



ECIU to pilot ground-breaking university model

The European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) has been greenlighted by the EU to innovate higher education in Europe.

In a three-year pilot project, the ECIU universities will pioneer challenge-based instead of degree-based education on a European scale. The *ECIU University* will be open to students, researchers, industry and society at large, across borders. It will offer demand-driven, interdisciplinary and flexible education, tailored to the needs of society and students.

Furthermore, the challenges will focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goal for cities and communities. This means learners at *ECIU University* will be tackling real and important problems in society and help shape a better world.

Prestigious EU support

Following up an initiative by French President Emmanuel Macron, the European Commission announced a call for *European Universities*, as part of the EU Erasmus+ programme. In the call, 60 million euros (max 5 million euro per project for 3 years) were made available for university alliances to strengthen their collaborations. The alliances had to work towards a European curriculum with innovative pedagogies, structured mobility, and a European campus.

On June 26, the Commission announced *ECIU University* as one of 17 successful applicants.

Universities for the future

By developing this new educational model, the *ECIU University* responds to the urgent societal challenges the world is facing.

“These challenges we can only solve together with our most entrepreneurial students, our best researchers and experts from society,” says ECIU President Victor van der Chijs (University of Twente).

“This EU grant confirms that our consortium is leading in innovating teaching and learning, and heading in the right direction when it comes to reinventing the relationship of universities with society and the challenges surrounding them.”

Ground-breaking educational model

The *ECIU University* will create a European platform where students, researchers, society and industry, can work together to find innovative solutions to real-life challenges. It will enhance the flexibility of education by granting learners "micro-credits" for individual courses, which they can gather in a competence passport tailored to their needs, instead of offering a fixed “one-size-fits-all” degree.

This increased flexibility will also enable life-long learners to access education more easily. The *ECIU University* will work closely with society, establish pop-up laboratories to test innovate teaching and research practices, and will foster ideas to enhance physical, blended and virtual mobility among universities.

Mobility and transnationality are at the core of the *ECIU University*. To facilitate relations among the members, three Challenge Innovation Hubs will be set up (in Linköping, Hamburg, and Barcelona).



Support from society and industry

The plan for the ECIU University was co-created with industry, public organisations, society, academics, future and current students at stakeholder events all over Europe. The universities' industry partners and almost all regional public authorities also support the creation of the *ECIU University*.

Supporting industry stakeholders are Airbus, Cisco, Engineering Ingegneria Informatica SpA, Ericsson AB, Hella, Intel, Lietuvos Energija, Lyse Group, NXP, Ponsse, Sandoz Industrial Products S.p.A. Gruppo Novartis, Sick AG, and Suez Environment.

Kick-off in November

The project's official launch is in November. From 2020 onwards, students, employees and external collaborators will be given the opportunity to take part in piloting the groundbreaking education system.

"The ECIU University is a very ambitious project. It caught the attention of entrepreneurs and educational experts from all over the world. I am very happy with all the positive feedback received so far, and I warmly invite society, researchers, students, and stakeholders to come up with real-life challenges we can work on with in the ECIU University", says Sander Lotze, who is the project director for ECIU University.

ECIU

Members of the ECIU are research-intensive universities:

Aalborg University, Denmark. Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain. Dublin City University, Ireland. Hamburg University of Technology, Germany. INSA Group, France. Linköping University, Sweden. Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania. University of Nottingham, UK. University of Stavanger, Norway. University of Trento, Italy. Tampere University, Finland. University of Twente, the Netherlands. Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico.