

## UNICA EduLAB European Conference

26-27 May  
Blended format  
(in Bucharest & online)



# Design of European degrees – Building flexible pathways beyond academic cycles

Promoted by the University of Bucharest – Interdisciplinary School  
of Doctoral Studies (ISDS) in partnership with UNICA and CIVIS

### Conference webpage and registration form:

<https://www.unica-network.eu/event/unica-edulab-european-conference2022/>

### Convenors

**Romiță IUCU**, President of the Board of Trustees, University of Bucharest, and **Bogdan MURGESCU**, Vice-Rector, University of Bucharest

### Concept note

The Rome Communiqué, while drawing attention to the necessity of flexible and open learning paths as a means for better responding to the students' needs, challenges the academic communities to innovate the higher education landscape by offering new forms of teaching and learning. Innovative models are not restricted to "traditional" degrees, but they can appeal to modern and flexible curricular reshapes, such as modularisation, short-term learning, digitally enhanced (virtual) mobility, and micro-credentials. It shouldn't be considered that curricular innovation in HE is only linked to the universities' educational offer. Creating attractive flexible learning pathways associated with the professional dynamics and the society's needs for present-day qualifications offers not only a noticeable image for the universities, but especially addresses the students' need for more flexible, individualised and job-linked learning pathways. Another effect would be reducing inequalities and discrepancies in the academic communities, thus increasing access to HE.

Universities need to stand at the forefront of leading the trend for innovating the learning environment, evolving societal needs, and tackling global issues and community development.

The pace of change in learning has been drastically speeded-up during the last years, with a significant impact on digitalisation, pedagogical approach, equal access to opportunities, inclusion and learning mobility / portability. The new educational paradigms, seen in many cases as real challenges for the education of the

future, can represent opportunities for adopting greater learning flexibility in a digitally enhanced environment, with a special focus on new ways of designing learning in higher education.

European Higher Education, especially through the European Universities initiative and the new objectives of the European Higher Education Area, becomes the most suitable arena for testing and refining innovative ways of transforming this educational offer from a one-to-all model towards agile and personalised learning opportunities at a larger, European scale, through the European Degrees.

By embedding different innovative components, such as micro-credentials, digitally enhanced mobilities, learning portability and digital credentials, flexible curricula and modularisation of learning, European Degrees become not just innovative products of the future of education, but can play the role of key levers for achieving real transformations and building up new fully recognisable and portable learning pathways models in higher education.

In this challenging conceptual and empirical context, this event intends to continue the discussions already launched at the European level and identify new directions for action by addressing the following questions:

- What are the main challenges in these processes and how can European approaches reshape this endeavour, supporting not only European Universities, but the entire educational landscape for valid transformations?
- How can existing structures and experiences support and enhance future developments, in relation with academic degrees, doctoral education, scientific networking, and university cooperation?
- How can new tools, such as joint programmes, micro-credentials, and digitally enhanced mobility, be used to better cater to the changing needs of students, academics, and institutions?
- How can we build new governance models for Higher Education innovation; which are the main stakeholders and what types of structural changes can they generate for the future?
- What is the envisaged architecture and how can it work on a vision for European and international Higher Education and Research in the second quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? What needs to be changed and what is to be kept?

The programme of the conference is designed to provide answers to those questions and create a baseline for new philosophical and structural approaches as ways to innovate teaching, learning, recognition, and internationalisation in European Higher Education.

## Conference outcomes: Towards the European Degree

The discussions and debates at the conference shall result in the release of a **Conference Statement**, tackling some of the main ideas and issues addressed below:

- Solutions and ideas for solving the main obstacles encountered in the development of new joint programmes;
- Proposals on how to enhance the European approach with a view to match the European Universities Alliances' needs, including aspects linked with minimum requirements and research-based training;
- Means and methods for linking micro-credentials to the traditional Higher Education cycles (Bachelor, Masters, and Doctoral studies);
- Added value of joint curricula designed and implemented in the European Universities Alliances for the students' professional development, considering aspects of certification, recognition, credentialing, portability, and transferability.

Furthermore, based on the common experiences shared by the participants and their interest in further scientific and academic cooperation, the conference organisers will invite participants to join **follow-up groups on specific topics, aiming to create an active scientific network for future collaboration between academics.**

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Format

The Conference will be organized in a **blended format**: the plenary sessions will take place in a hybrid format (onsite and online), while the parallel sessions will take place fully online.

**Participants are kindly invited to indicate in the registration form whether they will attend on site or remotely.**

**Venue of the conference (for onsite participants):** University of Bucharest Rectorate, 90 Panduri St., sector 5, 050663 Bucharest, Romania.

Online participants will receive further instructions and the link to join the conference ahead of the event.

Please note that **participation is free but registration is mandatory via the form available on the event webpage: <https://www.unica-network.eu/event/unica-edulab-european-conference2022/>**

### Deadlines for registration:

- **Monday, 15 May** for onsite attendance
- **Monday, 23 May, 17:00 pm CEST** for remote attendance

For any questions or doubts, please contact the UNICA Secretariat: [laura.brossico@unica-network.eu](mailto:laura.brossico@unica-network.eu)

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

(as of 3 May 2022)

### DAY 1 – THURSDAY, 26 MAY 2022

Chair: **Bogdan MURGESCU**, Vice-Rector, University of Bucharest

10:00-10:30	<p><b>Welcome addresses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bogdan MURGESCU</b>, Vice-Rector, University of Bucharest</li> <li>• <b>Marian PREDA</b>, Rector, University of Bucharest</li> <li>• <b>Luciano SASO</b>, UNICA President</li> <li>• <b>Mihai DIMA</b>, ISDS Director</li> </ul>
10:30-11:30	<p><b>Keynote speech: Assessing European needs for Higher Education in 2050</b> By <b>Javier VALLE LÓPEZ</b>, Professor, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid</p> <p><b>Q&amp;A session</b> moderated by <b>Bogdan MURGESCU</b>, Vice-Rector, University of Bucharest</p>
11:30-11:45	Coffee break
11:45-13:15	<p><b>Session 1 - Taking stock of accumulated experience and good practices</b></p> <p><b>Parallel panels (first round):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Joint Degrees</b> <u>Moderators:</u> <b>Lucia VENNARINI</b>, Division Director of Academic Affairs, University of Tübingen &amp; <b>Alexandru CĂRȚIS</b>, Assistant Director, CIVIS European University, University of Bucharest</li> <li><b>2. Recognition of Non-formal / Informal Learning Outcomes</b> <u>Moderators:</u> <b>Athina DIMOPOULOU</b>, Member of the Directorate of International and Public Relations, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens &amp; <b>Anca NEDELICU</b>, Vice Dean, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest</li> <li><b>3. Digitally Enhanced (Virtual) Mobility</b> <u>Moderators:</u> <b>Roxana ZUS</b>, University of Bucharest &amp; <b>Anișoara DUMITRACHE</b>, Research Assistant, University of Bucharest</li> <li><b>4. International Doctoral Cooperation</b> <u>Moderators:</u> <b>Mossadek TALBY</b>, Professor and Director of the Doctoral College, Aix-Marseille University &amp; <b>Margareta Gabriela NISIPEANU</b>, University of Bucharest</li> </ol>
13:15-15:00	Lunch break

15:00-16:15	<p><b>Parallel panels (second round):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Joint Degrees</b> <u>Moderators:</u> <b>Lucia VENNARINI</b>, Division Director of Academic Affairs, University of Tübingen &amp; <b>Alexandru CARȚIS</b>, Assistant Director, CIVIS European University, University of Bucharest</li> <li><b>Recognition of Non-formal / Informal Learning Outcomes</b> <u>Moderators:</u> <b>Athina DIMOPOULOU</b>, Member of the Directorate of International and Public Relations, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens &amp; <b>Anca NEDELCU</b>, Vice Dean, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest</li> <li><b>Digitally Enhanced (Virtual) Mobility</b> <u>Moderators:</u> <b>Roxana ZUS</b>, University of Bucharest &amp; <b>Anișoara DUMITRACHE</b>, Research Assistant, University of Bucharest</li> <li><b>International Doctoral Cooperation</b> <u>Moderators:</u> <b>Mossadek TALBY</b>, Professor and Director of the Doctoral College, Aix-Marseille University &amp; <b>Margareta Gabriela NISIPEANU</b>, University of Bucharest</li> </ol>
16:15-16:45	<p><b>Interactive reporting: conclusions from the parallel sessions</b> <b>Chair:</b> <b>Bogdan MURGESCU</b>, Vice-Rector, University of Bucharest</p>
16:45-17:15	<p><b>Wrap-up of the first day</b> <b>By Bogdan MURGESCU</b>, Vice-Rector, University of Bucharest and <b>Romiță IUCU</b>, President of the Board of Trustees, University of Bucharest</p>

## DAY 2 – FRIDAY, 27 MAY 2022

**Chair:** **Romiță IUCU**, President of the Board of Trustees, University of Bucharest

10:00-10:15	<p><b>Welcome address</b> By <b>Sorin COSTREIE</b>, Vice-Rector, University of Bucharest</p>
10:15-11:15	<p><b>Keynote speech: setting the goals for 2030 - Design of European degrees. Building flexible pathways beyond academic cycles</b> By <b>Olga WESSELS</b>, ECIU Alliance, FOREU Coordinator</p> <p><b>Discussion</b> moderated by <b>Romiță IUCU</b>, President of the Board of Trustees, University of Bucharest</p>
11:15-11:30	Coffee break
11:30-12:30	<p><b>Session 3 - Identifying obstacles and designing solutions</b></p> <p><b>Parallel Workshops</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>From joint degrees to flexible pathways</b> <u>Moderator:</u> <b>Nadia FERNÁNDEZ DE PINEDO</b>, Senior Lecturer, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid</li> </ol>

	<p><b>2. New perspectives on traditional cycles: BA, MA, PhD (TBC) versus micro-credentials and non-traditional academic cycles</b>  <u>Moderator:</u> <b>Janika LEOSTE</b>, Business Collaboration and Innovation Chief Specialist, School of Educational Sciences, Tallinn University</p> <p><b>3. European Universities Alliances as piloting arenas for the future of European degrees</b>  <u>Moderator:</u> <b>Meritxell CHAVES SÁNCHEZ</b>, Project Coordinator, University of Barcelona and Manager, CHARM European University Alliance (CHARM-EU)</p>
12:30-13:00	<p><b>Interactive reporting: conclusions from the parallel workshops</b>  <b>Panel discussion on the draft of the conference statement &amp; follow-up</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> <b>Lucian CIOLAN</b>, Vice-Rector, University of Bucharest</p>
13:00-13:30	<p><b>Wrap-up and conference closing</b></p> <p>By <b>Bogdan MURGESCU</b>, Vice-Rector, University of Bucharest and <b>Romiță IUCU</b>, President of the Board of Trustees, University of Bucharest</p>