

23 - 24 May, 2022 | Brussels, Belgium

# EURASHE 31ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE NEXT GENERATION PHE

Skills relevance, Inclusion, Digitalisation and Innovation

## CONFERENCE REPORT



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EURASHE and its members ARES and EPHEC, and with the support of the Wallonia Brussels Federation, organised its 31st Annual Conference, 'Next Generation PHE: Skills relevance, Inclusion, Digitalisation and Innovation', on 23-24 of May 2022. It was held at the EPHEC campus in Brussels, Belgium and the plenary sessions were simultaneously streamed to an online audience.

After a year of uncertainty, NEXT GENERATION PHE discussed the big issues facing Europe as it emerges from the Covid Pandemic – How can we 'build back better' and how can Professional Higher Education (PHE) support this collective endeavour?

The Conference was held in the EU's capital and focused on policy, demonstrating the relevance of EURASHE to the European Commission's policy priorities, including key initiatives such as the Future of European Universities, the New Skills Agenda, and Mission-oriented R&I and Smart Specialisation.

Moreover, during the 2022 European Year of Youth, EURASHE invited ten students from all around Europe to come to Brussels and participate in the Conference. Putting young people and students in the centre of the discussions is vital since they will be the most impacted by what we do today.

With more than 180 participants, and 90 speakers, including keynote speakers, parallel session speakers, panel discussion speakers and poster presenters, the two-day Conference offered an excellent opportunity to meet like-minded people.

If you missed the event and want to see all the recordings, you will find them in the [Conference App](#).

# AGENDA



## DAY 1 | 23 MAY

**09:00-09:30 REGISTRATION & WELCOME COFFEE**

**09:30-10:00 OPENING SESSION**

**Pierre-Yves Jeholet** | Government of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels  
**Armando Pires** | EURASHE  
**Emmanuelle Havrenne** | Haute École EPHEC  
**Laurent Despy** | Academy for Research and Higher Education - ARES  
**Mariya Gabriel** | European Commission

**10:00-10:30 KEYNOTE SPEECH**

**Implementing the European Skills Agenda**  
**Antoine Kasel** | European Commission

**10:30-11:00 KEYNOTE SPEECH**

**The role of Universities of Applied Science in building the European Research and Innovation Areas**  
**Luciana Vaccaro** | Haute École spécialisée de Suisse occidentale

**11:00-11:30 COFFEE BREAK**

**11:30-12:15 BREAKOUT SESSIONS I**

**12:15-13:00 GOOD PRACTICES I**

**13:00-14:15 LUNCH BREAK // POSTERS & NETWORKING**

**14:15-15:00 PANEL DISCUSSION**

**Future skills for the European Green Deal**

Moderation by Ulf-Daniel Ehlers

**Chiara Riondino** | European Commission

**Aitor Lizartza** | Mondragon University

**Maxime Cerutti** | BusinessEurope

**Emma Furlan** | Paris 1 Pantheon Sorbonne

**15:00-15:45 BREAKOUT SESSIONS II**

**15:45-16:00 COFFEE BREAK**

**16:00-16:45 PANEL DISCUSSION**

**Implementing the Digital Education Plan**

Moderation by John Edwards

**Ivana Juraga** | European Commission

**Saskia Van Uffelen** | Inetum

**Abdullatif AlShamsi** | Higher Colleges of Technology

**Niklas Sillander** | Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences

**16:45-17:30 ALLIANCES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN  
EDUCATION AREA**

**European Universities: Coordination, opportunities,  
and challenges**

Moderation by Michal Karpisek

**Tine Delva** | European Commission

**Ana Tecilazić** | Alegra University College

**Hannes Raffaseder** | UAS St Pölten & EUDRES Alliance

**Ana Sargento** | Politécnico de Leiria & RUN-EU Alliance

**19:00 GALA DINNER**

## DAY 2 | 24 MAY

**08:45-9:15 REGISTRATION & WELCOME COFFEE**

**09:15-09:30 EURASHE AND THE STAND BY YOUTH INITIATIVE**

**Andrew Paterson** | OECD

**John Edwards** | EURASHE

**Roosa Veijola** | SAMOK

**09:30-10:00 KEYNOTE SPEECH**

**Mapping Professional Tertiary Education**

**Viktoria Kis** | OECD

**10:00-10:45 BREAKOUT SESSIONS III**

**10:45-11:15 COFFEE BREAK**

**11:15-12:00 GOOD PRACTICES II**

**12:00-13:00 POLICY ROUNDTABLE**

**Place-based Research & Innovation**

Moderation by Nijolė Zinkevičienė

**Xabier Goenaga** | European Commission

**Tomislav Pinter** | European Commission

**Manuel Aleixo** | European Commission

**Ingrid Rigler** | European Commission

**13:00-14:15 LUNCH BREAK // POSTERS & NETWORKING**

**14:15-15:00 ALLIANCES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN  
EDUCATION AREA**

**Centres of Vocational Excellence: Raising the bar in VET**

Moderation by Iñigo Araiztegui

**João Santos** | European Commission

**Henriette Hansen** | South Denmark European Office & EUVECO

**Bojan Jovanovski** | FH Joanneum

**Adrijana Hodak** | Intercompany training centre & TalentJourney

**15:00-15:45 CLOSING SESSION**

**PHE Star Awards Ceremony, wrap up and invitation  
to the 32nd Annual Conference**

**Stéphane Lauwick** | Chair of Programme Committee

**Adam Gajek** | EUROCHAMBRES

**Armando Pires** | EURASHE

**Mihnea Costoiu** | University Politehnica of Bucharest



# DAY 1





## OPENING SESSION

Speakers: **Pierre-Yves Jeholet** - Government of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels, **Armando Pires** - EURASHE, **Emmanuelle Havrenne** - Haute École EPHEC, **Laurent Despy** - Academy for Research and Higher Education - ARES, **Mariya Gabriel** - European Commission.

On Monday, 23 May, the Conference started with welcoming words from Pierre- Yves Jeholet (Minister-President of the Government of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels). He stressed that innovation is crucial for higher education institutions to remain relevant and competitive. He also underlined that the unexpected Covid pandemic has showed us how vulnerable society can be to changes and his belief that digitalisation and innovation are vital to overcoming the crisis.

EURASHE president Armando Pires also had some words for the audience during the opening ceremony, where he spoke about the record-breaking numbers of the Conference and its main objective to reflect on the role of PHE in the EU's Recovery and Resilience Plans. His speech was followed by Emmanuelle Havrenne (Vice-Chancellor and Managing Director of Haute École EPHEC), who explained the purpose of EPHEC and how it prepares students for the labour market. The covid pandemic has helped them question themselves proactively and identify areas to further improve. Laurent Despy (Administrator of ARES), talked shortly about the importance of organisation and mentioned three keywords: Quality, diversity and openness.

To close the opening session, Mariya Gabriel (European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth) sent an important message to the Conference, addressing the importance of creating problem solvers, resilient people who will solve future challenges. The Commissioner believes firmly that PHE is a crucial element in facing the upcoming challenges.

## KEYNOTE SPEECH - ANTOINE KASEL

### IMPLEMENTING THE EUROPEAN SKILLS AGENDA



*“Upskilling and reskilling have become more relevant than ever, and the involvement of different actors is the cornerstone of successfully implementing the skills agenda.”*

Antoine Kasel (Head of Cabinet of European Commissioner Nicolas Schmit), started his speech by talking about the European Skills Agenda and how this plan addresses today's challenges, especially in terms of upskilling and reskilling. The key objective is to strive for a Social Europe. The EU leaders have welcomed three ambitious targets to achieve by 2030: more and better jobs, skills and equality, and poverty reduction. The European Skills Agenda is a crucial factor in helping achieve those objectives and put into action the first principle of the European Social Rights pillar, which is that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education. He also addressed the importance of higher professional and vocational education, playing a key role in upskilling graduates and offering skills-adapted curricula to the labour market needs.

## KEYNOTE SPEECH - LUCIANA VACCARO

### THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN BUILDING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH & INNOVATION AREA

*“The regions that have Universities of Applied Sciences have developed much better.”*



Luciana Vaccaro (Rector of the Haute École Spécialisée de Suisse Occidentale and Chair of UAS4Europe) spoke about the diversity of Universities of Applied Sciences. She addressed the vulnerability of societies to the crisis but also the importance of working together to overcome future challenges. The main goal of Universities of Applied Sciences is to empower students to acquire relevant skills. In Switzerland, data shows regions with Universities of Applied Sciences are more innovative thanks to their close ties with companies. These partnerships, supported by the public funds, are a very successful way to establish practical cooperation between education and the private sector resulting in what the European economy needs – innovation.



## PANEL DISCUSSION

### FUTURE SKILLS FOR THE EUROPEAN GREEN

Speakers: **Chiara Rioldino** - European Commission, **Aitor Lizartza** - Mondragon University, **Maxime Cerutti** - BusinessEurope, **Emma Furlan** - Paris 1 Pantheon Sorbonne. Moderated by Ulf-Daniel Ehlers.

During the first panel discussion, speakers discussed how to help students acquire future skills to face the challenges of tomorrow. According to the speakers, the essential future skills are; cooperation, adopting new Information and Communication Technologies, labour market relevance and vision-oriented people. PHE institutions should be more labour market-relevant, fostering collaboration between institutions and businesses.

One of the most significant challenges society faces nowadays is the speed of change, experts keep talking about the skills of the future. Still, the focus should be on the present since many of these challenges are affecting society already.

The European Commission is still researching the topic, while businesses are doing their best to apply new processes and materials to be ready for climate change and a greener economy. One of the conclusions was to ensure that the green transition would not be too much of a surprise, as digitalisation came unexpectedly and rapidly during the COVID crisis, where after years of discussion, society had to undergo a sudden acceleration of digitalisation.



## PANEL DISCUSSION

### IMPLEMENTING THE DIGITAL EDUCATION ACTION

Speakers: **Ivana Juraga** - European Commission, **Saskia Van Uffelen** - Inetum, **Abdullatif AlShamsi** - Higher Colleges of Technology, **Niklas Sillander** - Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences. Moderated by John Edwards.

It is more than a year after the Digital Education Action Plan was adopted, and in this session, the European Commission outlined how it is being implemented. Digital education is becoming increasingly essential and is very high on the political agenda everywhere. The recovery and resilience plans include a large number of funds for infrastructure, teaching training, and online content, all related to digital education skills. The Commission has been very busy working on an expert group developing guidelines for teachers, focused on artificial intelligence, disinformation, and digital literacy.

Speakers also underlined the critical role students play in the process. Listening to students and putting the students in the centre is crucial to making everything work; they are the most vital stakeholders in any plan. It is essential to let students know their study phase won't be over when they get a diploma and that they will need to become lifelong learners to adapt to the labour market.

## ALLIANCES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA

### EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES | COORDINATION, OPPORTUNITIES

Speakers: **Tine Delva** - European Commission, **Ana Tecilazić** - Alegbra University, **Hannes Raffaseder** - UAS St Pölten & EUDRES Alliance College, **Ana Sargento** - Politécnico de Leiria & RUN-EU Alliance. Moderated by Michal Karpisek.

During the discussion, the speakers talked about the local and global benefits of the European Universities Alliances and the need to go further on educational cooperation across borders. This initiative is a long-term vision for the Commission, so partner institutions can work together and build bridges. European Universities are already working together on approaches to face societal challenges. The role of PHE in the initiative is crucial because of the link between the world of work and regional development. The Alliances offer a perspective of long-term cooperation, an opportunity for smaller HEIs to connect to wider European networks and bring their regions closer to the idea of Europe. There is an urgent need to build these alliances and find new partners.

The panel also stressed that delivering inclusive and mobility activities focused on the student is essential, making them active citizens to preserve the European values and principles.



DAY 2

## EURASHE & STAND BY YOUTH INITIATIVE

Speakers: **Andrew Paterson** - OECD, **John Edwards** - EURASHE, **Roosa Veijola** - SAMOK.

*“We still have high hopes in the most educated generation in history, the one that will lead us in the fight against climate change and the digital transition”*  
– Andrew Paterson.



The Stand By Youth Initiative aims to support and encourage businesses to help youth through the crisis and beyond by raising awareness, sharing good practices, and hosting events to build a broader coalition of like-minded companies.

This generation is the most educated; there are young people with extraordinary potential that society can't afford to lose. The OECD has worked with governments since the beginning of the crisis to support young people and improve their opportunities. The initiative was launched on 8 July 2021, and companies have been invited to take part in a Call to Action, asking them to do more to boost mentoring and training for young people.

## KEYNOTE SPEECH - VIKTORIA KIS

### MAPPING PROFESSIONAL TERTIARY EDUCATION



*“Certainly, all higher education programmes are academic; in the sense that they involve high-level learning and teaching intellectually.”*

The last Keynote speech of the Conference, given by Viktoria Kis from the OECD, addressed the problems of existing data on professional education and the diversity of the short-cycle tertiary programmes. Kis presented an OECD report analysing the data gaps between theoretical and professionally focused education programmes.

Given the data, the report points out that all higher education programmes are academic and professionalising at different levels, making these classifications misleading parameters when recollecting international data. For this reason, a new classification is proposed only based on the professional dimensions of education programmes

## POLICY ROUNDTABLE

### PLACE-BASED RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Speakers: **Xabier Goenaga** - European Commission, **Tomislav Pinter** - European Commission, **Manuel Aleixo** - European Commission, **Ingrid Rigler** | European Commission. Moderated by Nijolė Zinkevičienė.

During this policy roundtable, the speakers shared their insights on the role of policy in research and innovation areas while giving perspectives from different European Commission directorates.

All speakers stressed how education programmes could boost new talents and skills; thus, research and innovation are regionally focused. Higher education institutions have a significant role when applying and monitoring Smart Specialisation Strategies, positively influencing the territories they are in. For this purpose, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology operates within particular fields and from an entrepreneurial mindset, turning research results into concrete innovations via start-ups.

At the same time, other European Commission programmes focus on more extensive territories, such as the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon Europe, creating partnerships between regions from different countries to raise the level of R&I.

## ALLIANCES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN EDUCATION AREA

### CENTRES OF VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE | RAISING THE BAR IN VET

Speakers: **João Santos** - European Commission, **Henriette Hansen** - South Denmark European Office & EUVECO, **Bojan Jovanovski** - FH Joanneum, **Adrijana Hodak** - Intercompany training centre & TalentJourney. Moderated by Iñigo Araiztegui.

The second session of Alliances within the European Education Area started presenting the European Commission initiative on Centres of Vocational Excellence, highlighting the role of universities in the strategic development of regions.

Vocational Education and Training centres are significant actors both on the local and global scale since they reinforce research and innovation within the region and create international networks of collaboration that can innovate in digitalisation and face climate change. The speakers emphasised the importance of VET centres as facilitators of the diversity of skills and professions needed for a constantly evolving labour market. Even though VET centres have minor notoriety compared to other higher education institutions, their impact on a local scale and international collaborations proposed by this initiative can show their significant role in the upcoming years.





## CLOSING SESSION

Speakers: **Stéphane Lauwick** - Chair of Programme Committee, **Adam Gajek** - EUROCHAMBRES, **Armando Pires** - EURASHE, **Mihnea Costoiu** - University Politehnica of Bucharest.

*"I truly hope this event has enabled us to bounce back after the last two difficult years and that we can start reinforcing our cooperation" - Armando Pires.*



The closing ceremony aimed to give closure to the event and thank participants, contributors and speakers for joining EURASHE on its most important event of the year and for their commitment to Professional Higher Education.

The PHE Star Awards, hosted by Stéphane Lauwick, awarded the most remarkable good practices in Skills relevance, Inclusion, Digitalisation and Innovation.

The closing session continued with the conference wrap-up by Adam Gajek, highlighting the key messages of the event and the announcement of the EURASHE 32nd Annual Conference, which will take place in Romania and be organised in collaboration with the University Politehnica of Bucharest.



Watch the conference wrap-up

# THANK YOU!