UNICA

Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe

Co-funded by the European Union

UNICA STRATEGIC Plan 2024-2025

A. INNOVATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, ACADEMIC STANDARDS & COLLABORATION

Priorities

1. Promote Innovative Teaching and Learning Pathways: Encourage the adoption of digital and blended education models, flexible and personalized curricula, student-centred learning approaches, and the integration of innovative teaching technologies and learning environments to enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

2. Advance Lifelong Learning Opportunities: Facilitate the development and implementation of micro-credentials, skills development programs (including reskilling and upskilling initiatives) to cater to the evolving needs of individuals and the workforce in a rapidly changing world.

3. Embrace the European Degree Framework: Support the implementation and adoption of the European degree framework, ensuring consistency and comparability of academic qualifications across UNICA member institutions.

4. Enhance Quality Assurance Mechanisms: Collaborate with member institutions to streamline and strengthen quality assurance mechanisms, upholding high academic standards and ensuring the quality and relevance of educational programs.

5. Collaborate on Harmonization of Higher Education Practices: Foster collaboration among UNICA member institutions to harmonize higher education practices, promoting mutual recognition of qualifications and facilitating student mobility and academic staff exchanges.

6. Simplify Erasmus+ Mobilities: Simplify and streamline the Erasmus+ mobility process, addressing any accreditation challenges or bureaucratic hurdles to enhance the ease and efficiency of student and staff mobility management within the UNICA network

B. RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Priorities

1. Engaging in the Renewal of the European Research Area (ERA): Actively participate in shaping the future of European research by contributing to the ERA's development and advancement.

2. Promoting Equality and Inclusiveness in Academia: Foster a research environment that is equitable, inclusive, and free from bias, ensuring equal opportunities for all researchers.

3. Contributing to the Reform of Research Assessment: Advocate for a fair, transparent, and evidence-based research assessment system that recognizes the diverse contributions of researchers.

4. Championing Open Science: Promote open access to research data, publications, and methodologies to advance knowledge sharing and collaboration.

5. Securing Stable and Transparent Funding: Advocate for consistent and transparent funding mechanisms to support research activities and innovation.

6. Facilitating Academic Exchange and Collaboration: Encourage and facilitate knowledge exchange, joint research projects, and collaborative ventures among UNICA member institutions.

7. Recognizing and Celebrating Research Achievements: Highlight and celebrate the significant contributions of UNICA member institutions and researchers to advance knowledge and innovation.

8. Providing Peer-to-Peer Support and Continuing Professional Development for Research Managers: Offer ongoing training, mentorship, and professional development opportunities for research managers within UNICA member institutions

C. ENGAGED & SUSTAINABLE URBAN UNIVERSITIES

Priorities

1. Capitalizing on the Unique Urban Profile of UNICA Members: Leverage the distinctive characteristics of UNICA member institutions, being urban universities in capital cities, to drive innovative and impactful initiatives in their local ecosystems and communities.

2. Whole-Institution Approach to UN SDGs Implementation: Promote a comprehensive and integrated approach to incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the core operations and decision-making processes of UNICA member institutions.

3. Seamless Cooperation between Universities and Cities: Foster close collaboration between UNICA member institutions and their respective host cities to promote sustainable practices and address shared societal and environmental challenges.

4. Science-Driven Solutions for Societal Challenges: Advocate for the central role of science and research in addressing pressing societal issues, supporting UNICA member institutions to translate scientific findings into tangible solutions.

5. Strengthening International University Partnerships: Expand and strengthen international university partnerships to foster knowledge exchange, collaboration, and mutual learning on sustainability practices.

D. POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Priorities

1- Enhancing UNICA's Strategic Presence and Advocacy Efforts: Strengthen UNICA's strategic engagement with EU policy-making bodies, effectively representing the interests of UNICA member institutions in shaping higher education policies**.**

2- Capitalizing on UNICA's Unique Standing as a Network of Capital City Universities: Leverage UNICA's distinctive characteristics as a network of universities based in capital cities to bring a unique perspective and expertise to policy discussions.

3- Consolidating the Collective Voice of Capital City Higher Education Leaders: Strengthen collaboration and amplify the collective voice of UNICA member institutions, ensuring that their concerns are heard at all levels of policymaking.

4- Forging Stronger International Partnerships and Collaboration: Expand and strengthen international alliances with other networks of universities and higher education stakeholders to broaden UNICA's reach and influence in policy discussions.

5- Promoting UNICA's Policy Agenda and Position Papers: Effectively communicate UNICA's policy recommendations and positions to key decision-makers, ensuring their consideration in policy development processes.

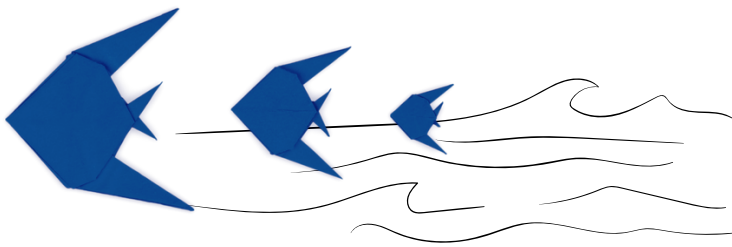
6- Organizing Policy Debates and Forums: Facilitate discussions and debates on critical higher education policy issues, bringing together experts, practitioners, and policymakers to foster informed decision-making.

7- Developing Strategic Policy Tools and Resources: Create and disseminate policy briefs, position papers, and other resources that inform and support UNICA member institutions in their advocacy efforts.

8- Engaging with Civil Society and External Stakeholders: Collaborate with relevant civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to expand UNICA's advocacy network and influence.

9- Building Partnerships with EU Institutions and Agencies: Foster strong partnerships with key EU institutions and agencies, such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) bodies.

10- Monitoring and Assessing Policy Implementation: Continuously monitor and assess the implementation of EU higher education policies, providing feedback and advocating for necessary adjustments.



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