

ATHENA seminar series and round-table discussion with stakeholders
18 November 2021 – 28 February 2022

The European University initiative, from European policy to practice on the ground: Solutions for smart integration

European University alliances have started out as transnational laboratories to invent and test new models of cooperation in the European Higher Education Area, laying the groundwork for the universities of the future.

The expectations are high: within three years, the first alliances are called upon to leverage significant institutional transformation involving students, staff, and stakeholders such as the local and regional ecosystems in the process.

Smart integration is one of the major challenges European Universities are facing at all levels. European Universities need to come up with innovative, efficient and flexible solutions to achieve **institutional integration within the alliance**, while safeguarding the specificities and historical identity of each member institution. They must also achieve **integration of the newly formed transnational learning and research community**, aiming to offer added value to each student and staff member through their membership in a European University alliance, as well as meaningful **integration of the alliance in the local economic and social environment**.

A four-part seminar series

In the context of the transition from the Slovenian to the French Presidency of the European Union, ATHENA, the European University for a Green Digital Europe, invites other alliances and external experts to a seminar series in which we will reflect on four transversal topics, i.e. areas in which we strive to achieve “smart integration”:

1. Digitalisation of processes: how much and what kind of digitalisation is meaningful for European Universities?

Transnational alliances cannot operate without digitalisation. One of the issues dealt with in this seminar concerns the alignment of university strategy with regional priorities and European policies in the field of digitalisation. The case study discussed is related to the implementation of Digital Innovation Hubs.

18 November 2021, 2 to 4 pm CET, University of Maribor, Slovenia, on site and online

2. Interlinking with regional stakeholders: how can European University alliances integrate industrial innovation ecosystems?

This seminar looks at the ways in which European University alliances can work with regional ecosystems (economic partners, local authorities etc.), for mutual benefit. The main focus will be on local industry and the ways in which it can cooperate with an international university network to increase employability of university graduates and create innovative life-long learning opportunities.

30 November 2021, 4 to 6 pm CET, University of Siegen, Germany, on site and online

3. Fostering linguistic diversity: how can European Universities become truly multilingual?

In this seminar, participants will discuss the ways in which alliances can strengthen the role of local languages in their international activities. Conversely, in the many learning and communication situations where English has to serve as the *lingua franca*, how can linguistic quality be sustained?

7 December 2021, 2 to 5 pm CET, University of Orléans, France, on site and online

4. Legal frameworks for effective cooperation: what can be done to speed up the transformation of higher education in Europe?

This seminar will address a series of challenges that European Universities face in practice when they build common educational paths for their students. A central issue is the recognition of virtual and blended mobility.

14 December 2021, 2 to 4 pm CET, Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal, on site and online

The four seminars take place in November and December 2021, each hosted by a specific ATHENA member institution that aims to **reflect critically and constructively about opportunities and challenges in the chosen field**. The seminar organisers will be particularly attentive to **the link between European policy and practice on the ground**. In each seminar, case studies will be discussed. The seminar organisers and participants will develop concrete proposals for policies in alliances, at the national, and at the European level.

A round-table discussion with policy proposals

28 February 2022, University of Orléans, France, on site and online

The seminar series prepares a round-table discussion with major national and European stakeholders. This event will figure in the programme of the **French Presidency of the European Union** and is supported by the French embassies in Germany, Slovenia and Portugal.

Based on exchanges within the alliance, with other alliances and external experts in the four seminars, ATHENA will make policy proposals at this event.

Calendar

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Follow in person at the University of Maribor or online.

30 November 2021, 4 to 6 pm CET: **Interlinking with regional stakeholders**

Follow in person at the University of Siegen or online.

7 December 2021, 2 to 5 pm CET: **Fostering linguistic diversity**

Follow in person at the University of Orléans or online.

14 December 2021, 2 to 4 pm CET: **Legal frameworks for effective cooperation**

Follow in person at the Polytechnic Institute of Porto or online.

28 February 2022: **The European University initiative, from policy to practice**

Round-table discussion with national and European stakeholders (event under the patronage of the French Presidency of the European Union)

Follow in person at the University of Orléans or online.

Registration and regular updates

Please visit <https://athena.um.si/seminar/> or scan the QR code below.



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