



UNICA IRO MEETING 2023

6-8 NOV



SOPIA UNIVERSITY
ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI



UNICA IRO GROUP MEETING 2023 | 6-8 November

Hosted by

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

JOIN AND GET INVOLVED! CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Enhancing International Collaboration and Student Support in Higher Education

The international landscape of Higher Education continues to evolve, presenting new challenges and opportunities for universities, not only in Europe but worldwide. Leveraging on recent work by the UNICA IRO group – in particular during the meeting on the occasion of the General Assembly in June and the online meeting with DG EAC in May -, the upcoming IRO in-person meeting in Sofia aims to foster knowledge exchange, collaboration, and innovative thinking among members of the network.

Join us in shaping the future of international Higher Education! We are looking for good practices, success stories, lessons learned and institutional perspectives of the IRO at your university.

What we're looking for:

Session 1 "Strategic partnerships outside Europe"

3 X 20 MINUTE
PRESENTATIONS

Topics:

- Establishing global partnerships
- Overcoming cultural challenges
- Mobility programs: within and beyond Erasmus+
- Addressing sociopolitical sensitivities
- Internationalization strategies
- Legal and regulatory considerations
- Alumni engagement



Session 2 "Students in the spotlight: tackling the challenges of housing & inclusion"

4 X 20 MINUTE
PRESENTATIONS

Topics:

- Strategies to support international students finding accommodation
- Collaboration with housing providers & other partnerships
- Support services & orientation
- Cultural Diversity and Inclusion
- Peer-mentoring programmes
- Student-led inclusion initiatives
- Inclusive pedagogies
- Mental Health and wellbeing support





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We invite you to submit proposals for contributions related to the topics of the UNICA IRO meeting.

We encourage the submission of practices that have the **potential to be transferred to other IROs or inspire colleagues** to adopt similar ones and/ or findings that might be useful for IROs in general.

Call for presentations for Session 1 – “Strategic partnerships outside Europe”

This session seeks to delve into the realm of **international partnerships, transcending geographical boundaries and embracing diversity**. We're eager to explore the richness of relationships with institutions beyond Europe, even those that might pose challenges.

Share your insights, experiences, and innovative strategies that have enabled your institution to **navigate the complexities** of such collaborations. We are looking for 3 presentation from different angles of approach. Here are some guiding questions to help you identifying a good angle:

1. What strategies have you employed to identify suitable international partners that align with your institution's goals and values?
2. What specific cultural challenges have you encountered while collaborating with institutions from different cultural backgrounds, and how did you address them?
3. Can you share insights into cross-cultural communication techniques that have proven effective in fostering understanding and collaboration?
4. Can you provide examples of innovative mobility programs that extend beyond traditional exchange and encourage a broader international perspective?
5. How do you navigate partnerships and collaborations in regions with complex sociopolitical dynamics?
6. What strategies does your IRO employ to prepare students and faculty for engaging with partners in regions with varying sociopolitical contexts?
7. What comprehensive approaches have you adopted to infuse international perspectives into curricula, research, and campus culture?
8. How do you navigate legal complexities when working with partners from different jurisdictions, and what steps do you take to ensure compliance with relevant laws?
9. Are there any examples of alumni-led initiatives that have contributed to the expansion of your institution's global network?



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Call for presentations for Session 2 – “Students in the spotlight: tackling the challenges of housing & inclusion”

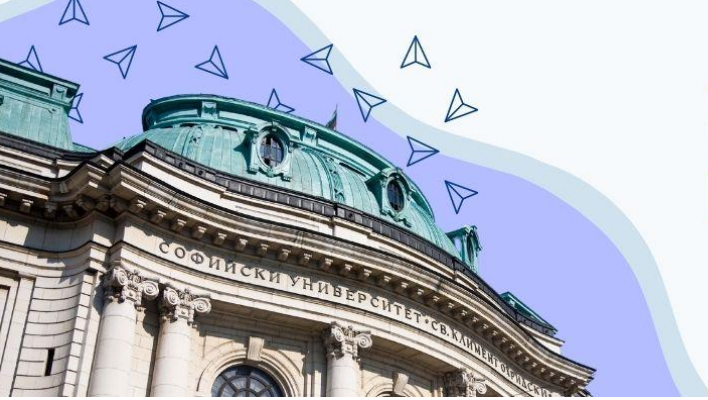
From addressing the pressing housing challenges faced by international students to fostering a culture of inclusivity that celebrates diversity, this theme delves into the **heart of student life**. We want to bring to the table innovative strategies, shared experiences, and transformative ideas aimed at creating supportive environments where every student can thrive academically and personally. We are looking for 4 presentations, 2 per topic (housing challenges and inclusion challenges). Here are some guiding questions to help you:

Related to challenges with housing:

1. How do you tailor your housing support strategies to cater to the unique needs and preferences of international students from diverse backgrounds?
2. Can you share successful case studies where international students were effectively guided through the housing search process, ensuring a smooth transition to their new environment?
3. What strategies have you employed to establish strong collaboration with housing providers, ensuring quality accommodations and beneficial terms for students?
4. What innovative approaches has your institution implemented to assist international students in securing suitable and affordable accommodation upon arrival?

Related to challenges with inclusion:

1. How does your institution promote an inclusive environment that respects and celebrates the diverse cultural backgrounds of students?
2. What challenges have you encountered in fostering cultural diversity and how have you addressed them to create a friendly living environment?
3. What student-led initiatives have emerged to promote inclusion and address housing challenges within your institution's community?
4. How do you incorporate mental health and well-being considerations into your support services?
5. How do your institution's teaching and learning approaches take into account diversity and creates an inclusive classroom environment?
6. Can you share successful initiatives that offer counselling, resources, or spaces for students to receive appropriate support?



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General principles to have in mind:

- Presentations should focus on practices carried out at universities related to the topics mentioned above. We want to know the “what” and “how” the IRO at your university is doing in relation to those topics;
- Ideally, contributions should cover different geographical areas;
- Presentations should not exceed 20 minutes;
- Presentations can be supported by PowerPoint slides.

SUBMISSION:

If you are interested in contributing to the meeting, please send an email to Laura Brossico (laura.brossico@unica-network.eu) with a **preliminary title and a short (10-line) outline** of your contribution **not later than 17 September 2023.**