

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 3 July 2023

Circle U. to pursue the alliance’s mission and vision with the renewed support of the European Commission

With the selection of “Circle U. 2030”, a new four-year project funded by the Erasmus+ 2023 call for European Universities, the achievements, efforts and ambition of Circle U. have been acknowledged. With a €12.8m grant, Circle U. will continue building the university of tomorrow.

Building on the success of the alliance’s pilot projects (Circle U., ERIA and InnovEd4TS), Circle U. will continue developing, offering and supporting outstanding education, research and innovation to contribute to more sustainable, democratic and healthier societies.

With this funding, the Alliance will consolidate and further develop the joint ecosystem. The Open Campus will become a single entry point for all educational opportunities in Circle U. A fourth Knowledge Hub will be established tackling a new theme, in addition to the existing ones on climate, democracy and global health. Four collaborative platforms will enable the Circle U. universities, their communities and associated partners to foster educational innovation, boost multilingualism, support early-career researchers and empower student entrepreneurs. The backbone of Circle U., the Academic Chair programme, will be expanded with a Fellow programme, ensuring strong, sustainable and concrete connections between academics, researchers, students as well as associated and global partners.

Whilst continuously testing out new concepts in higher education and research cooperation, Circle U. will scale up and offer a significantly increased range of flexible learning opportunities for half a million students and other learners: summer and winter schools, public conversations and lectures, open courses, challenge-based learning activities, language and intercultural skills modules, joint courses and programmes.

By 2030, Circle U. will be a truly integrated European University –inclusive, interdisciplinary and research-intensive– where students and staff across Europe and beyond work seamlessly together within a shared ecosystem through joint tools, procedures and infrastructure.

With Università di Pisa and Universität Wien now formally project partners, Circle U. and its nine partner universities share the dedication, motivation and resources to maximize the impact of their joint action. With universities from European countries within and outside the European Union, the Alliance is contributing to shaping a multifaceted identity rooted in shared European democratic values. Circle U. is a European and global alliance, whose unique transformational dynamic will also benefit partners outside the EU.

Bjørn Stensaker, Vice-rector at the University of Oslo and coordinator of the “CU2030” project, shares his enthusiasm: *“The selection of this new project is firstly an acknowledgment of the work accomplished by our nine universities and our communities since 2020. In the pilot phase, we have established a solid ground for a unique cooperation, based on mutual trust, shared dedication and continuous dialogue. And we are actually shaping the future of our universities. In the next four years, we will strengthen our shared ecosystem, multiply the opportunities and make Circle U. a reality for our students, staff and partners.”*

Vincent Blondel, Rector of UCLouvain and President of Circle U., continues: *“Circle U. partners are in this for the long run and we are committed to continue these transformational processes long after the funding periods end. As we learn from our experiences and scale up, we will have more impact and truly become the university of tomorrow.”*

ABOUT CIRCLE U.

We, Aarhus Universitet (Denmark), Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Germany), King's College London (United Kingdom), UCLouvain (Belgium), Università di Pisa (Italy), Universität Wien (Austria), Université Paris Cité (France), Universitetet i Oslo (Norway) and Univerzitet u Beogradu (Serbia), we have agreed to combine our expertise and common interests to build a European University with the name Circle U. By 2030, Circle U. is to be an inclusive, a research-intensive and interdisciplinary alliance delivering outstanding interdisciplinary education, research and innovation through an innovative and adaptive ecosystem, in order to enable more sustainable, democratic and healthier societies. Our students, researchers, staff and partners from civil society, the private and public sectors will strengthen and shape our alliance through a process of co-creation to ensure they have the skillset, mindset and values to interact in meaningful ways to mobilise knowledge for impact.

SOME KEY FIGURES ABOUT CIRCLE U. SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN 2020

- 49 academic chairs appointed to drive the academic and research actions of Circle U.
- 3 Knowledge Hubs as interdisciplinary spaces for academics, researchers, students and partners to co-develop learning, teaching and research activities on Circle U.'s priority themes – climate, democracy and global health
- 6 Circle U. challenges to empower students and staff to develop sustainable solutions to real-life challenges
- 1 Think&Do Tank to push the reflection and actions towards sustainable and innovative education
- 1 Female Founder Network to support female student-led entrepreneurship and innovation
- 152 students and PhD candidates participated in 5 summer schools organised in 2022
- Around 250 students and PhD candidates will participate in 5 summer schools organised in 2023
- 18 joint programmes and courses to offer unique learning opportunities to students
- 1.397 students, researchers and public audience participated in a dozen of thematic seminars, public lectures, organised in 2021 and 2022
- 5 funding instruments and mobility schemes to foster interdisciplinary research and innovation and support early-career researchers
- 24 projects funded by the Circle U. seed-funding scheme in 2021 and 2022 to boost bottom-up initiatives
- 10 policy papers focusing on multiple topics including sustainable education, diversity, sustainability and quality assurance

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Visit our website: www.circle-u.eu
- Subscribe to our newsletter: <https://www.circle-u.eu/newsletter>
- Follow us on Twitter (@CircleU_eu) and LinkedIn (Circle U. European University Alliance)
- Contact our Secretary General (secgen@circle-u.eu) or our communication team (engage@circle-u.eu)