

UNICA Rectors Seminar

The Future of the European Universities Alliances

30 September 2021 | 13h00 – 15h00 PM (CEST)

Biographies of the speakers

Luciano Saso | UNICA President | Introduction



Prof. Luciano Saso (Faculty of Pharmacy and Medicine, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy) received his PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences from Sapienza University in 1992. He is author of more than 220 scientific articles published in peer reviewed international journals with impact factor (SASO-L in www.pubmed.com, total impact factor > 500, H-index Google Scholar 45, Scopus 37). He coordinated several research projects in the field of pharmacology and has been referee for many national and international funding agencies and international scientific journals in the last 30 years. Prof. Saso has extensive experience in international relations and he is currently Vice-Rector for European University Networks at Sapienza University of Rome. In the last 15 years, he participated in several projects including IMS2020, EGRACONS, IMOTION, BUCUM, UZDOC, TRAIN and has been speaker and chair at many international conferences organised by UNICA and other university networks. He coordinates the Sapienza team in the European University CIVIS (www.civis.eu). Prof. Saso has been Member of the Steering Committee of UNICA for two mandates (2011-2015) and in November 2019 he has been re-elected President of UNICA for the second mandate (2019-2023).

Sophia Eriksson Waterschoot | Director, Youth, Education and Erasmus+, EAC | Keynote speaker



Sophia Eriksson Waterschoot is Director for Youth, Education and Erasmus+ at the European Commission's Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. She is in charge of European cooperation on higher education, schools and youth policy, including Europe flagship programmes Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. She has previously held various positions within the European Commission in the field of strategy and investment in education, labour market policy, European Semester and European cohesion funds. She studied economics, business, political science and EU affairs in Sweden, France and Belgium, including an Erasmus student exchange. She is an Eisenhower Fellow. Twitter: @sophiabrusseles

Günter M. Ziegler | President, Freie Universität Berlin | Opening talk: "European Universities as agents for advancing the European idea"



Günter M. Ziegler has been the eighth President of Freie Universität Berlin since July 6, 2018. He is a distinguished Mathematician and Science Communicator, who earned his doctorate at M.I.T. in 1987. Following postdoc years in Augsburg and Stockholm, he arrived in Berlin in 1992. He completed the habilitation process at Technische Universität Berlin in 1992, where he worked as a professor of mathematics from January 1995 through February 2011. Since March 2011 he has been doing research and teaching at Freie Universität Berlin. In 2006 he was in charge of setting up Berlin Mathematical School (BMS) as a joint graduate school of the three major Berlin universities. In 2001 Ziegler was awarded the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize of the German Research Foundation (DFG) for his research. In 2008 he received the Communicator Award of the DFG and the Stifterverband. In 2010 he was awarded an Advanced Grant from the European Research Council, and in November 2017 he was awarded the Berlin Science Prize of the Governing Mayor of Berlin. Ziegler is a member of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, of the German National Academy, Leopoldina, and the German Academy of Engineering Sciences, Acatech, as well as a fellow of the American Mathematical Society. From 2006 to 2008 Ziegler was president of the German Mathematical Society (DMV).

Panel Discussion: The Future of the European Universities Alliances

Christoph Schneider | Vice President for Research, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin | Chair



Christoph Schneider is Vice-President Research of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin since August 2021. Before that he has been Section Editor for Meteorologische Zeitschrift, Scientific Editor for Journal of Glaciology and Associate Editor for Frontiers in Earth Sciences, Cryospheric Sciences. Since September 2018 is is also Member of Advisory Board, Leibniz-Institute on Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB). Between 2017 and 2020 he has been Executive Director of the Geography Department, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Since 2016, Professor Schneider is Editor for Frontiers in Earth Sciences, Cryospheric Sciences and member in "Fachkollegium Physische Geographie (317-01) der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft" (review board physical geography of the German Research Foundation). He is Professor for Climate Geography, Department of Geography, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, currently on leave until 07/2026.

Marian Preda | Rector, University of Bucharest | CIVIS Alliance



Marian Preda is a professor of Sociology, Management & Social Policy, and the Rector of the University of Bucharest since December 2019. He is the former president of the Senate of the University of Bucharest (2015-19), former dean of the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work (2008-15), former president of the Romanian Sociological Society (2010-12), president of the Presidential Commission for Social & Demographic Risks Analyses (2009-10). Prof. Preda has 29 years of experience in carrying out scientific projects on social issues in Romania both in his capacity of researcher at the Research Institute for Quality of Life and as a member of the academic and scientific life of the University of Bucharest. He has been a consultant for the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, National Antipoverty and Social Inclusion Commission of the Romanian Government under projects financed by EU, DFID and The World Bank and in the Republic of Moldova (for UNICEF and for UNFPA). Prof. Preda had a Fulbright Research Grant hosted by the Sociology Department of the George Washington University (May – August 2017). As of 1 October 2020, Marian Preda has become the new president of the CIVIS alliance.

Rosette S'Jegers | Honorary Vice Rector for Education, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, former Secretary General of the Flemish Rector's Conference, Eutopia Coordinator for Education & Students | Eutopia Alliance



Rosette S'Jegers is currently EUTOPIA Coordinator for Education & Students, and advisor to the Vice-Rector of Educational and Student Affairs at VUB. She was previously the Secretary-General of the Flemish Interuniversity Council. In this position she handled big educational topics and interacted with the ministry of education and other educational councils in Flanders. Previously she was the Vice-Rector for Educational Affairs at the VUB and the Dean of the Social Sciences and Solvay Business School faculty. In this position she was responsible for the educational policies on respectively the institutional level and faculty level. With a background in economy and as a researcher, she knows how to translate macro-economic developments to the business context. She has a critical attitude with an eye for the creation of levers for economics and has experience with guiding start-ups. She is currently also member of the Board of Directors of several organisations. Rosette has driven change in educational policies and innovative teaching methods throughout all her positions in her life and gained expertise in improving cooperation between universities and companies, and is passionate to push these policies even further through the EUTOPIA European University Alliance.

James Smith | Vice Principal International, University of Edinburgh | Una Europa Alliance



James Smith was appointed Vice-Principal International in 2014, having held the Chair of African and Development Studies since 2010. He holds visiting professorships in Development Policy and Practice at the Open University and in the Department of Geography, Environmental Management and Energy Studies at the University of Johannesburg. He is a member of the Council of the UK's Economic and Social Research Council. His research focuses on the role of science, innovation and infrastructure on Africa's development and is currently writing a book on African health research and innovation networks and neglected tropical diseases. He has experience working with donors, development agencies and NGOs including DfID, IDRC, CIDA, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Oxfam and the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Svein Stølen, Rector, University of Oslo | Circle U Alliance



Svein Stølen is a Professor of Chemistry, specializing in thermodynamics and functional materials. He has extensively combined advanced experimental methods with high performance computer analyses, and he has substantial experience with international research infrastructure and high performance computing. He has been permanently employed at UiO since 1991 and has been a professor since 1996. He has considerable leadership experience as Head of Department at the Department of Chemistry (2009 – 2012), as Vice-Dean at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (since 2013), as Chair of the Board of UiO:Life Science and of the Centre for Digital Life Norway, and through several external board posts. Svein is an eager presenter of popular science, has been the driving force behind one of the most-visited websites at UiO (periodesystemet.no), and received UiO's Dissemination Prize on behalf of the Department of Chemistry in 2011. He also played a key role in the development of the interdisciplinary programme of studies, Materials, Energy and Nanotechnology.

Henrik C. Wegener, Rector, University of Copenhagen | 4EU+ Alliance



Henrik C. Wegener has been Rector at the University of Copenhagen since March 2017. He is an expert on food safety, zoonoses, antimicrobial resistance and emerging infectious diseases. He has served as advisor to national and international authorities & governments (including the position as Chair of the High Level Group of the EC Scientific Advice Mechanism), international organizations and private companies, and universities and research foundations, and he has served, and is presently serving, on several national and international committees and boards on food safety, veterinary public health, and research policy. Henrik Wegener is a former prorector at the Technical University of Denmark.