

EURASHE 30TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Professional Higher Education for
Sustainable Development:

Creating a Change that Endures

CONFERENCE REPORT



P. PORTO



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EURASHE, together with its members, the **Portuguese Polytechnics Coordinating Council (CCISP)**, the **Polytechnic Institute of Porto** and with the support of the **Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union**, organised its 30th Annual Conference, 'Professional Higher Education for Sustainable Development: creating a Change that Endures', which took place online the 20–21 of May 2021.

After a year full of uncertainty, we needed to adapt to the challenges and launch the first-ever online EURASHE Annual Conference. The Conference welcomed more than 400 registrations from more than 30 different countries. Even after spending a year working from home, people are still interested in attending online meetings to learn, share and meet like-minded people.

With 57 speakers, among them keynote speakers, parallel session speakers, panel discussion speakers, and poster presenters, the two-day Conference offered numerous opportunities for attendees to learn about how professional higher education can drive the regions' sustainable economic recovery.

The panel discussions included speakers from academia, the business world, students and government, offering valuable insight into the future perspective and the sustainable recovery of the regions.

One of the advantages of making the Conference online has been the opportunity of having four high-level keynote speakers from the European Commission, The Club of Rome and the Finish Government.

Parallel sessions allowed the participants to learn more about good practices and other case examples all around Europe to understand how Professional Higher Education is leading the change.

Once again, the EURASHE 30th Annual Conference created a unique experience for attendees combining panel discussions, parallel interactive sessions, project poster presentations, keynote speeches and endless networking opportunities.

If you missed the event and would like to know more about the content of the keynote speeches, you can find them on our youtube channel.

From EURASHE, we hope attendees leave with all the tools and necessary information to take professional higher education to the next level!

THURSDAY 20 MAY 2021

Professional Higher Education and Sustainability

-  **10:00 – 10:10**
Welcome and introduction by day moderator
-  **10:10 – 10:25**
Welcome words by Professor Manuel Heitor, Portuguese Minister for Research and Higher Education.
-  **10.25–11.10**
Panel discussion. Future perspectives of Professional Higher Education.
-  **11:10–11:20**
Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth (video message)
-  **11.20–11.30**
Coffee break
-  **11.30–12.15**
Keynote speech by Anita Lehtikoinen, Permanent Secretary of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland
-  **12.15–13.15**
Networking lunch
-  **13.15–14.00**
Panel discussion. European Universities initiative
-  **14.00–15.00**
Parallel Interactive sessions:
 - Recognition of Prior Learning along SDG 10 @St. Pölten UAS – Katalin Szondy
 - The TESSe2b project: producing results to help deliver the European Green Deal – Luís Coelho, Polytechnic Institute of Setubal
 - EU Transformation Frameworks for Recovery and Resilience – Dimitri Corpakis and Richard Tuffs, Friends of Smart Specialisation
 - “Impact first”: Co-creation of real, international social enterprises in higher education – Karin Lukas-Eder and Marco van Lier, UAS4EUROPE
 - Canada’s SDG story – the potential of higher education at home and abroad – Denise Amyot, Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan)
 - How to implement the 17 SDG in 40 educations – Birgitte WogeVIA University College
 - Global Engagement in Higher Education – an inspirational framework – Lies Verstraete and Tine Ternest, VIVES University of Applied Sciences
 - Examples of higher education institutions supporting sustainable and inclusive innovation in their own ecosystems and networks – Raffaele Trapasso, OECD



15:00–15:30

Cultural Programme offered by the Polytechnic Institute of Porto



15.30–17:00

Panel discussion. Maximising PHE potential in European Research and Education area: ambitions for the sustainability driven future



17.00–17.30

Wrap up of the day and presentation of the Conference's second day

FRIDAY 21 MAY 2021

Driving the smart and sustainable economic recovery of regions

 **09:50 – 10:00**

Welcome and introduction by day moderator

 **10:00–10:45**

Keynote speech by Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms

 **10:45–11:45**

Keynote speech by Sandrine Dixson-Declève, Co-President, Club of Rome

 **11:45–12:00**

Coffee break

 **12:00–13:00**

Parallel Interactive Sessions

- European University Armenia (EUA) Good Practice of Establishing Knowledge Triangle and Innovation – Vahram Soghomonyan and Gohar Avetisyan, European University Armenia
- Reaching the sustainable development goals – a matter of future skills – Ulf-Daniel Ehlers and Laura Eigbrecht, Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University, Karlsruhe
- Co-creation innovation Portugal – Preparing the future together for a better society – Pedro Dominginhos, Vera Ferro Lebres, Susana Rodrigues and Ville Kairamo
- Professional higher education 2035 (in Estonia) – Ulla Preeden and Ülle Ernits, Tartu Health Care College
- Sustainable Networking of Sustainability Related Initiatives: SUSIMPACT Case Study – Marek Frankowicz, Jagiellonian University
- Collaborative Innovation – Higher Education Institutions as driver for smart regions – Gabriele Permoser and Hannes Raffaseder, St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences

 **13:00–14:00**

Networking lunch

 **14:00–15:30**

Panel discussion. Professional higher education for smart and sustainable recovery

 **15:30–16:00**

Cultural Programme offered by the Polytechnic Institute of Porto

 **16:00–16:30**

Take away from the Conference

 **16:30–17:00**

Closing the Conference and announcing the Annual Conference 2022



DAY 01

PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

WELCOMING CEREMONY

On Thursday, 21 May, the conference started the day with the welcoming word of Professor Manuel Heitor, Portuguese Minister. He thanked EURASHE and participants for their commitment to Professional Higher Education. He spoke about the challenges that lay ahead, the role and capacity of professional higher education in addressing societal needs in education throughout the life-long cycle, cooperation with the world of work, supporting innovation and further development.



Minister Manuel Heitor

“Professional Higher Education is a key step for a better Europe”

○ PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

Speakers

Stéphane Lauwick, Former EURASHE President

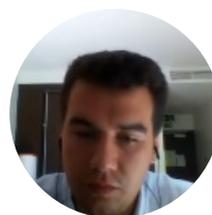
Pedro Dominginhos, President of the Portuguese Polytechnics Coordinating Council

José Barros Oliveira, Vice-President of the Polytechnic Institute of Porto

Tiago Diniz, President of Federação Nacional de Associações de Estudantes do Ensino Superior Politécnico

During the panel, discussion speakers highlighted the role of PHE in sustainability, capacity to contribute to both by innovation activities and projects to necessary attention to sustainability in curricula, but also institution's processes and operation. Professional education has a crucial role in regional cohesion and preparing education for future challenges. There is a critical need to listen to students since they have great expectations from Europe to bridge to a better and more cohesive future and the necessity to reflect on the staff's capacity to address sustainability issues.

The panel gave strong messages, such as the visualisation of Universities of Applied Sciences as bridges to Sustainability and Inclusion. Regional cohesion will have a substantial role in professional education as a critical factor in ensuring and preparing students and society for future challenges.



VIDEO MESSAGE BY COMMISSIONER MARIYA GABRIEL

Commissioner Mariya Gabriel wasn't able to attend, yet she addressed the participants by a pre-recorded message. She thanked EURASHE for focusing this year's Conference on sustainable development, addressing that Universities should be active participants in the Green Transition. The European Commission is firmly committed to the Green transition, making Erasmus + greener with the implementation of financial incentives and devoting 35% of the overall budget of Horizon Europe to fund new solutions for Climate Change. She also highlighted the European support for the development of Micro-credentials, with the European approach on micro-credentials, short courses, and the open public consultation.



Commissioner Mariya Gabriel

“The greater the challenge we face, the closer cooperation must be, working together we will be able to address challenges around inclusion, innovation, digital and green readiness and international competitiveness.”

○ KEYNOTE SPEECH BY ANITA LEHIKONEN, PERMANENT SECRETARY OF THE FINISH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE, FINLAND

Anita Lehtikoinen, permanent secretary of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, addressed in her keynote speech how megatrends affect science, technology and innovation and how society should be resilient and learn to face all the challenges coming ahead. Finland is already preparing itself to become an equitable, robust and intelligent nation in a global context.

Professional Higher Education and Universities of Applied Sciences are playing a vital role in the Finnish education system. One of their main goals is to make Finland an inspiring place to go by increasing international students who want to stay in the country.

By the year 2030, 50% of the young adults will have a degree in Finland, and they are expecting to increase the unemployment rate up to 75% (now at 72%).



Anita Lehtikoinen

“Regional engagement is becoming one of our priorities”

Find the full Keynote speech on youtube

○ PANEL DISCUSSION ON EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

Speakers

Vanessa Debiais-Sainton, Head of Unit in charge of Higher Education policies and programme, DG EAC, European Commission

Jakub Grodecki, Vice-President, European Students' Unions

Karl Dittich, President, European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education, EQAR

Nuno Rodrigues, Vice-President for Research at the Polytechnic of Leiria

During the panel discussion, speakers highlighted the importance and potential of European Universities initiative, which will set a strong foundation for a new Europe.

European universities are a catalyst for change; we need to use them as a transformative power to learn and do research differently. After the COVID crisis, cooperation and alliances are fundamental to think about the status quo of universities and discover new possibilities and drivers of change. This process may inspire further development in higher education. Yet, it faces various challenges and obstacles that should be addressed and removed by joint forces of institutions, national governments, and European Commission. It has been agreed that the process should inspire and be firmly embedded in the overall developments of higher education. The issues of European coherence, commitment to fundamental values, and higher education principles should also be kept in mind for further developments.

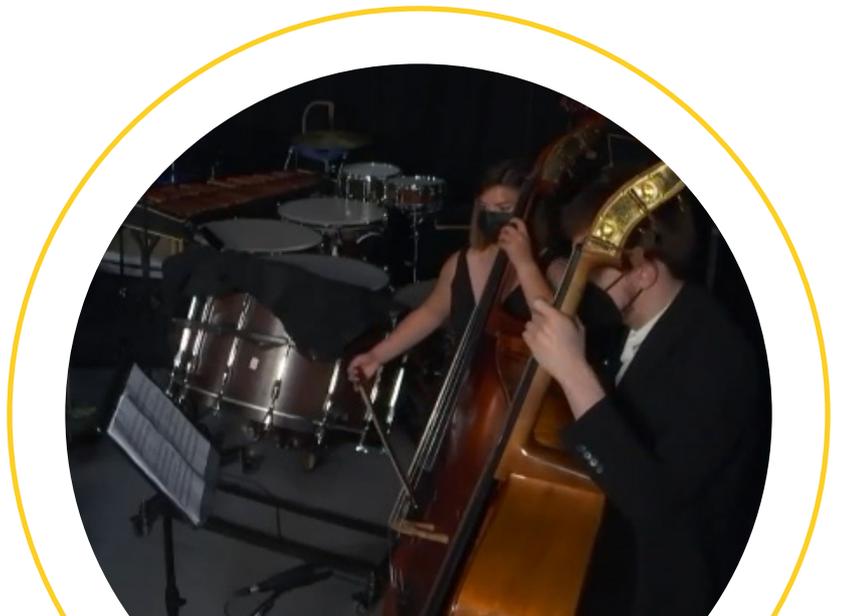


○ PARALLEL INTERACTIVE SESSIONS

The conference also had eight parallel sessions covering the five pillars of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, people, planet, peace, prosperity, and partnership during the first day. By sharing good practices, attendees could learn and understand deeply how other organisations and institutions use professional higher education to create a change. We had the opportunity to listen to good practices from Portugal, Canada, The Netherlands and Germany.

○ CULTURAL PROGRAMME

To ease our minds, we had the fantastic opportunity to listen to the resident Orchestra of the Polytechnic Institute of Porto, as well as the choir, who offered us 30 minutes of beautiful music.



○ PANEL DISCUSSION ON MAXIMISING PHE POTENTIAL IN EUROPEAN RESEARCH AND EDUCATION AREA: AMBITIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY-DRIVEN FUTURE

Speakers

Maria da Graça Carvalho, Member of the European Parliament

Nadim Ahmad, Deputy Director of the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities

Hilligje van't Land, Secretary General, International Association of Universities (IAU)

Ana Tecilazić, Secretary General, Algebra University College, Croatia

Stijn Delauré, Policy Officer, academic research and innovation policy, DG RTD, European Commission

During the panel, discussion speakers highlighted the importance of the knowledge triangle – or even square, including education, research and innovation together with culture and creativity.

When coming to maximise the potential of higher education, it is essential to have a comprehensive approach and an excellent innovation ecosystem, allowing the integration of research and education for further regional development.

Digitalisation and sustainability play a pivotal role; in today's society, students should be involved in real-world projects to acquire the necessary green and digital transition skills.

Also, place-based dimension and a new definition of excellence are essential factors and a tangible link to better cooperation with stakeholders.

MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE DAY

- The crisis requires new answers via significant transformative actions.
- COVID-19 has exacerbated deep fault lines in the global economy, starkly exposing divisions and inequalities.
- Active labour market policies should be broadened into partnerships with world of work.
- Need to prepare the workforce for new technologies, together with better labour-market conditions.
- Change what we produce and how we do it. Go for the green and systematic digital transformations.
- There is a role for professional higher education in a complex contribution through skills, user-oriented research, innovation and further development activities benefitting from institutions' embedding within the regional ecosystems, links to various actors and focus on applied sciences.



DAY 02

SMART AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF THE REGIONS

○ KEYNOTE SPEECH COMMISSIONER ELISA FERREIRA

The second day started with a Keynote speech by Commissioner for Cohesion and reforms Elisa Ferreira, highlighting the scale of the EU capacity, the unity of member states working together and the speedy response that Europe has given in four months to the COVID crisis.

She also addressed the importance of digitalisation and digital skills, the importance of a green transition, and a rebalancing of growth without leaving any region behind. 50% of the recovery plan will be investing in digitalisation and green transition. Commissioner also mentioned European Industry and the importance of accelerating it with new projects and new entrepreneurs funded by Horizon Europe. She invited universities of applied sciences / professional higher education institutions to play an essential role in facilitating and promoting regional development, recovery activities.



European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms Elisa Ferreira

“The challenges we face in terms of economic recovery, the digital revolution and transition to a greener economy, require us to race our level in terms of skills and education”.

Find the full Keynote
speech on youtube

○ KEYNOTE SPEECH BY SANDRINE DIXSON-DECLÈVE, CO-PRESIDENT, CLUB OF ROME

After this year of uncertainty, the world is changing, and large scale changes are already on the way. There was a fascinating point in the discussion, called the ‘social tipping point’ which gathers, mass movements, political progress, market forces and political disruption. These movements push us to a new area of zero carbon, zero poverty, and zero loss of nature and zero pandemic by the year 2050.

Sandrine Dixson Declève also addresses the ‘system thinking’ approach, divided into two main areas, the SDGs and the EU Green Deal. This approach shows the world that we need new thinking and new skills. It is fundamental to facilitate the leaders of tomorrow, changing from traditional leadership to system-based leadership, promoting regional development, recovery activities.

Now more than ever, we need to rethink the way we look at education, introducing new learning ways and encouraging lifelong learning from 5 to 50. There may be various approaches to reflecting sustainable issues in higher education, not only within curricula and research activities. Yet, there should be a discussion on the holistic role of higher education, on relevant policies including adequate incentives and assessment instruments.



Sandrine Dixson Declève

“We need to review the whole education system, from problem-solving to facilitating the leaders of tomorrow”.

Find the full Keynote speech on youtube

○ PARALLEL INTERACTIVE SESSIONS

We had eight parallel sessions covering the five pillars of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, people, planet, peace, prosperity, and partnership during the first day. By sharing good practices, attendees could learn and understand deeply how other organisations and institutions use professional higher education to create a change. We had the opportunity to listen to good practices from Armenia, Poland, Germany, Portugal and Estonia.

○ CULTURAL PROGRAMME

For the second time, we had the opportunity to listen to the resident Orchestra of the Polytechnic Institute of Porto performed different music pieces recorded exclusively for the EURASHE 30th Annual Conference.

○ PANEL DISCUSSION: Professional Higher Education for a smart a sustainable recovery

Speakers

Celia Reis, CEO and Executive Board Member at Altran Portugal

Jon Altuna, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Mondragon University, Spain

Jiří Nantl, Deputy Governor, South Moravia Region, Czech Republic

Armando Pires, President of EURASHE

Thomas Berger, Representative from the Hessen Ministry for Science and Art, Germany

Horizon Europe is the best opportunity to create synergies between academia and industry. Society needs better and faster integration between higher education institutions and industry involving co-design, development, flexibility and technology acceleration.

The EU Green Deal is creating new jobs and new skills; therefore, a smart specialisation strategy based on the labour market skills is more necessary than ever.

Inclusiveness is a crucial factor in the smart and sustainable recovery of the regions; no regions or institutions should be left behind. Cooperation and learning from each other is fundamental to overcome new challenges.

Society should reflect on the new challenges that the pandemic has brought. Disruptive innovation and flexibility are vital elements to deal with it. Professional Higher Education is playing a pivotal role in the recovery as well as in the regional development.

MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE DAY

- PHE can play a substantial role in triple helix collaboration at the city and region level
- Need to play into and support city and regional strategies for sustainable economic development – from GDP to doughnut (Kate Raworth) – respecting limits to growth (Club of Rome 1972)
- Systems perspective – shift from the economy as a machine to that of an organism – ‘from a spanner to secateurs’
- PHE can build the skills needed to deliver the EU’s Green Deal

○ CLOSING CEREMONY

The closing ceremony of the EURASHE 30th Annual conference welcomed Armando Pires as the new President of EURASHE for the next two-year mandate and appreciated the contribution of office holders whose mandates have finished – Stéphane Lauwick, EURASHE President and Michal Karpisek, the Secretary General over many last years.

The conference closing ceremony ended with the announcement of the next EURASHE Annual Conference, which will take place on 23 – 24 May 2022 in Brussels, Belgium and will be hosted by EURASHE Belgian members from the French-speaking community, EPHEC and ARES (académie de recherche et d’enseignement supérieur).



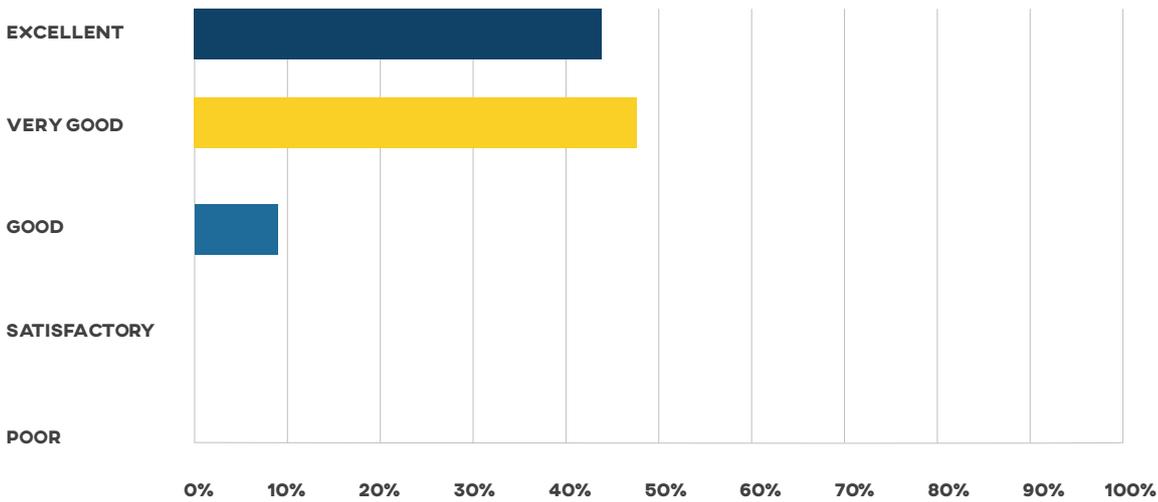


CONFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

CONFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

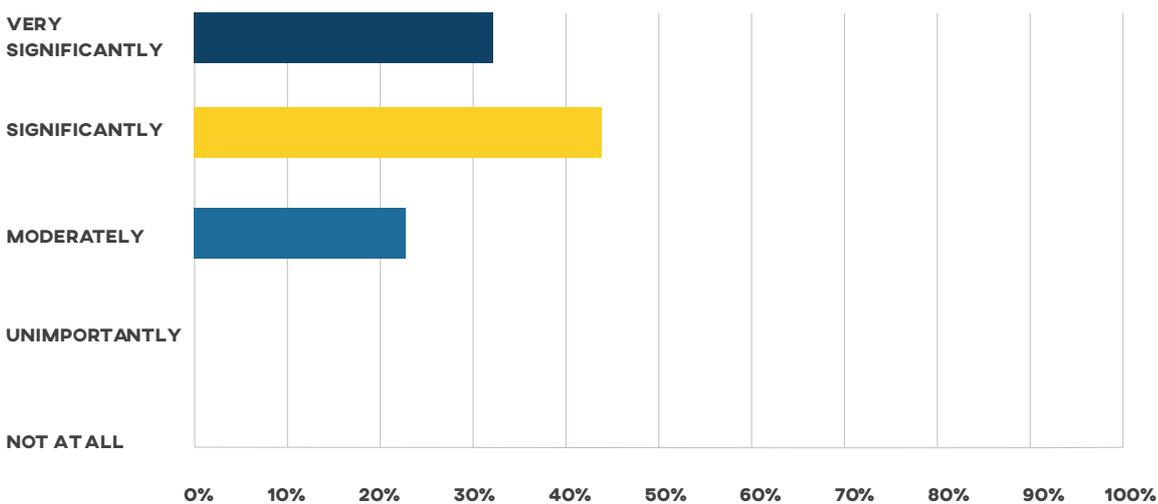
After the conference EURASHE conducted a survey, to know the opinion of the participants. In this case, EURASHE received almost 60 answers. EURASHE will take the answers into account to improve future events and conferences.

48% of the participants think that the overall assessment of the event was very good, while 42% thought it was excellent.



90% of the participants responded that they would definitively recommend this conference to their friends and colleagues.

Almost 75% of the participants answered that they would significantly and very significantly use the information obtained during the conference in their professional life.



Overall, the survey results showed that participants enjoyed the 30th EURASHE conference and learnt to apply it further in their professional lives. Regarding the sessions, most of the participants enjoyed the Keynote speeches and panel discussions the most. Others commented that parallel sessions were very insightful to learn more about what other European Institutions were doing.

Many thanks to all the participants and attendees for contributing to improving EURASHE events and conferences!

Joseph Ryan

Jon Altuna

Thomas Berger

Jon Knoll

CELIA REIS

