference dedicated to the future of Europe, organised by University College London (UCL), was held between 10th and 13th April 2002. It gathered 245 students representing universities from 26 capitals of Europe. The participants were debating in 10 forums, where they were discussing issues fundamental to Europe's future development, in the realms of public consultation on the future of Europe launched in March 2001 by the Swedish presidency of the Council of the European Union. The debate on the final day of the conference was open to the public. The students got involved in the discussions even before the conference, as they had the opportunity to share first thoughts with their peers by beginning the debate by e-mail. They had also been provided with briefing materials and reading lists by the chairs of their forums – all of them students of UCL. At the final plenary session the delegates voted on the statements each group had prepared in their forum.



3. Amsterdam 2004: Unity and diversity in Europe. The question of identity

The Amsterdam conference, held between 27th and 30th October 2004, was hosted by the Universiteit van Amsterdam and the Hogeschool van Amsterdam. The 250 delegates came from 26 countries. The students were sharing their visions on the future of Europe during

forum debates and plenary sessions. Their conceptions of Europe's prospects could also be noticed in posters designed and submitted by each participating country.

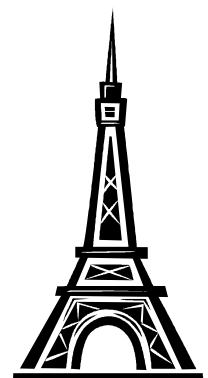


In order to encourage the participants to exchange their views and ideas on the topic of European identity, a panel discussion was organised, during which four experts showed a political, economic, cultural and scientific perspective of the conference's main theme. Later on, the students took part in debates in 10 different recommendation forums, discussing issues such as: Christian identity and the accession of Turkey to the EU, immigration and racism, European political strength and the European constitution, educational and economic mobility, communication media and consumerism. On the final day of the conference, all forums presented their recommendations to the jury, which comprised as members Dr. W. F. Duisenberg, the first president of the European Central Bank and G. Nice, QC, prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Out of 10 forum groups, the jury selected one which was awarded a special prize.

In Amsterdam, the cultural programme intertwined with the official part of the conference. On the closing day, the forum presentations were preceded by a comedy act written especially for the UNICA Student Conference by a comedy group Boom Chicago.

4. Paris 2006: Université dans la cité/ University, city, citizenship

Between 25th and 28th October 2006, the UNICA student conference was held in Paris. It was hosted by Pierre and Marie Curie University together with 3 other universities: Panthéon Sorbonne, Sorbonne Nouvelle and Paris Dauphine. It gathered 225 students representing 36 universities from 28 countries. The students debated on the conference's main theme in 10 different forums, covering sub-topics such as the political role of the university in society, the students' status, the relation between business and university as well as the successful student mobility. The students' vision of the bond connecting the university and the city was also expressed in the posters submitted by a delegation of each participating country. Since the conference was bilingual, every forum had an interpreter who rendered each speech either in French or in English, depending on the language used by the speaker.



The discussions in forums were enhanced by a round-table debate of experts organised on the second day of the conference.

5. Warsaw 2008: Let's Win Europe: Chances and Challenges for Young People

Between 24 and 27 September 2008, the UNICA Student Conference organised by the University of Warsaw gathered 226 participants (213 students and 13 tutors) representing 30 universities from 23 countries. The Organising Committee was assisted by a group of 60 volunteers – students from the University of Warsaw. The main purpose of the conference was to offer the participants a platform to discuss issues which are of essential importance to their generation. The students were debating in 8 different working groups, each of them related to a different discussion theme. The issues the participants elaborated on included, among others: Europe's political future, labour market in the 21st century, youth mobility and migration, the problem of inequality in today's society, as well as new technologies and their influence on our lives. Apart from taking part in debates, the participants had a chance to meet experts in a given field and go on outings to the Polish Parliament and the office of the Polish Representation of the EC. After the end of the conference the students delegated by each working group created Warsaw Declaration: a statement in which they presented the outcomes of panel discussions they took part in. The document is available on the Conference's website: <http://www.usc2008.uw.edu.pl>

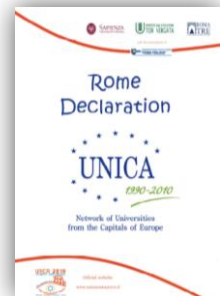


6. Rome 2010: Europe Through Students' Eyes

The Rome UNICA Student Conference 2010 marked the 10th anniversary of the organisation of this biannual event by the UNICA Network. It gathered 249 students from 38 UNICA member universities, who spent 4 days examining and debating on the state of higher education in Europe. The Conference was organised by 3 UNICA member universities: University of Rome La Sapienza,



University of Rome Tor Vergata, and Roma Tre University, with the support of a partner University, University of Rome "Foro Italico". The students were sharing their visions on the future of European higher education in 10 forums and addressed topics such as the challenges related to multiculturalism and internationalisation, innovation and development of hard and soft skills in university curricula, and sustainable development at universities. Ms. Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, addressed the students in a special video message. The participants also had a chance to meet the Mayor of Rome, Mr Gianni Alemanno. *Rome Declaration*, the final document of the Conference expressing the students' voice in matters of higher education, was sent out to the Rectors, Presidents and IROs of UNICA member Universities, Ministers of Education, Members of the European Parliament (Commission on Culture and Education) and the representatives of the European Commission.



7. Oslo 2012: The Ideal European University

UNICA Student Conference 2012 at the University of Oslo, gathered more than 200 students from 32 UNICA universities and was eco-certified by the Foundation for Environmental Education Norway (FEE). The students debated in 10 discussion forums, exploring issues such as sustainability as part of the university life, university and the culture of innovation, and the impact of crisis on higher education. Apart from being the first eco-certified UNICA Student Conference, the Oslo Conference was also the one that introduced a student video competition. All the videos are available at the USC 2012 YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/UNICAsc2012>



8. Lausanne 2014: Make it Happen! Student Action Plan

The 8th UNICA Student Conference was hosted by the University of Lausanne, 8 - 12 October 2014. It gathered more than 270 students from 34 UNICA Member Universities. The students debated in 10 forums grouped into 3 different themes: "Before", "During" and

"After" the University. Each forum presented its action plan at the Closing Session, where fellow students could vote electronically on the pertinence and feasibility of each proposal.



Website of Lausanne's Conference: <http://wp.unil.ch/unica2014/>

II. PREPARATION

1. WHO IS WHO

DELEGATE - student participating in the Conference. Delegates must be in the last year of their first cycle (Bachelor), in second cycle, or in their third cycle of studies (PhD) and are required to be **fluent in English**, the official language of the Conference.

ACADEMIC TUTOR - appointed by the sending university, assists the students during their preparation for the Conference and accompanies them during the Conference itself. A tutor also facilitates the contacts with other (academic and non-academic) experts in the field who could provide the students with guidance and advice during the preparation. At the conference, it is the tutor's responsibility to make sure that the students from his/her home university participate in the discussion forums. Furthermore, all the tutors take part in an evaluation meeting, during which they assess the event and draw conclusions and guidelines for future conferences. The Conference programme offers dedicated activities for tutors: campus visits, Tutors Roundtable, and individual appointments at Host Universities.

CONTACT PERSON - is responsible for practical matters regarding the conference (i.e. ensuring that the students are registered and that their travel is arranged) and the contact with Organisers. Academic tutor can also assume the role of the contact person. If a University's contact person is different from the academic tutor, it is very important that he/she stays in close contact with both students and the tutor and forward all the information he/she receives from the Organisers.

FORUM CHAIR - chairs and facilitates the forum discussions and assists the forum participants in the preparation of their project proposal, which is presented at the end of the Conference

3. PREPARATION OF DELEGATES

Before the start of the Conference, the delegates are requested to **submit short, 1-2-page short paper on the topic of the discussion forum they will participate in.**

The participants of the Conference are **provided with adequate reading material by both Conference Organisers and Academic Tutors** (documents, articles, documentaries).

In order to prevent forum discussions from turning into "lectures" and "information meetings", **Forum Chairs** might provide the delegates with a **short glossary containing basic definitions of terms and concepts to be discussed.**

III. CONTACT AND USEFUL LINKS

UNICA Secretariat, Brussels, Belgium

Tel : +32 (0)2 514.79.00

Fax : +32 (0)2 514.79.00

E-mail : office@unica-network.eu

<http://www.unica-network.eu/>

Active websites of previous UNICA Student Conferences

1. Warsaw 2008: *Let's Win Europe: Chances and Challenges For Young People*

<http://www.usc2008.uw.edu.pl>

2. Lausanne 2014: *Make It Happen! Student Action Plan*

<http://wp.unil.ch/unica2014/>
