



# NEWSLETTER 4/2025

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## FROM THE EUCEET ASSOCIATION

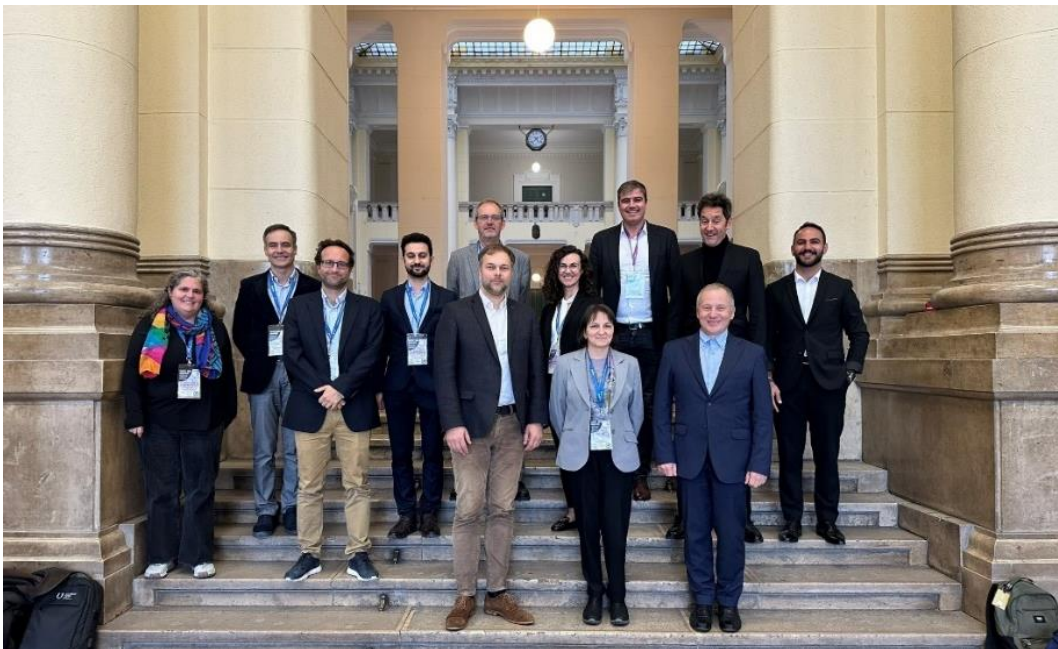
### Brief report of the 2025 EUCEET Association General Assembly

The 18<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the EUCEET Association took place on **Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025** in Budapest from **15.00-17.00** kindly hosted by the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) and was attended by 13 people, representing 11 institutions, members of the Association, from 8 countries.

During the meeting, discussions covered matters related to the activities of the Association, between the 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly held on October 18, 2024, in Paris, and October 17, 2025 and were outlined and defined directions for the Association's activities in 2026.

The main objectives of the Association for the year 2026 was established:

- To increase the membership - it is the duty of each member of AC;
- To decide in the spring of 2026 the date, location, and theme for the EUCEET Association 2027 conference;
- To issue a new call for the EUCEET Educational Award 2027 and encourage members to participate and promote this activity;
- To maintain and develop the association's LinkedIn account and website;
- To publish an EUCEET Newsletter every three months, primarily based on contributions from members.



Group photo with the participants at the 18<sup>th</sup> General Assembly 2025



## 2025 EUCEET Association Award for excellence in teaching in civil engineering

After the opening of the EUCEET 2025 Budapest conference “*Teaching Gen Z Civil Engineers*” the 2025 EUCEET Award for excellence in teaching in civil engineering was officially presented to Prof. Alfonso Rodríguez Dono for his teaching initiative, entitled “*Engineering Education for a Sustainable Future: Confronting Environmental Challenges*”.



Photo taken at the EUCEET Excellence in Teaching award ceremony  
Alfonso Rodríguez Dono (Middle, the winner),  
Šarūnas Skuodis (left - EUCEET, President),  
Thibaut Skrzypek (right - EUCEET, General secretary)

More information on the EUCEET Teaching Award can be found [here](#).

**Brief report about 2025 EUCEET Association Conference in Budapest, Hungary**

 Theme: Teaching Gen Z Civil Engineers

 Venue: Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Hungary

 Date: **16-18 October, 2025**



The poster features a central circular image of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) main building at night, illuminated with blue and yellow lights. The background is a mix of blue and yellow with decorative patterns of dots and stars.

**EUCEET 2025 BUDAPEST**  
 European Civil Engineering Education and Training Association Conference  
**TEACHING GEN Z CIVIL ENGINEERS**

Supported by **SEFI** and **EELISA European University**  
 MŰEGYETEM 1782

**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

- Ana Rivas Álvarez  
 25 Years of Project-Based Learning in Civil Engineering Education: Transforming Student Development at the University of Castilla-La Mancha
- Enikő Bereczki  
 Understanding Generation Z: Challenges and Opportunities in Education
- Sofie Craps  
 Empowering Tomorrow's Engineers: Building Identity and Competence in Gen Z
- Emanuela Tilley  
 Interdisciplinarity in Civil Engineering
- Giulia Sonetti  
 Beyond Technocentrism: Fostering Inner Transformation in Engineering Education for Sustainability

**Details & Registration:** 

**OCTOBER 16-18 2025**  
 BUDAPEST / HUNGARY  
 BME MAIN BUILDING  
**ONSITE EVENT**  
 EUCEET2025@EMK.BME.HU

[HTTPS://EUCEET2025CONFERENCE.BME.HU](https://euceet2025conference.bme.hu)

## Conference Programme

Thursday, Oct 16 2025, Building K, Ceremonial Hall

### Agenda – Day 1

- 9:00 – 10:00**     **Registration – Morning Coffee**
- 10:00 – 11:30**     **Session I.**  
*Tamás Lovas and Šarūnas Skuodis - Welcome speeches*  
**Keynote & Q&A: Enikő Bereczki-Fodor – Understanding Generation Z: Challenges and Opportunities in Education**  
*Keynote & Q&A: Alan Kwan – From Z to Alpha: looking round the corner in Engineering education*
- 11:30 –12:00**     **Coffee Break**
- 12:00 –13:00**     **Session II.**  
*Šarūnas Skuodis – Improving Student Engagement in Civil Engineering Studies*  
*Ross Higgins – Examination of Students’ Perceptions of the Efficacy of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Structural Engineering Education*  
*Declan Phillips – Interviews as an Authentic form of Assessment and Learning in the Era of Artificial Intelligence*  
*Balázs Nagy – Teaching transversal competences in civil engineering education*
- 13:00 –14:30**     **Lunch Break (On-site)**
- 14:30 – 16:00**     **Session III.**  
**Keynote & Q&A: Sofie Craps – Empowering Tomorrow’s Engineers: Building Identity and Competence in Gen Z**  
*Kitti Ajtayné Károlyfi – Implementing BIM and Project-Based Education in Architectural and Civil Engineering Curricula: Experiences from Széchenyi István University*  
*Rita Sassine – Integration of PBL into the Gen Z Civil Engineering Curriculum*  
*José Antonio Lozano Galant – Enhancing Civil Engineering Education through PBL: Insights from a National Wooden Bridge Design and Construction Competition*  
*Acacia Naves – Evolution of civil engineering degrees in Spain up to the present and on-going changes at the Civil Engineering School of A Coruña.*
- 16:00 –16:30**     **Coffee Break**
- 19:00 – 22:00**     **Gala Dinner**

Friday, Oct 17 2025, Building K, Ceremonial Hall

## Agenda – Day 2

- 8:30 – 9:00**      **Registration – Morning Coffee**
- 9:00 – 10:10**    **Session IV.**  
*Keynote & Q&A: Emanuela Tilley – Beyond Blueprints: The Case for Interdisciplinarity within Civil Engineering Curricula*  
*Keynote & Q&A: Giulia Sonetti – Beyond Technocentrism: Fostering Inner Transformation in Engineering Education for Sustainability*
- 10:10 – 10:30**    **Coffee Break**
- 10:30 – 11:30**    **Session V**  
*Milad Komary – Enhancing STEAM Education in Engineering Through the Integration of AI and Smartphone Technology in Teaching Practices*  
*Šarūnas Skuodis – Housing Decarbonisation Skills for Climate, Health and Jobs*  
*Chafic Achour – 3D Scanning for Optimized Historic Building Restoration*  
*Jorge Collao – Enhancing Structural Analysis Education Through BIM Visual Programming*
- 11:30 – 13:00**    **Lunch Break (On-site)**
- 13:00 – 14:10**    **Session VI.**  
*Primož Jelušič – Optimization in geotechnical engineering: key topics and practical tools*  
*Paulo Cachim – Learning Sustainable Construction Principles by Building a Learning-Game*  
*Seyedmilad Komarizadehasl – Bridging Innovation and Resilience through the NORISK Erasmus Mundus Program in European Civil Infrastructure Education*  
*Katerina Kovarova – Geological gastronomy - a possible way of explaining geological processes for civil engineering students*  
*Šarūnas Skuodis – Closing words*
- 14:10 – 15:00**    **Coffee Break**
- 15:00 – 17:00**    **General Assembly**
- Day 3 - 18 Oct**    **On Day 3, optional tour will be offered, further details will be shared later.**

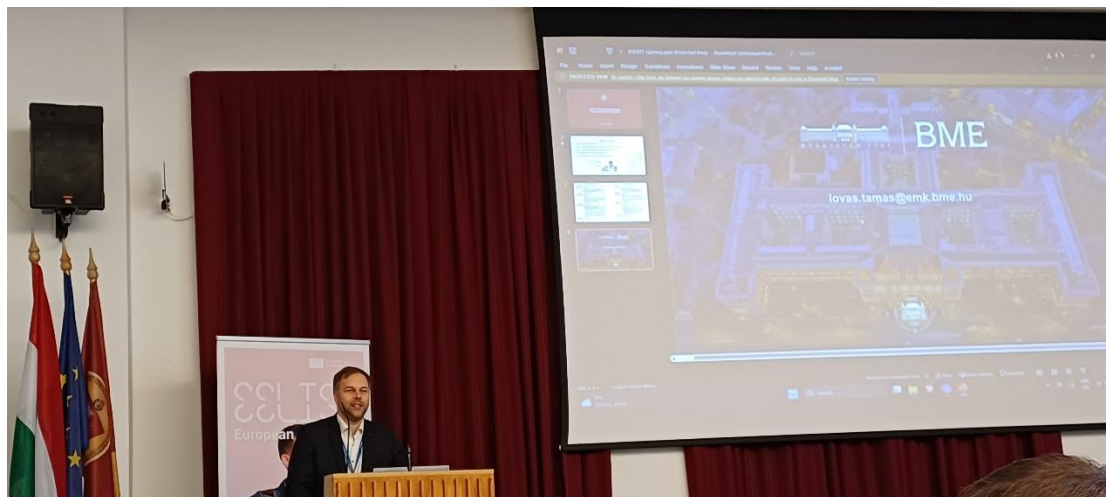


BUDAPEST UNIVERSITY  
OF TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMICS



The [Budapest EUCEET 2025 Conference](#) opened in the Ceremonial Hall of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) was a huge success, with over 60 participants, including PhD and MSc students. Several other organizations were also represented at the conference, including the president of SEFI, who participated and gave a presentation. Representatives from AECEF, the EELISA alliance and the director of the Digital Twins for Infrastructures and Cities master's programme were also in attendance.

**Tamás Lovas** (EUCEET, Vice-President) and **Šarūnas Skuodis** (EUCEET, President) addressed a warm welcome to participants from across Europe. Their remarks highlighted a shared dedication to revitalizing civil engineering education through collaboration, innovation, and empathy. Both speakers underscored that the next generation of engineers must be prepared not only with technical proficiency but also with adaptability, critical thinking, and social consciousness.



Tamás Lovas also presented the EELISA university alliance, which supports the conference and of which BME is an active and proud member, as well as the [Digital Twins for Infrastructure and Cities master's program](#), now in its third year, in which BME participates in collaboration with four other EELISA partners, using an innovative blended learning teaching methodology.



The conference activities were organized into **6 technical sessions**.

**Four lectures** were delivered in the programme of the conference:



**Enikő Bereczki-Fodor**

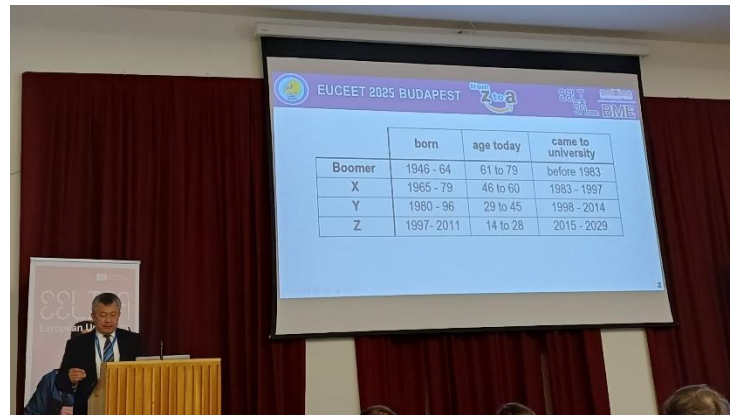
(Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, Budapest, Hungary, Ph.D. in Education Science)

*“Understanding Generation Z: Challenges and Opportunities in Education”*



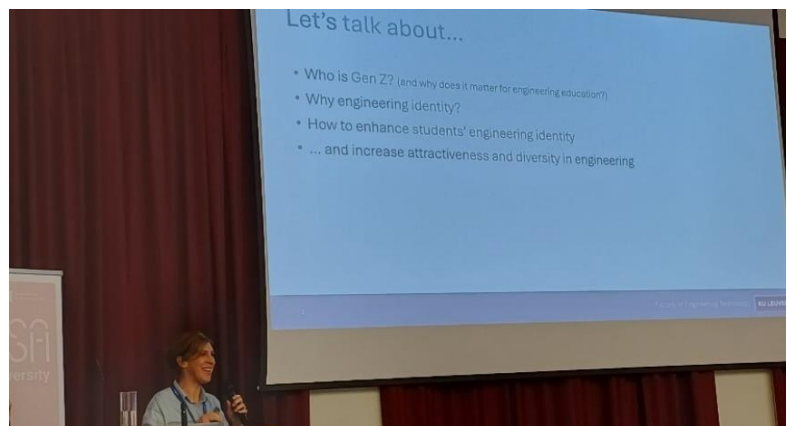
**Alan Kwan** (Cardiff University, UK)

“From Z to Alpha: Looking Round the Corner in Engineering Education”



**Sofie Craps** (KU Leuven, Belgium)

“Empowering Tomorrow’s Engineers: Building Identity and Competence in Gen Z”



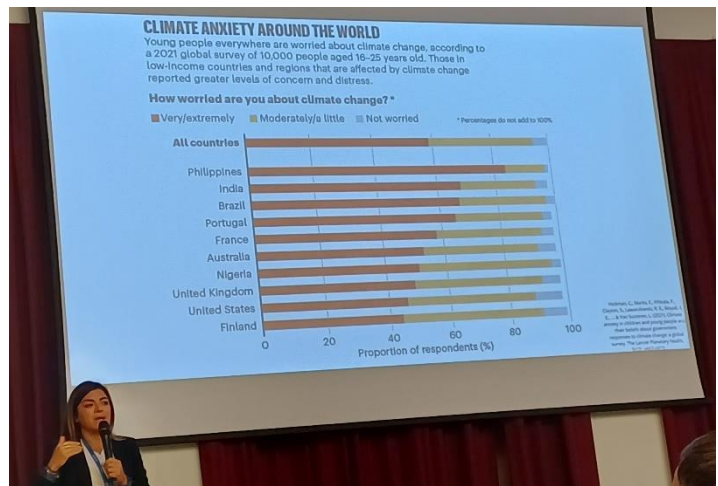
**Emanuela Tilley** (University College London, UK)

*“Beyond Blueprints: The Case for Interdisciplinarity within Civil Engineering Curricula”*



**Giulia Sonetti** (Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya)

*“Beyond Technocentrism: Fostering Inner Transformation in Engineering Education for Sustainability”*





Attendees on Day 1



Attendees on Day 2

On the third day of the conference, participants visited the József Gruber Reservoir, located near the Budapest University of Technology and Economics on Gellért Hill.



Photos taken at the József Gruber Reservoir

More information: <https://euceet2025conference.bme.hu/>

## 2026 EUCEET Association General Assembly

The 19<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the EUCEET Association will take place in Riga, Latvia, on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025, kindly hosted by the Riga Technical University (RTU).

Time	Activity	Venue
<b>Thursday October 8th, 2026</b>		
15:00 - 17:00	Administrative Council	(room will be specified)
19:00	Dinner	place will be specified
<b>Friday October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026</b>		
10:00 - 12:00	EUCEET General Assembly	Riga, Kipsalas street 6A (room will be specified)
12:00 - 12:30	Coffee break	Riga, Kipsalas street 6A (room will be specified)
12:30 - 14:00	RTU Laboratory tour	Riga Technical University

### About Riga Technical University



Riga Technical University (RTU) is the oldest technical university in the Baltic states and the recognised Latvian leader in higher education. For more than 160 years, RTU has been driving innovation and research excellence in the Baltic region, continuing to shape new generations of skilled, visionary, and ambitious leaders in the fields of science and technology. It is the only polytechnic university in Latvia and the largest university in the country – it educates and trains almost 15 thousand students.

RTU is focused on becoming a third-generation university that not only provides high quality education, but also conducts advanced research and ensures innovation and technology transfer, practically implementing scientific discoveries. In the faculties of RTU it is possible to obtain high quality education not only in engineering, but also in social sciences and humanities.



Study programs implemented by RTU have been positively evaluated by international experts and are officially accredited. RTU is constantly developing its infrastructure by constructing a campus on Ķīpsala Island. On completion, the campus will be the most advanced engineering study centre in the Baltic Region.

**RTU FACTS & FIGURES**

# KNOW MORE, DO MORE

**8 AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS**

**Faculty of Civil and Mechanical Engineering**  
 • Offers programmes in civil, mechanical, and industrial engineering, integrating theoretical learning and hands-on practice to prepare students for careers in construction, transportation, mechanical engineering, and infrastructure development.

**Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology**  
 • Provides education in chemistry, chemical technology, materials, biotechnology, and environmental engineering - areas that are among the most important research fields of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, addressing global challenges impacting humanity's future survival.

**Faculty of Computer Science, Information Technology and Energy**  
 • Offers programmes in the fields of computer science, telecommunications, energy and electrical engineering, and digital humanities, implementing advanced high-tech solutions and emphasising a cross-disciplinary approach across various high-demand fields.

**Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management**  
 • Offers studies in the fields of business management, human resources, real estate, logistics, and finance, with a focus on proactive industry collaboration and the advancement of both national and global economies.

**Institute of Architecture and Design**  
 • A centre dedicated to shaping the future of architecture, offering professional qualifications and specialisations in spatial planning, restoration, interior design, and landscape architecture.

**RTU Latvian Maritime Academy**  
 • Rooted in centuries-long Latvian seafaring traditions, the academy prepares highly skilled and sought-after maritime professionals through strong industry partnerships and comprehensive practical training in technology, management, safety, and sustainability.

**RTU Liepaja Academy**  
 • Located in the scenic seaside city of Liepaja, this campus offers a diverse selection of STEM and humanities programmes alike, providing a broad spectrum of career options in the fields of IT, education, media, linguistics, and arts.

**Riga Business School**  
 • In partnership with the State University of New York (USA), BI Norwegian Business School (Norway), and the University of Ottawa (Canada), RBS is the only school in the Baltics offering North American-style MBA programmes, preparing students for leadership roles in a technology-driven world.

13 760 students	8808 men 4952 women	253 professors and associate professors	538 researchers and leading researchers
Over 170 000 graduates	163 study programmes	165 lecturers and assistants	186 scientific assistants

Founded in 1862, Riga Technical University (RTU) is a well-established university that boasts the most comprehensive international university environment in Latvia. International Cooperation Department offers to acquire study programmes in engineering and social sciences at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral level in English to international students.

International institutional collaboration is one of the main core elements of the RTU development strategy. Based on a wide network of partner institutions abroad and participation in international organizations and networks, RTU implements academic and scientific collaboration, facilitates the mobility of students and staff, fosters knowledge exchange and participation in the world's leading research centres.

More information: <https://www.rtu.lv/en>

## FROM MEMBERS



### École nationale des ponts et chaussées, France

Prof. Thibaut SKRZYPEK, General Secretary of EUCET Association sent the following news of interest for members of EUCEET Association:

#### **Carbon Neutrality Strategy International Conference**

16 February, 2025



#### **This international web conference aims to:**

- At the country and NGO level: understand the environmental challenges specific to each country and identify strategic development priorities; analyze the current regulatory framework; identify economic levers to accelerate implementation.
- At the project level: assess solutions that combine sustainability across the entire life cycle of the structure, environmental performance, accessibility and cost; compare methods for evaluating and monitoring performance.

The program will feature representatives from 15 countries (China, Germany, Quebec, USA, Morocco, Senegal, Uganda, Switzerland...) with the involvement of 31 high-level speakers.

To register for free: [click here!](#)

Videos from previous editions can be found on the [YouTube channel](#).

[Learn more about the MS IBD](#)

**REFLEXIONS 2026: Advancing Collective Action for Energy Transition****05 February, 2026**

Institut Polytechnique de Paris organises the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the REFLEXIONS conference, an [international scientific forum designed to address the most urgent energy challenges of our time](#), on February 5th, 2026, at École polytechnique. The event will be held in English.

**Strategic Stakes of REFLEXIONS 2026**

Through this conference, IP Paris seeks to promote science-based decision-making, cross-sector collaboration, and inclusive dialogue by bringing together engineers, industrial leaders, policymakers, researchers, and civil society. The objective is not only to generate ideas but also to mobilize collective intelligence to support meaningful action.

REFLEXIONS 2026 is structured around three central pillars, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the energy transition:

- **Energy Sustainability:** This pillar explores how to ensure the long-term environmental viability of energy systems. Participants will address issues such as resource depletion, climate impact, and pollution, and they will work together to identify solutions that reconcile energy access with the limits of the planet.
- **Energy Security:** Energy resilience is essential in an era marked by geopolitical uncertainty and supply chain fragility. This theme addresses the robustness of energy infrastructure, national and regional sovereignty over energy sources, and strategies to anticipate or respond to technological and geopolitical disruptions.
- **Energy Justice:** The energy transition must also be fair and inclusive. This pillar examines who benefits from energy systems, who bears their costs, and how governance frameworks can be made more representative. It invites participants to consider how historical inequalities might be addressed and how future systems can better support all communities.

Together, these three dimensions: sustainability, security, and justice, form a coherent and inclusive framework for reimagining global energy systems.

**Towards Collective Action**

REFLEXIONS 2026 is conceived not only as a conference but also as a catalyst for action. By creating a space where knowledge, expertise, and perspectives converge, IP Paris aims to help define pathways toward an energy future that is resilient, equitable, and sustainable.

All interested participants, including industrial innovators, policymakers, researchers, and civil society actors, are invited to join this important dialogue. Through shared commitment and interdisciplinary engagement, REFLEXIONS 2026 will contribute to shaping energy systems that meet today's needs without compromising the well-being of future generations.

**EELISA expands its horizons and signs a joint statement on enlargement**

01 December, 2025



[EELISA](#)'s governance took a decisive step during its meetings held last week at [Istanbul Technical University](#): the Alliance now welcomes two new associate partners, the [University of São Paulo](#) in Brazil and the [Technical University of Moldova](#) in the Republic of Moldova. Their integration marks a strategic milestone that accompanies the official presentation of EELISA's new enlargement policy and the signing of the joint declaration "*Expanding Horizons: EELISA's Commitment to Global Collaboration.*"

By joining EELISA, USP and UTM will help extend the scientific and geographical reach of the Alliance while benefiting from an ecosystem rich in opportunities for academic collaboration, knowledge exchange, and international visibility.

Founded in 1934 and ranked among the world's top universities, the University of São Paulo stands out for its academic excellence, scientific influence, and international partnerships.

The Technical University of Moldova, a leading institution in the fields of engineering, technology, and innovation, shares this ambition.

For Hasan Mandal, Rector of Istanbul Technical University and newly appointed President of the Governance Board, the entry of these two universities "*expands EELISA's scientific capacity and strengthens its ambition to develop transnational education, collaborative research, and tangible societal impact.*" Anthony Briant, outgoing co-president and Director of École nationale des ponts et chaussées, adds that this impact is also strategic at institutional and European levels: "*I have always been convinced that the European scale is the right dimension to assert our educational values and principles, and to enhance our attractiveness in comparison to other major world regions. Our new associate partners do more than validate this idea—they contribute in ways that complement and amplify our educational, societal, and ecological impact.*"



The joint declaration signed on this occasion formalizes this renewed commitment. It confirms EELISA's ambition to act beyond European borders by promoting multilateralism and the free circulation of knowledge, and by contributing to the emergence of a more cohesive, resilient, and open global academic community.

With this dual integration and a clear roadmap for the coming years, EELISA strengthens its position as a leading international alliance, ready to tackle the scientific, societal, and educational challenges of a transforming world.

[Read the full declaration](#)

## Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VILNIUS TECH), Lithuania



Assoc. Prof. dr. Šarūnas SKUODIS, EUCEET Association President and Director of Civil Engineering Research Centre, Vice dean of Civil Engineering Faculty at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, sent the following news of interest for members of EUCEET Association:

### **VILNIUS TECH Civil Engineering Science Center has purchased one of the most modern thermal analysis devices**

VILNIUS TECH's Civil Engineering Science Center (Lithuania, Vilnius) is stepping into a new era of innovation with the arrival of one of the most advanced simultaneous thermal analysis systems - technology that unlocks unprecedented precision in understanding material behavior, stability, and sustainability. Valued at €230,000, this state-of-the-art device integrates multiple analysis methods to

accelerate the development of next-generation composites, recycled materials, and energy-storage solutions, strengthening collaboration between science and industry. Together with recently acquired long-term reinforced-concrete testing equipment, the Center is rapidly expanding its research capabilities and contributing to smarter, safer, and more sustainable engineering.

Read more: <https://vilniustech.lt/about-university/news/the-civil-engineering-science-center-has-purchased-one-of-the-most-modern-thermal-analysis-devices/73472?nid=376337>

### **VILNIUS TECH Road Research Institute Scientists Recognized at the Prestigious “Baltic Road Awards”**

VILNIUS TECH’s Road Research Institute (Lithuania, Vilnius) has been honored at the *prestigious Baltic Road Awards* for pioneering scientific innovation in road engineering. Their long-term research introduced a sustainable solution for using non-hazardous ash and slag from municipal waste incineration in unbound road base layers - significantly reducing landfill waste and advancing circular economy practices. Presented at the International Baltic Road Conference, this achievement underscores the Institute’s leadership in developing practical, environmentally responsible infrastructure solutions that meet Lithuania’s and the EU’s climate goals.



Read more: <https://vilniustech.lt/about-university/news/news/vilnius-tech-road-research-institute-scientists-recognized-at-the-prestigious-baltic-road-awards/73477?nid=376350>

## Wroclaw University of Science and Technology, Poland



Wroclaw University  
of Science and Technology

### 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Wrocław University of Science and Technology

The year 2025 is a special time for the academic community – Faculty of Civil Engineering is celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary! It marks eight decades of tradition, innovation, and contribution to the development of structural engineering in Poland as well as internationally.

On this occasion, Prof. Piotr BERKOVSKI, former member of the Administrative Council of EUCEET Association, was celebrated during the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary festivities of Wrocław University of Science and Technology. The distinguished ceremony honored his significant contributions as a Board member, emphasizing his dedication and influential role in the university's development.





Photos taken at the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Faculty of Civil Engineering at Wrocław University of Science and Technology

More information: <https://80wbliw.pwr.edu.pl/>

## Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest – UTCB, Romania



### UTCB at the EU-CONEXUS Events in Valencia

21-23 October, 2025

UTCB participated on 21-23 October 2025 in a series of high-level EU-CONEXUS engagements hosted in Valencia, Spain, including:

- ◆ Transformative Research for Urban Coastal Sustainability Conference
- ◆ Management Board Meeting
- ◆ Strategic Workshop 2026–2030
- ◆ EU-CONEXUS ENABLES Workshop for Research Managers

Hosted by Universidad Católica de San Vicente Mártir [#UCV](#), the third edition of EU-CONEXUS Conference, titled '*Transformative Research for Urban Coastal Sustainability*', focuses on reimagining how coastal cities tackle their challenges. The meetings at this event brought together rectors, vice-rectors, council members, work-package leaders, and students to co-design the next phase of inter-institutional cooperation.

More than fifty representatives of the EU-CONEXUS European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability Alliance convened to advance a shared strategic agenda.

➡ Titled '*Transformative Research for Urban Coastal Sustainability*', this 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the EU-CONEXUS Conference focused on reimagining how coastal cities tackle their challenges. By integrating social, environmental, and economic dimensions, the conference aimed to foster innovative, collaborative solutions that transcend conventional approaches.

Our UTCB representatives actively participated with posters, while our colleagues, Cristiana Croitoru (Director of Doctoral School), Adriana Sumanaru and Bianca Mătășariu (International Relations Center representatives) facilitated workshops and held insightful presentations for the participants.

➡ The 2026–2030 Strategic Workshop signaled not only a planning horizon but also a renewed commitment to a stronger, more integrated, and more sustainable European University Alliance.



UTCB was proudly represented by: Ilinca Năstase, Valentina Manea, Raluca Ioana Grasu, Cristiana Croitoru, Felicia Alboiu, Anca Mărgineanu, Adriana Sumanaru, Bianca Mătășariu, Alexandru Trandafir, Andrei-Odey Kadhim, Bogdan Gheorghe, Cornelia Diac, Gabriel-Georgian Hojda, Paul Dancă, Raluca Ghențulescu, and Simona Șerban.

More information: <https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/eu-conexus-conference-2025/>

### **UTCB and EU-CONEXUS Strengthen Academic Outreach at Begin Edu Fair in Cairo 12 - 15 November, 2025**

From 12 to 15 November, 2025, UTCB joined ten Romanian universities at the **Begin Edu Fair in Cairo** in a series of promotional and collaborative activities aimed at increasing awareness of study opportunities in Romania. The programme was organised under the coordination of **UEFISCDI**, the **National Council of Rectors**, and the **#StudyInRomania** initiative.

The UTCB delegation consisted of **Cristian Rușanu**, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Engineering in Foreign Languages, and **Lavinia Turcu**, Interim Director of the International Relations Office and EU-CONEXUS Communication & External Relations Coordinator at UTCB. Their participation enabled high school students in Cairo, along with representatives of Egyptian educational institutions, to explore the academic opportunities offered by both UTCB and the EU-CONEXUS European University Alliance.

### Engagement and Collaboration Activities

Throughout the mission, representatives of Romanian higher education institutions took part in a range of activities designed to strengthen bilateral academic cooperation and enhance visibility in the region:

- **Meeting with the Ambassador of Romania to the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. Olivia Todorean** to address shared priorities, challenges, and sustainable approaches to deepening academic collaboration between Romania and Egypt.
- **Exchange of best practices with Prof. Dr Ezzat Samy Aziz**, focusing on student recruitment, international mobility, research cooperation, and opportunities for joint academic initiatives.
- **Participation in the Begin Group International Education Fair**, held at the InterContinental Citystars Cairo, where hundreds of prospective students received direct guidance regarding study programmes in Romania.
- **Visits to several leading high schools in Cairo**, offering students the opportunity to discover Romanian higher education pathways.
- **Thematic presentations** covering the structure of the Romanian higher education system, benefits for international students, and the unique advantages of Romanian academic programmes.
- **Networking sessions** with Egyptian partners and institutions interested in developing future collaborations.

### Impact and Strategic Importance

UTCB would like to express sincere gratitude to all organisers and institutional partners for their support, open dialogue, and the conducive framework provided for meaningful academic exchange.

These initiatives contribute significantly to the **internationalisation efforts** of Romanian universities and reinforce the shared EU-CONEXUS mission to promote global academic cooperation. By engaging with students, educators, and institutional partners in Egypt, the alliance strengthens its visibility, fosters new partnerships, and supports the development of sustainable, high-quality educational and research collaborations.



Photos taken at Begin Edu Fair in Cairo 2025

More information: <https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/2025/11/21/utcb-and-eu-conexus-strengthen-academic-outreach-at-begin-edu-fair-in-cairo/>

**UTCB International Staff Training Week 2026: Fostering Wellbeing in Student-Focused Roles****8-12 June, 2026****Sinaia, Romania**

Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest (UTCB) is pleased to launch the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the International Staff Training Week, organised as a Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) on the theme “Staff Wellbeing in Student-Focused Roles.”

This programme is dedicated to academic and administrative staff working closely with students—colleagues from International Relations Offices, Student Services, Counselling Centres, Mobility Units, and teaching roles—who often operate in fast-paced and emotionally demanding environments. The BIP offers a unique opportunity to explore strategies and institutional practices that improve wellbeing, resilience, and balance within higher education.

The physical component of the training will take place in the beautiful mountain town of Sinaia, chosen specifically for its restorative natural landscapes. Far from daily routines, participants will be invited to slow down, reconnect with nature, and reflect on how well-being practices can be integrated into student-focused roles. The programme combines interactive workshops, peer learning, mindfulness activities, and cultural exploration, creating a space for authentic exchange and renewal.

**Objectives:**

- Foster wellbeing and emotional resilience among higher-education staff
- Share good practices for supporting the mental health of both students and staff
- Strengthen collaboration and mutual understanding across European partner institutions
- Develop staff skills in communication, empathy, and inclusive practices
- Promote sustainable and mindful approaches to daily professional work

**Programme Structure:****Virtual Component – 2 June 2026**

A 2-hour introductory online session designed to prepare participants for the week in Sinaia:

- Institutional presentations and expectations
- Ice-breaking and wellbeing-mapping activity
- Pre-survey on existing wellbeing practices

**Physical Component – Sinaia, 8–12 June 2026****Expected Outcomes:**

- Increased awareness of personal wellbeing strategies
- Stronger peer-learning networks across European universities
- Development of institutional wellbeing action plans
- Enhanced capacity for inclusive and empathetic student support

More information: <https://utcb.ro/utcb-international-staff-training-week-3rd-edition/>

## FROM PARTNERS



### Association of European Civil Engineering Faculties – AECEF

#### Participation at the Conference "80 years of the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Wrocław University of Science and Technology", October 17, 2025

AECEF was invited and was present at the celebrations on 17 October 2025, represented by the President, Prof. Nicolaos Theodossiou, and by the Secretary General, Prof. Alfredo Soeiro. Both made presentations about competences of engineers and Sustainability with Civil Engineering.



See more on: <https://80wbliw.pwr.edu.pl/>

#### Pact for Skills in Construction

FIEC, EBC and EFBWW have met and suggested that new supporters should join, AECEF is a signatory and has participated in the last online meeting.



More information: <https://www.fiec.eu/priorities/pact-skills-construction>

## Academic Cooperation Association



### Study in Europe webinar: using AI in international student marketing

On 13 November 2025, the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), on behalf of the European Commission, hosted a [Study in Europe](#) webinar dedicated to the practical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in international student marketing.

Moderated by **Jenny Nygård**, Policy and Project Officer at ACA, the webinar opened with welcoming remarks from **Jacques Kemp**, Programme Coordination Manager at the European Education and Culture Executive Agency. **Raul Ranne**, Senior Advisor at ACA, then provided an overview of key trends, opportunities and considerations in education marketing, underlining the increasing importance of adapting to AI driven developments. This was followed by a case study from **Valentýna Škrabálková** from ACA member, the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research (DZS), who shared practical examples of AI supported social media communication and offered inspiration for participants exploring new tools.

Participants subsequently joined two parallel workshops. The first workshop on **AI for content creation: creating videos, images, and social media content with AI tools**, facilitated by **Paul James Kirrage**, International Speaker and Trainer for AI and Innovation in Education, focused on producing videos, images and social media materials with AI tools and addressed challenges such as editorial consistency, workload management, international audience expectations and alignment with the European ethical framework. The second workshop, **Building custom chat tools: implementing AI chatbots for student inquiries**, led by **Miska Noponen**, Chief Executive Officer at Annie Advisor, explored the design of education-focused chatbots, including accuracy, division of responsibilities between human staff and automated systems, and practical considerations regarding costs and maintenance.

ACA warmly thanks all speakers and participants for their interest and engagement in the webinar.

Information from: <https://aca-secretariat.be/newsletter/study-in-europe-webinar-using-ai-in-international-student-marketing/?titleId=1&articleId=5&edition=2025&current=1>

### ACA @CEEDUCON – Prague, Czech Republic

The Central European Education Conference ([CEEDUCON](#)), held from 19 to 20 November 2025 in Prague, brought together more than 800 participants from diverse national and international backgrounds. Organised by the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research (DZS), an ACA member, in cooperation with fellow ACA member organisations the Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation (SAAIC) and the Tempus Public Foundation (TPF), as well as the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE), the conference explored

internationalisation in higher education across four thematic areas: smart and sustainable international cooperation; internationalisation for all; global and regional partnerships; and alumni, employability and future skills.

ACA was represented in three sessions by members of its Secretariat. **Jenny Nygård**, Policy and Project Officer at ACA, presented the recently published report [Mapping the internationalisation strategy landscape across the EHEA, 2025 and beyond](#), co-produced with the European Association for International Education (EAIE), together with **Jody Hoekstra-Selten**, Senior Knowledge Development Officer at EAIE (for more information, see *ACA Newsletter – Education Europe*, [November 2025](#)). The session provided an overview of the project's development and highlighted the report's three chapters: the evolution of national internationalisation strategies in the EHEA, specific country information, and perspectives on national strategies today, focusing on their relevance, key influencers and implications for the future. Contributions from ACA member organisations enriched the discussion, with **Gerhard Volz** (OeAD) and **Eero Loonurm** (Harno) offering insights into their respective national contexts and strategies, adding valuable perspectives from national agencies.

ACA was additionally represented by **Martin Bogdan**, Policy and Project Coordinator, who co-led a session with **Petra Habulin-Musladin**, Advisor at SALTO I&D ET, and **Aaron Kang**, Inclusion Officer at TU Darmstadt. The speakers introduced the recently published practical guide, [Establishing the Role of an Inclusion Officer in a Higher Education Institution](#), outlining its key findings, challenges and benefits, and focusing on practical steps, advocacy and real-life examples (for more information, see *ACA Newsletter – Education Europe*, [September 2025](#)). Attendees had the opportunity to explore and discuss how to implement this role within their own institutions. Martin also contributed to a further session, together with **Neli Kalinova-Schmieder** from ESN, on how higher education institutions can support students from disadvantaged backgrounds, drawing on recent results from the [DIEM project](#).

Information from: <https://aca-secretariat.be/newsletter/aca-ceeducon-prague-czech-republic/?titleId=1&articleId=10&edition=2025&current=1>

## **Erasmus Student Network (ESN)**



### **Local Changemakers Training 2 - Braga, Portugal**

Between the **23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2025**, **34** active ESN volunteers from **20 countries** got together in the beautiful city of **Braga in Portugal** to take part in the **Local Changemakers Training, hosted by ESN Portugal**. The Local Changemakers Training is part of the **SPEAK OUT project**, which is funded by the **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme** of the European Commission. The project aims to **empower international youth to engage with local communities, challenge stereotypes, and fight misinformation**. It promotes intercultural understanding, democratic participation, and solidarity.



The Local Changers Training Braga focused on **empowering young people to become ambassadors of active citizenship** by equipping them with the skills and tools to organise local events that inspire civic engagement and community participation. It aimed to support participants in **designing initiatives that raise awareness of democratic values, inclusion, and the benefits of being active members of society.**

During their time in Braga, the participants attended interactive sessions and presentations which provided them with the needed knowledge and skills to **design and implement local activities aimed at fostering civic engagement and democratic participation.**

The content of the training was structured around **Kolb's Learning Cycle**. During the first day, the participants were provided with a space for sharing and reflecting on their current local realities. They were encouraged to **share and understand their personal experiences with stereotypes and misinformation**, as well as draw key learning points. The aim of the first day has been **laying a strong foundation of understanding and reflection** related to the topic of active citizenship, civic engagement and democratic participation.



The second day focused on **experiential learning, conceptualisation and design**. The whole day was dedicated to the strategic planning of local actions that could, later on, be implemented by the participants in their local communities. The participants were fully immersed in the process and managed to **design specific, goal-oriented activities that would focus on fostering a concrete space for active and democratic participation in the civic life of their local communities.**

The third and final training day has been structured around **peer sharing and evaluation**. The people involved were encouraged to analyse their peers' work, provide feedback and incorporate needed changes in their designs. They were also provided with concrete tools to **assess and understand the outcomes, outputs and impact** of their events, while later on implementing the newly acquired knowledge to assess the impact Local Changemakers Training Braga had on their development.

Overall, the event proved to be a **grand success** amongst ESN's active volunteers. Through Non-Formal Educational activities and experiential learning, the 34 participants have been able to **deepen their knowledge on civic engagement, democratic participation and ways to fight misinformation**. After this experience, they are now ready to act as multipliers and **bring the change to their local communities!**

More information: <https://www.esn.org/news/local-changemakers-training-2-braga-portugal>

### **Empowering Students Across Europe: the opportunities of the Student Toolbox on the European Student Card**

ESC Tension-2 is launching the **Student Toolbox**, designed to foster the students' awareness and usage of the **European Student Card (ESC)** across universities in Europe.



The **European Student Card (ESC)** is an **extension of your student card that provides benefits for on and off-campus services during your time abroad**, making your studies across Europe easier. With your student card, you can access all university services across Europe without needing a new card or having logistical issues, as long as your card is part of the ESC circuit. To help you understand how the card works, the **ESC Tension-2 initiative**, in which the **Erasmus Student Network is a partner**, has launched a **Student Toolbox** to help you navigate all the benefits available and to support you in promoting the ESC within your university community.

The **ESC Tension-2 Student Toolbox** collects **concrete results such as awareness-raising materials, operational tools and training packages**. You can dive into interactive slides, infographics and videos

to discover all the ways the European Student Card can make your student life abroad smoother and more connected. Don't forget to **share your feedback in section 15!** Your insights will directly shape the future of this project.

FR | IT | PT

### Student Toolbox

The **Student Toolbox** aims to increase the students' **awareness and use of the European Student Card (ESC)**, by working as a reference point by integrating it into real-life scenarios.

The Student Toolbox collects concrete results such as awareness materials, operational tools and training packages organised into the 15 themes available in **English, French, Italian and Portuguese**.

We suggest following the path proposed for a gradual learning process. It is possible to pick a specific theme, according to one's own interest, and explore further. **Click on the slideshow below to read about the specific topic!**

#### 1- One service leads to another



**The ESC Initiative is all about students, for students.** Your involvement helps to make the European Student Card more inclusive, practical and tailored to real student needs. Get involved, discover all the benefits and unlock the full potential of your student experience across Europe, because your voice can make a difference!

Information from: <https://www.esn.org/news/empowering-students-across-europe-opportunities-student-toolbox-european-student-card>

## European Council of Civil Engineers (ECCE)



### 82<sup>nd</sup> ECCE General Meeting

28–30 May 2026

Tbilisi, Georgia

The 82<sup>nd</sup> ECCE General Meeting will be held from 28–30 May 2026, in Tbilisi, Georgia, hosted by the Georgian Society of Civil Engineers and the Georgian Technical University.

Details will be announced in due time.

### The message of the president of ECCE, Mr. Platonas Stylianou, marking the 40 Years of the European Council of Civil Engineers (ECCE)

#### 40 Years of ECCE

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#### President's Message



CELEBRATING  
40 YEARS OF ECCE

1985-2025

Summarizing the spirit and vision that have guided the ECCE anniversary celebrations throughout 2025 the President's message reflects on ECCE's long-standing legacy and reaffirms the collective responsibility for the decades ahead — to strengthen the unity of Europe's civil engineers and lead the transformation towards a **safe, resilient, and sustainable built environment** and recalls ECCE's strategic documents — the **Position Paper on "The Need for Integrating Structural/Seismic Upgrade of Existing Buildings with Energy Efficiency Improvements"**, the **3S Approach Manifesto (Safe, Sound, Sustainable)**, and the **2024 Manifesto "Building a resilient future: Climate-proof design of infrastructure for generations to come"** — which together set out ECCE's integrated vision for Europe's future.

As the European Council of Civil Engineers (ECCE) concludes the celebrations of its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, **ECCE President Platonas Stylianou** shares a closing message that reflects on four decades of unity, leadership, and dedication to the civil engineering profession in Europe.

Since 1985, ECCE has served as the voice of Europe's civil engineers — promoting safety, excellence, and resilience in the built environment. In his address, the President emphasizes that the challenges of the new era — from climate risks and seismic vulnerability to digital transition and sustainable

transformation — demand **holistic, integrated engineering solutions** based on ECCE's **3S philosophy: Safe, Sound, Sustainable**.

The message calls upon ECCE Member Organizations and civil engineers across Europe to embed this approach in national policies, professional standards, and everyday practice, ensuring that Europe's infrastructure remains secure, sustainable, and future-ready.

👉 [Read the full message of ECCE President Platonas Stylianou](#)

Information from: [http://www.eceengineers.eu/news/2025/81\\_ece\\_meeting.php?id=41](http://www.eceengineers.eu/news/2025/81_ece_meeting.php?id=41)

## European Society for Engineering Education (SEFI)



### SEFI PhD Summer School 2026: Applications Now Open!

19–22 May, 2026

Aalborg University, Denmark

The SEFI Summer School on Engineering Education Research (EER) 2026 will be hosted by the Aalborg UNESCO Centre for Problem-Based Learning in Engineering Science and Sustainability (UCPBL) at Aalborg University (AAU).



This Summer School is designed to support early-career academics in Engineering Education Research as they develop their scholarly identities and strategies for impactful careers. With a focus on creativity, integration, and transformation, the program will explore how research can meaningfully connect to teaching, interdisciplinary collaboration, and wider academic life.

Adopting a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach, inspired by AAU's long-standing PBL tradition, participants will engage in collaborative mini-projects, identifying real-life challenges, developing solutions in teams, and sharing results through peer feedback and reflection

Key themes include:

1. **Meanings and Identity**

- What does it mean to become an academic in the field of EER?
- Who do I want to become as a scholar, and how do I position myself in the EER community?
- How do personal values, motivations, and experiences shape academic identity?

2. **Transformative Methodologies**

- What does it take to be a university academic today and in the future?
- How do philosophical, conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and empirical approaches collectively shape EER?
- How can we bridge literature with real-life challenges, connect theory with practice, and align diverse research designs with research questions, data collection, analysis, and writing?

3. **Professional Growth**

- How can I balance research development with other aspects of academic life?
- How do I publish and disseminate research effectively?
- How can I connect my research to teaching?
- How do I build healthy and productive professional relationships—with peers, mentors, and collaborators?
- How can I expand and sustain networks that foster creativity, collaboration, and long-term impact?

Throughout the Summer School, participants will interact with peers, experienced researchers, and recent PhD graduates in a **collaborative process of co-creation and knowledge exchange**.

The SEFI 2026 Summer School offers not only academic development but also a unique opportunity to join an **international community of emerging scholars**, collectively shaping the future of Engineering Education Research.

Information from: <https://www.sefi.be/2025/12/02/sefi-phd-summer-school-2026-applications-now-open/>

**European Convention of Engineering Deans - ECED 2026****25 – 27 May, 2026****Gliwice, Poland****About ECED 2026**

The Silesian University of Technology is pleased to host the SEFI European Convention of Engineering Deans (ECED) in May 2026.

This year's theme — *Engineering the Circular Transition* — reflects the growing need for engineering education to support Europe's shift toward sustainability, digital transformation and human-centric leadership.



ECED 2026 will continue the well-established single-track format, offering space for deans, academic leaders and industry partners to exchange strategic perspectives, practical insights and institutional experiences.

**First Programme Highlights**

- Opening Forum: Engineering Europe's Future – Circular, Digital & Human
- Plenary Panels on circular collaboration, leadership and alliances
- Interactive Workshop: All Hands on Circular Transition
- Student & Young Leaders Forum
- Collective Insight Session and ECED 2026 Summary Reflection
- Industrial Night in the historic Guido Coal Mine (Zabrze)

*A detailed day-by-day programme will be released soon.*

Information from: <https://www.polsl.pl/rn3-1-dwz-swm/en/ECED2026/>

## FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

### News from Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)



#### Launch of the 2026 Erasmus+ call for proposals and Programme Guide

**Publication date: 14 November, 2025**

**Author: European Education and Culture Executive Agency**

The Commission has launched the Erasmus+ [2026 call for proposals](#), opening new opportunities for learners, educators, youth workers and organisations across Europe and beyond.



With a budget of around € 5.2 billion for 2026, Erasmus+ continues to support cross-border mobility and cooperation projects that help people develop the skills they need for the future — from basic and digital skills to green, civic and soft skills

The first funding opportunities are now available on the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal \(F&TP\)](#). Check the portal regularly for upcoming calls, application criteria and deadlines.

Find further information in the [press release](#) and at these links:

- [Programme Guide 2026](#)
- [2026 Annual work programme](#)

Information from: [https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/launch-2026-erasmus-call-proposals-and-programme-guide-2025-11-14\\_en](https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/launch-2026-erasmus-call-proposals-and-programme-guide-2025-11-14_en)

**Online Info session: European Universities 2026 Call for proposals****Publication date: 5 December, 2025****Author: European Education and Culture Executive Agency**

The European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) organised an online info session on 27 November 2025 to illustrate the 2026 European Universities call for proposals (ERASMUS-EDU-2026-EUR-UNIV), now open for submission on [the Funding & Tenders Portal](#).

The session, was open to everyone, covered important aspects of the call, including how to apply, eligibility criteria, and the types of projects that qualify for support.

**Agenda:**

- Welcome and introduction
- Policy context and call objectives
- How to prepare a high-quality proposal
- Questions & Answers
- Closing remarks

Information from: [https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/online-info-session-european-universities-2026-call-proposals-2025-11-27\\_en](https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/online-info-session-european-universities-2026-call-proposals-2025-11-27_en)

## ARTICLES from journals, newspaper, magazines

### How can Japanese universities attract more students?

Author: Yan Li, Xiao Chen and Justin Sanders

15 October, 2025

Universities in Japan face a stark paradox. Even as policy-makers aim to attract 400,000 international students by 2033, many institutions continue to overlook one of the most basic drivers of student satisfaction and retention: the physical campus environment.

**A recent study**, based on interviews with Japanese and American undergraduates who had studied in both countries, found that students share a strong, often unmet desire for ‘third places’ on Japanese campuses – welcoming, flexible spaces beyond classrooms and dormitories where they can socialise, relax, recharge and engage in spontaneous learning.

#### Libraries as rule-bound silos

Japanese university libraries, students told us, are designed around books rather than people. Strict rules – no food, no drinks, limited hours – make them functional but uninviting. By contrast, American university libraries typically offer 24/7 access, café corners, group work zones and casual seating areas.

Many interviewees wished Japanese libraries could serve not just as study halls, but also as hubs of informal learning and community.

#### Cafeterias and gyms: missed opportunities

The cafeteria is another missed opportunity. Students appreciate the healthy, affordable meals on offer, but the facilities are open only during fixed hours, discouraging lingering or socialising.

By comparison, American dining halls often double as social spaces where students can meet friends, study or simply relax throughout the day.

Gyms reveal an even starker contrast. On many Japanese campuses, they remain the preserve of sports clubs, effectively closed to students who are not affiliated with them – including both domestic and international students. In the US, by contrast, gyms are widely accessible, offering not just exercise but also stress relief and community.

#### Third places needed as integration engines

These gaps matter. Without informal gathering places, opportunities for spontaneous interaction between local and international students are severely limited. Formal events and global centres can

only go so far. What students are asking for is something simpler: more open, flexible and welcoming spaces on campus.

This is precisely what sociologist Ray Oldenburg called “third places” – neither home nor work but spaces where communities form. On campuses, they nurture belonging, reduce isolation and create environments where students want to stay.

### **Why Japan must act**

For Japanese universities competing for students in an age of demographic decline, creating third places is not a luxury – it is a necessity. Importantly, these changes do not require costly new buildings.

Repurposing existing spaces, extending library and cafeteria hours or opening gyms to all students would go a long way toward improving well-being and campus life.

Internationalisation is often framed in terms of English-medium instruction, student mobility or research rankings. But if Japanese campuses are to thrive, internationalisation must also mean rethinking physical spaces. Only then can universities attract and retain the diverse, creative and globally minded students that Japan’s future requires.

*Dr Yan Li is a specially appointed associate professor (lecturer) at the Global Admissions Support Office, Institute for International Initiatives, the University of Osaka, Japan. E-mail: [li.yan.cqin@osaka-u.ac.jp](mailto:li.yan.cqin@osaka-u.ac.jp).*

*Xiao Chen holds an MSc from the Graduate School of Human Sciences at the University of Osaka. He is currently affiliated with Hitachi Pharma Information Solutions, Ltd, Japan.*

*Dr Justin Sanders serves as head of content and learning design for Woven by Toyota, Japan. He has held positions with notable educational organisations, including the International Baccalaureate, Minerva, Temple University, and the University of Osaka.*

*This commentary is **based on the article** “The shared desire for third places on campus in Japan: A study of Japanese and American university undergraduate students with experience studying in both countries” published in the Asia Pacific Education Review (2025).*

*This article is a commentary. Commentary articles are the opinion of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of University World News.*

Information from:-<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20251015103530671>

**Universities need to be more effective, not more efficient**Author: John D Kenny

10 December, 2025

Over recent years, numerous countries, such as Finland, the United Kingdom and the United States, have conducted government reviews of their higher education policy settings.

The most recent example in Australia was the Australian Universities Accord (*The Accord*).

A common issue these reviews have is funding for universities, but, in Australia, significant problems with the way universities function as institutions have been revealed, as evident in a number of subsequent inquiries into governance at the national and state levels: the Senate, New South Wales and Victoria.

*The Accord* advocated for a more systemic and collaborative approach to higher education policy-setting and reform and avoided the politically partisan tenor of previous reviews and it has argued for a focus on making the higher education system more effective.

While applauding the goal of making the system more effective, recent research suggests the Accord is unlikely to succeed because it has failed to apply key lessons from 40 years of higher education reform.

**Governance issues**

The shift in focus from efficiency to effectiveness is highly significant because an efficient organisation is not necessarily an effective one, but higher education policy tends to conflate these ideas through the notion of productivity.

Although Australian universities have arguably become more efficient, the way universities have been governed may have inadvertently led the higher education system to become less effective. Further, this research also suggests the Accord has largely overlooked the crucial role the academic profession must play in the governance of universities to bring this shift about.

Issues related to the governance in universities have also been confirmed in the *Report by the Expert Council on University Governance*.

This panel has proposed eight principles to be applied, but, unfortunately, while these include some welcome suggestions such as ensuring greater representation of staff and students in decision-making as well as training and workload recognition for those in governance roles, they did not specify the ratios of representation needed for these stakeholder voices to be heard.

Without this authoritative recognition, the voices of staff and students will most likely remain in the minority. More specifically, in relation to academic leadership, the panel made no recommendation regarding the ratio of elected to ex-officio members on academic senates to ensure elected academic members have sufficient power to be genuinely influential in decision-making.

The panel also dodged the important question of how elected academic members might be selected to be genuinely representative of the voice of their academic peers and the university community.

At a fundamental level, therefore, the research argues the reforms suggested do not seriously challenge the status quo in which academic leadership is subordinated to the corporate executive, so it is unlikely that university governance will lead to more effective outcomes.

The prevailing hierarchical top-down model of management based on compliance and productivity, which has resulted in a “performativity” focus that has plagued the university sector for decades and led to **a crisis-driven culture**, will most likely continue.

If we are serious about improving the performance of our universities, it’s time to think more systemically about how to make universities more effective, not just more efficient.

To be effective, an organisation needs governance structures, policies and accountability processes that **align with its intended purpose**. More specifically, according to **the Higher Education Support Act**, universities are expected to operate as independent organisations which uphold scholarly standards to provide high-quality teaching and research in the service of the economic, social and cultural needs of society.

Therefore, they require a model of governance that is quite different from other organisations: one in which power is shared between the corporate and the academic leadership.

If the aim of reform in higher education is to make universities more effective, efficiency should be a secondary concern. Reforms aimed at increasing effectiveness will need to more forcefully address the power imbalance between academic and corporate leadership for universities to make the leap from more efficient to more effective organisations.

### **Reliance on measurable outcomes**

We argue that the corporatised university, with its focus on compliance with government dictates to ensure an efficient and productive higher education system, has created a dilemma: while arguably making universities more efficient, it has reduced their independence and undermined the foundations of academic work.

A reliance **on measurable outcomes suited to short-term political cycles** and ideologies has devalued the underlying ethical principles that distinguish universities from other types of organisations.

Attempts have been made to rationalise how academics should adapt to **tighter institutional control** and **a corporate performance-based culture**, but these commentaries dodge the fact that the values that underpin such a culture are fundamentally different from the values that underpin the work of academics and universities.

To be truly effective, universities need to find a way **to reconcile these two very different value**

systems in the decision-making processes, rather than allow the corporate to dominate the academic, as it has for decades.

### Erosion of academia as a profession

We argue there is, however, another key factor that has contributed to this situation. Furthermore, it is a factor which has largely been overlooked and for which the academy itself must take a significant amount of responsibility: the grossly underdeveloped sense of academia as a profession. This has prevented academics, as a professional group, from articulating how they should fit into a more accountable higher education system without losing the essence of their role.

A similar point was noted over 30 years earlier in the UK when Ronald Barnett and Robin Middlehurst described academia as a “lost profession”.

Later, Michael Shattock questioned whether the academic profession still existed in the UK and, in the US, John Magney and others described a downgrading of academic work from that of “independent” to “managed” professionals.

In the corporatised university, increasingly the onus has been put on individuals to become more entrepreneurial and performance expectations, de-coupled from professional and scholarly standards, have been re-aligned with the needs of the organisation, the government of the day, industry or students as “customers”.

While clearly some individuals have benefitted from corporatisation, the majority of academics have been coerced into compliance with the demands of questionable ranking systems and pressure to demonstrate impact.

In a marketised climate, with little guidance from the profession, many are confused about their role and have had to adopt coping strategies ranging from resistance through to acquiescence, compliance, disillusionment and-or disengagement.

In 2024, a report from the University of South Australia indicated over two-thirds of university staff experienced a poor psychosocial safety climate and high levels of work stress.

Further, these pressures are felt most severely by less powerful or younger members of the profession, such as PhD students, early career researchers, those with child-rearing duties from minority groups, and-or those in casual positions, a situation which threatens the long-term sustainability of the profession.

Similarly, academics working in less commercialisable disciplines, such as the humanities, arts and socially orientated research, are disadvantaged in comparison to those in technological, health and scientific research, which can undermine the effectiveness of universities in meeting the full range of their obligations to society.

We claim that the individualisation of the workforce, central to neoliberal reforms, is derived from a values base that undermines the independence of the university as an institution and the leadership role academics should play.

While this may appeal to the individualism of some academics, it undermines the notion of academia as a professional group, with a set of common professional values linked to altruism, honesty and service that go beyond their institution to serve the broader society, their profession and their discipline.

### **Rethinking the academic role in a more accountable system**

In the prevailing top-down corporate culture, difficult questions about what forms of accountability are most suited to universities and the work of academics **tend to be glossed over**.

For a truly accountable and effective higher education system, the dilemma created by the corporatised university **must be addressed**. Bovens argues this requires clarity about the purpose of universities and **the different roles at play across the system**. So, these same questions of accountability must be asked not only of the academics but also of other key stakeholder groups, **especially the government and the university corporate leadership**.

Agency refers to the capacity of individuals and groups, with a clear understanding of their role, to make their own choices, take intentional actions and influence the outcomes of their lives or circumstances. To clarify the academic role in a more accountable higher education system, **we have proposed four foundational principles** for consideration.

These principles reaffirm academic autonomy and independence as fundamental to academic agency and raise important systemic questions of power and resourcing which government reviews have tended to avoid but which must be recognised across the system if universities are to become truly effective. These principles are presented as a basis on which individual academics can build a professional identity with a clear sense of themselves as members of a profession.

Four foundational principles for defining academic work:

1. Enhanced academic decision-making power to participate in shared leadership, policy setting and resource allocation to ensure universities maintain academic standards and a focus on their broader social purposes.
2. Systemic recognition inherent to the professional academic role is defined by common values that underpin their trustworthiness, emphasise autonomy and discretionary decision-making based on their expertise and recognise responsibilities that extend beyond any given organisation or government to their profession, discipline and wider society.
3. Recognition that scholarship, broadly defined, is central to the academic role and provides the fundamental justification for individual academic freedom to pursue questions within their area of

expertise and related fields, including the strategic directions and operation of the higher education sector and-or its institutions.

4. Formal recognition of the “special” nature of the academic employment relationship and agreement that this work must be adequately resourced and appropriate accountabilities developed that recognise that academics have professional responsibilities that extend beyond their institutions to broader society, their profession and their discipline.

Further, while these principles challenge the university corporate leaders and government **to be accountable for their part in how the system functions**, they also challenge the academic profession to get its act together and redefine their role in a more accountable higher education environment. Just as importantly, they argue, all stakeholder groups need to understand how their role relates to that of the other stakeholders.

For the higher education system to be truly effective, government agencies and university corporate managers must respect the fundamental differences between their roles and that of the academic staff and find ways to work together even though they may come at their work from **very different value positions**.

Unfortunately, it appears these deeper lessons about systemic change in higher education have not yet been learnt. Any country intent on developing its higher education sector to be more effective should avoid blindly following the corporate performativity path, which has been found to be **counter-productive and ineffective** and has led to **a crisis in universities in the West**.

The foundational principles have many global implications because they are generalisable and can be applied to any higher education context. However, because every system has its own historical and political context, the principles need to be contextualised as a set of “enabling principles” suited to a given system.

### **Beyond theory**

Any country interested in developing its higher education system to be more effective would be well advised to consider applying these hard-won **lessons from 40 years of experience in the West**. We have set up a case study to do this for the Australian higher education context.

To move beyond theory, we have set up **a case study**, under the auspices of **the Australian Association of University Professors (AAUP)**, in which the four foundational principles have been applied to the Australian context to explore the question, “How can the academic profession fit into a more accountable higher education system without sacrificing the independence fundamental to the role?”

So far, this work has resulted in the development of a **Professional Ethical Framework for Australian Academics** (Framework), which aims to explore, in practice, how Australian academics, government and university managers can work together towards a common goal and shared responsibility for an effective higher education system.

**The Framework** suggests a blueprint for the governance of universities aimed at enhancing the leadership role of Australian academics and promoting more collaborative and inclusive decision-making processes. Australian academics and other stakeholder groups are encouraged to find out more about this study by clicking on [this link](#).

We also encourage our academic colleagues around the globe to consider establishing similar case studies that aim to apply **the foundational principles** to their own higher education context.

Globally, a stronger academic profession might help universities deal with growing global challenges such as those due to artificial intelligence, disinformation and authoritarianism.

*John D Kenny is an adjunct associate professor at the University of Tasmania, Australia.*

*This article is a commentary. Commentary articles are the opinion of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of University World News.*

Information from: <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20251208170113138>

### **70% of employers have confidence in universities – Survey**

**Author: Nathan M Greenfield**

**11 December, 2025**

Seventy per cent of employers indicate that they have either “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in America’s higher education institutions, according to a new survey by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U).

Another 23% indicated they had some confidence, with only 7% indicating “very little confidence”.

Seventy-three per cent said the time and money spent earning a degree was either “definitely worth it” or “somewhat worth it”.

The findings contrast sharply with those studies conducted among America’s general population and registered voters.

In July, a **Gallup/Lumina study** reported that only 46% of people indicated they had “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in America’s colleges and universities, although that share had risen six percentage points over the previous year.

In addition, **an NBC poll** released two weeks ago showed that 63% of registered voters believed that a four-year degree was “not worth the cost because people often graduate without specific job skills and with a large amount of debt to pay off”.

The AAC&U survey, on the other hand, found that 85% of employers say that colleges are doing a good job of preparing students for the workforce – although this is made up of 38% who say: “They are doing a very good job and do not need major changes”, and 47% who say: “They are doing a somewhat good job but should make some changes”.

Lynn Pasquerella, president of the AAC&U, told *University World News* the latest study “creates a more expansive narrative around the value of a college degree and whether we’re actually delivering the promise that we’ve made to our students and society”.

The fact that 77% of Republicans have “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in America’s colleges and universities (three percentage points higher, in fact, than self-identified Democrats) provides the materials to “change the narrative” and counter the critique of higher education by the current administration.

“It’s an opportunity to tell a fuller, richer story of the value of higher education in America,” says Pasquerella.

The study, *The Agility Imperative: How Employers View Preparation for an Uncertain Future (How Employers View)*, conducted by the business analytics firm Morning Consult, surveyed 1,030 employers in four different sectors of the economy (73% being private companies) last August. The results are considered accurate to within + or – 3%.

### **Diverse perspectives**

While 70% of all employers indicated “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in America’s colleges and universities, and Republicans and Democrats were only 3 percentage points apart, *How Employers View* found that Independents (who make up about one-third of American voters) have the lowest level of confidence, with only 55% reporting “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in American higher education.

The gap between respondents who are 50 or more years old and those under 40 years old was significant, with 74% of the younger cadre indicating “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence” in the nation’s higher education institutions but only 56% of older managers indicating so.

*How Employers View* broke the question about colleges’ and universities’ mission into six areas: 1) Provide a skilled workforce; 2) Help students become informed citizens; 3) Create an environment where students of all backgrounds feel supported; 4) Engage with and serve their community; 5) Provide a platform for exploring ideas; and 6) Foster cross-cultural understanding. The results were surprisingly uniform, with between 94% and 88% of employers indicating that these were either “very important” or “somewhat important”.

Even when the study disaggregated the responses for “Provide a platform for exploring ideas” and “Foster cross-cultural understanding”, and presented them by age of respondents and by political party, the results were remarkably similar, ranging from 94% of Democrats who underscored the

importance of “providing a platform for exploring ideas” to 86% of Republicans who underscored the importance of “Foster cross-cultural understanding”.

On the question of providing a platform for exploring diverse ideas, the difference between older and younger respondents was 4 percentage points: 87% to 91%. Ninety per cent of the younger respondents said that “fostering cross-cultural understanding” was “very/somewhat important” compared to 80% of older respondents.

While the findings in *How Employers View* cannot be mapped one-to-one onto the findings in the Lumina/Gallup report, seeing where the two studies diverge is not difficult.

In the context of the debates about the so-called “wokeness” of American universities by President Donald J Trump, Secretary of Education Linda McMahon and governors like Florida’s Ron DeSantis and Texas’ Gregg Abbott, items two through six (above) would be termed by many as ideological “woke” activities encompassing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programmes and courses that focus on the racial realities of American history.

The Lumina/Gallup study found that 38% of Lumina/Gallup’s respondents said they lacked confidence in higher education because of such political agendas on campus, while 32% said that colleges and universities had the “wrong focus”, with this theme including “Indoctrination/brainwashing/propaganda”, “Too liberal/political”, “Not allowing students to think for themselves/pushing their own agenda” and “Too much concentration on diversity, equity and inclusion”.

The distance between what Lumina/Gallup found and the banning of DEI and critical race theory in dozens of state public institutions and what employers told the AAC&U could hardly be more stark: 90% of Democratic employers, 83% of Republicans and 75% of independents said they would look “more favourably upon a degree from an institution known for respecting diverse perspectives (that is, political, economic, social) in the curriculum”.

### **Government restrictions**

While the so-called ‘compact’ that the Trump administration offered colleges and universities in October landed like a damp squib, at their year-in-review **podcast** last week, Sarah Spreitzer, the American Council on Education vice-president and chief of staff for government relations, and Jon Fansmith, senior vice-president for government relations and national engagement, said that they expect the administration to come back next year with Compact 2.0.

*How Employers View* might, however, give the US administration pause, as it provides support for Fansmith’s critique of the original compact: “It destroys the idea of civil debate. It destroys the idea of academic freedom. It destroys these things that we understand to be effective in accomplishing not just preparing students to be great citizens, but to be effective employees and powerful innovators and creators of our economy.”

Morning Consult found that only 13% of Republican respondents indicated that they would look

favourably upon an applicant with a degree from an institution that was “subject to government restrictions on what students learn and discuss”.

Fully 83% of Republicans either strongly or somewhat agreed that they would look favourably upon “a degree from an institution that was not subject to government restrictions on what students learn and discuss”. The figure for Democrats was exactly the same, while among Independents 78% opposed government control of what students can learn and discuss.

Put another way, even after months of the Trump administration pressuring elite colleges and universities to knuckle under to the government’s demands for viewpoint censorship and demanding that they restructure departments and curricula according to the government’s directives and, in some cases, appoint government overseers to ensure compliance – and after Trump used legal manoeuvres to force universities to disband DEI programmes and courses and ban the teaching of critical race theory – American business leaders strongly prefer that the government stay in its own lane.

### **Challenges to ‘America First’**

Nor did a large majority of the employers surveyed agree with the 32% of Americans who told Lumina/Gallup that universities had the “wrong focus” and did not “teach right [relevant] things”.

Overall, 85% of employers were either satisfied with what universities were teaching or felt that they were doing a good job, but some changes were needed. Among Democrats, this figure rose to 90%, while among Republicans it was 72%.

The gap in answers to this question between respondents over 50 and under 40 was one of the largest gaps of any question in the survey. Seventy two per cent of those over 50 were largely satisfied with what new employees had learnt at college, while among those under 40, the figure was 90%.

The findings of Morning Consult’s drill-down provide another indication of the distance that employers are from the administration’s “America First” agenda, as was discussed last week in relation to the reorientation of the Fulbright and other international scholarships.

To the prompt, “Recent college graduates possess the skills and knowledge to succeed in entry-level positions within my company or organisation”, 84% said they were either “very/somewhat prepared” to appreciate cultural differences, and 75% said new hires were prepared to “situate issues in global contexts”.

Additionally, the Morning Consult found that 76% of employers were “very/somewhat more likely” to consider hiring a recent graduate if they have experience “with community org/did community-based project”, 75% if they “worked with people from diverse backgrounds or cultures”, 69% if they “completed a project focused on addressing a global issue” or 69% if they “participated in a global experience.”

### **‘Reframe the narrative’**

Pasquerella said that the questions concerning artificial intelligence were new. But even here, again, employers are relatively pleased with new graduates' skills. Fully 91% think that AI skills are essential. But 81% are "very/somewhat confident" that colleges and universities are helping students develop skills that align with current and emerging uses of artificial intelligence in the workforce.

Interestingly, more than 70% of executives feel this way, while 55% of hiring managers do. Equally interesting, non-tech industries are 13 percentage points less sanguine than are tech industries: 56% vs 69%.

The overall support for what universities are teaching about the use of AI led Pasquerella to say that this shows that "colleges are [being] adaptable and flexible, counter to what's being said about higher education".

"We often hear students that say that they feel they're not prepared for the workforce, and yet employers are saying, 'No, actually, we think that these graduates are prepared. Here are the skills and competencies we want'," Pasquerella noted.

"What we have to do is make ... transparent to students what the value of the liberal education they are receiving is and how those skills and competencies translate into what they will need to do in the workforce.

"We have not been good at that. We haven't been good at being transparent about assignment design, the way in which employers are looking at students who have internship experience or applied learning in the classroom.

"So, there's work for us to do. The study is a call to action to reframe the narrative in ways that help restore public trust, in ways that align with employers' trust in higher education," said Pasquerella.

Information from: <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20251211131808853>

### **Universities expand into drone technology for development**

**Author: Wagdy Sawahel**

**11 December, 2025**

African universities are increasingly integrating drone technology into education and research programmes, recognising its value for humanitarian work and as a tool for accelerating progress towards sustainable development goals.

However, they face significant challenges that need to be addressed.

Professor Raphael Tabani Mpofu, chief executive officer at Inhlanyelo Hub (a subsidiary of the University of South Africa), told *University World News*: "African universities sit at the centre of talent

development, and drone technology is becoming essential for sectors such as agriculture, health logistics, climate monitoring and infrastructure management.

“Investing in workforce and research capacity in drone technology ensures that Africa builds its own expertise instead of depending on imported solutions. Strengthening this capability positions universities as engines of innovation for emerging industries.

“Universities, therefore, must assume leadership, not only as teaching spaces, but as innovation ecosystems that shape the continent’s technological future. Consistent policy support and long-term investment will be essential to drive this transformation.”

### **Drone-technology hubs**

Dr Michael Scheibenreif, regional manager of UNICEF’s African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA) in Malawi, told *University World News*: “African universities are beginning to see the potential to become drone-technology hubs, but initiatives are still geographically limited.”

Mpofu agreed that progress is evident, with several African universities establishing drone centres, research labs and industry partnerships.

“However, the pace is uneven, and many initiatives remain at pilot level rather than fully institutionalised. The foundation is there, but significant investment, coordination and policy support are still needed to reach full ‘hub’ status.”

Professor Bouraoui Seyfallah, head of the department of geophysics at the faculty of earth sciences, geography and spatial planning at *Université des Sciences et de la Technologie Houari Boumediene* (University of Sciences and Technology Houari Boumediene) Algeria, added: “Many African universities are moving towards becoming drone-technology hubs, with growing training programmes, innovation centres and collaborations with industry and government sectors. However, progress remains uneven across the continent.”

XN Iraki, associate professor of data science, innovation and technology management at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, told *University World News*: “Drones are the next frontier that African universities must focus on more, to explore their applications in solving African development problems.

“Drone technology is like other technologies where Africa has often been a follower and missed the dividends – examples include AI, the internet and electric cars.”

### **Drone-technology initiatives in Africa**

“Several African universities are investing in workforce and research development for drone technology because drones have become essential tools for agriculture, environmental monitoring, disaster management and infrastructure inspection,” Seyfallah noted.

The latest development in this direction was the announcement that **Zimbabwe's Drone University** has become the first African institution licensed to train drone-maintenance technicians, according to a 3 November post on its official **Facebook** page.

A **Drone Innovation and Simulation Unit** at Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology was launched in July.

It offers hands-on training programmes for both students and members of the public.

On 3 April, the African Development Bank, the government of Mozambique and Korea's government agency Busan Technopark launched an **innovative drone-driven initiative** to strengthen disaster preparedness in Mozambique, a country frequently hit by floods, mudslides, cyclones and other weather-related crises.

The Drone-Based Disaster Management Project will establish a drone-training centre in Mozambique to train professionals and implement drone-based monitoring and response systems in high-risk flood zones.

A **drone assembly and testing centre** at the Botswana International University of Science and Technology was also launched in March.

By December 2026, Rwanda will have a **Drone Operation Centre** to support drone manufacturing, testing, training and research and development.

Other African university-based programmes include the African Drone and Data Academy (**ADDA**), based at the Malawi University of Science and Technology with international faculty from institutions such as Virginia Tech; the **drone unit** at Nelson Mandela University in South Africa, which supports workforce development and applied research; and the **Inhlanyelo Hub Drone Diva Programme** at the University of South Africa, which equips women with skills in drone piloting and technology development.

### **Economic significance**

Dr Mosab Nouraldein Hamad, director of the Excellence Research Centre at Elsheikh Abdallah Elbadri University in Sudan, told *University World News*: "African universities' move towards drone technology coincides with robust growth in the global drone market."

According to the **Global Drone Market Report** (2025-30), drones will generate almost US\$40.6 billion in revenue in 2025, rising to US\$57.8 billion by 2030. The fastest-growing regional market will be the Middle East and Africa, growing at 15.4% from 2023 to 2030.

"These figures underscore the economic importance of African universities' efforts to develop drone capability, which could strengthen Africa's position in the global drone market," Hamad said.

### Localisation of drone production

“Producing local drones strengthens technological sovereignty, reduces dependency on imports and ensures solutions adapted to African contexts,” Seyfallah said.

Mpofu added: “Locally produced drones reduce costs, strengthen supply-chain autonomy and allow designs to be tailored to African environments and use cases. Home-grown manufacturing builds local technical ecosystems, supports industrialisation and keeps value creation within the continent. It also enhances national security and resilience by minimising reliance on foreign hardware and software.”

### Challenges and suggested solutions

“There are several challenges facing African universities seeking to become drone-technology hubs and to build the workforce and research capacity required for humanitarian and development applications,” Seyfallah explained.

“Key challenges include limited research funding, insufficient access to advanced hardware, lack of regulatory clarity and the need for highly specialised technical training and maintenance capabilities. To address these challenges, universities should strengthen partnerships with the private sector and government agencies, invest in incubators and specialised labs, update curricula to include drone engineering and data analytics, and promote regional collaboration to share expertise and resources.”

Expanding on these challenges, Professor Suresh Muthukrishnan, director of the GIS and Remote Sensing Center at US-based Furman University and co-creator of the African Drone and Data Academy in Malawi, told *University World News*: “A lack of support or vision from senior university leadership hinders innovative programme development and implementation.

“There is also a lack of infrastructure at universities, including high-powered computers, drones for training and data collection, and the software needed for AI- and machine-learning-based geospatial modelling. Drone regulations and import restrictions – for drone parts and computer components – further constrain progress.

“Universities need to integrate frontier technologies such as drones, AI, nanotechnology and geospatial tools across the curriculum, making them accessible to all students, not only computer science majors. They must also develop project-based curricula that address local social and environmental issues using drones and geospatial technologies, preparing students for employment and community engagement.

“Low-cost drone manufacturing in Africa is essential for building a robust drone ecosystem. It increases accessibility, stimulates local economies and promotes innovation, ultimately supporting humanitarian efforts and development projects across the continent.”

Mpofu noted that regulatory uncertainty slows practical testing, while weak university-industry links restrict opportunities for applied research.

“Universities need dedicated investment in labs, training programmes and local manufacturing capabilities. Strengthening partnerships with industry, regulators and global drone institutes will accelerate knowledge transfer. Streamlined procurement, incentives for interdisciplinary collaboration and sandbox testing environments will also help to speed up innovation and skills development.”

Iraki added: “Greater investment is needed in research and development, skills development and collaboration with the private sector, along with a stronger focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

“Focusing on STEM is essential for university-level drone development because it provides the knowledge base, practical skills and innovation capacity required for this rapidly evolving field.”

Scheibenreif added: “African universities suffer partly from a lack of funds and partly from a lack of long-term expertise in drones and drone applications. Building local expertise requires linking drones and data to specific use cases and recognising that these technologies intersect with many disciplines beyond mechanics or aeronautical engineering. The opportunity is interdisciplinary, and should be promoted as such.”

### **Positioning Africa as a leader in drone-enabled development**

Professor Atta-ur-Rahman, a UNESCO Science Prize laureate and former coordinator-general of the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTech) of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, which includes 22 African states, told *University World News*: “At present, African universities are unable to contribute significantly in this field because they have weak faculty, inadequate infrastructure and low research funding.

“African universities can, however, drive socio-economic development by becoming hubs for drone-technology education, research and innovation – through establishing unmanned aerial system (or UAS) laboratories, specialised degree programmes and interdisciplinary training in engineering, AI, agriculture and geospatial sciences.

“They can also build skilled manpower and support local drone start-ups. Partnerships with industry and government can help create testing corridors and strengthen regulatory frameworks.”

Drone applications – such as precision agriculture, medical deliveries, environmental monitoring, infrastructure inspection and disaster response – improve productivity, reduce costs, enhance public services and expand access to remote communities.

“Through capacity-building and innovation ecosystems, universities can position Africa as a leader in drone-enabled development,” Atta-ur-Rahman said.

### **Tools for sustainable development**

“Developing an African drone ecosystem requires, not only technological capacity, but also policies that encourage innovation, local manufacturing and responsible use aligned with humanitarian and development priorities,” Seyfallah said.

Seyfallah's view aligns with a 2024 **study** entitled, 'A systematic literature review on the role of UAV-enabled communications in advancing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals', which found that drones "show great potential in advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals".

Information from: <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20251201054459312>

## NEWS FROM THE WORLD

### 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Geological and Civil Engineering

6-8 March, 2026

Fukuoka, Japan



The aim of the 2026 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Geological and Civil Engineering is to provide a platform for researchers, engineers, academicians as well as industrial professionals from all over the world to present their research results and development activities in Geological and Civil Engineering. The annual meeting will be held in Fukuoka, Japan, March 6-8, 2026.

ICGCE 2026 provides opportunities for the delegates to exchange new ideas and application experiences face to face, to establish business or research relations and to find global partners for future collaboration.

#### CALL FOR PAPERS

The 2026 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Geological and Civil Engineering is the premier forum for the presentation of technological advances and research results in the fields of Geological and Civil Engineering. ICGCE 2026 will bring together leading engineers and scientists in Geological and Civil Engineering from around the world.

**Topics** of interest for submission include, but are not limited to:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Civil and Structural Engineering              | Material Quality and Control             |
| Bridge Engineering                            | Metallic Structures                      |
| Building Structure and Bridge Engineering     | Monitoring and Control Of Structures     |
| Building Technology                           | Operation and Maintenance                |
| Cartography and Geographic Information System | Project Management                       |
| Coastal Engineering                           | Reliability and Durability of Structures |
|   | Road, Bridge and Railway Engineering     |

Computational Mechanics  
Computer Simulation and CAD/CAE  
Concrete Structures  
Construction and Control  
Detection and Transformation  
Disaster Prevention and Mitigation  
Engineering Management  
Environment-Friendly Construction and Development  
Geological Engineering  
Geotechnical Engineering  
Harbor Engineering  
Heating, Gas Supply, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Works  
Hydraulic Engineering

Safety and Monitoring  
Sanitary and Ground Water Engineering  
Seismic Engineering  
Structural Analysis and Design  
Structural Engineering and Disaster Reduction  
Structural Rehabilitation, Retrofitting and Strengthening  
Surveying and Geo-informatics  
Surveying and Photogrammetry  
Surveying Engineering  
Transportation Engineering  
Tunnel, Subway and Underground Facilities  
Urban Planning  
Water Supply and Drainage Engineering

More information: <https://www.icgce.org/cfp.html>

## **LANDSLIDE RISK AND GEO-EDUCATION (LaRGE)**

**27 April – 3 May 2026**

**Queenstown, New Zealand**



The New Zealand Geotechnical Society is delighted to invite you to the **First International Joint Workshop** of [Joint Technical Committee 1](#) and [Joint Technical Committee 3](#) on Landslide Risk Assessment, Communication and Geo-education. We will share the latest research and develop best practice guidelines in the stunning New Zealand city of Queenstown.

Our theme “Landslide Risk and Geo-Education” unifies the full lifecycle of landslide risk management. It encompasses the needs to educate the next generation of landslide risk managers, to robustly understand landslide risk, and to communicate that risk to the public and decision makers so that real change is implemented.

This landmark international event unites JTC1 and JTC3 to advance landslide risk assessment, education, communication, and outreach – creating a unique opportunity to make a real change, and will be attended by leading experts from around the world.

### STRUCTURE

The workshop is structured around specific projects through interactive workshop sessions. We will go beyond disseminating knowledge: we will generate new ideas, develop ongoing projects, and create tangible outputs including guidelines and research direction.

LaRGE2026 will also deliver great training courses, keynote speeches, presentations, poster sessions, and field trips. The training courses will span landslide risk assessment, emergency response, science communication, and landslide geoeducation. We will be encouraging delegates to take part in our parallel science communication training, and to create their own simple-language summary of their work on video. The development and sharing of knowledge within this workshop conference will occur through several different formats, with something on offer for everyone.

The interactive workshops will be a great opportunity to influence real world outputs which will be used within academia and industry long after the conclusion of this session.

For those who wish to present their own research, abstract submissions are encouraged and successful candidates will be notified of either a poster, video or presentation opportunity. There is no need to submit an abstract to attend the workshops or training sessions; your interest in these events can be indicated at registration.

### Key Dates:

**Deadline for paper submission:** ~~23 November~~ **Extended to 7 December**

**Notification of paper acceptance, with reviewer feedback:** ~~mid-December~~ **By 15 January 2026**

**Deadline for revised paper submission:** ~~25 January 2026~~ **15 February 2026**

### WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR NEW ZEALAND

Since 1760 there have been at least 1,500 deaths from landslides in New Zealand, making them one of New Zealand’s most significant natural hazards. More fatalities have occurred from landslides than from earthquakes, volcanic activity and tsunami combined over the last 160 years. Queenstown is particularly vulnerable, making it an ideal venue for a conference about landslides. More than 50% of the land around the town is mapped as known landslides, with the underlying quartzofeldspathic schist very susceptible to deep seated failures. The largest, Queenstown Hill Landslide, has an estimated volume of 240M m<sup>3</sup>.

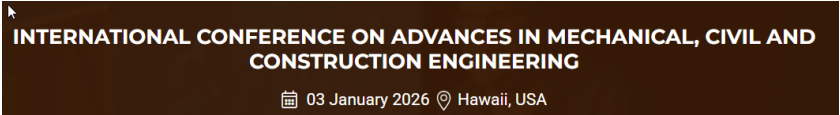
In early 2023 a series of severe weather events triggered over 150,000 landslides in the North Island of New Zealand, causing 11 deaths and over NZ\$14 billion of direct costs, and triggering a national state of emergency for only the third time in New Zealand’s history.

New Zealanders were already aware of the importance of landslides hazards; they are a common experience, and in November 2016 a magnitude 7.8 earthquake triggered tens of thousands of landslides in the South Island of New Zealand, causing years of disruption to infrastructure and several hundred landslide dams which posed a significant hazard to people.

More information: <https://landsliderisk.nz/>

CALENDAR

Date	Event	Place
03.01.2026	International Conference on Advances in Mechanical, Civil and Construction Engineering	Hawaii, USA



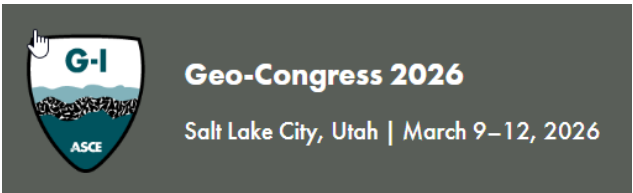
<https://conferencealerts.co.in/event/3377100>

21 – 25.01.2026	FOSS4G-Asia 2026 — Free and Open Source Software for Geospatial	Nashik, INDIA
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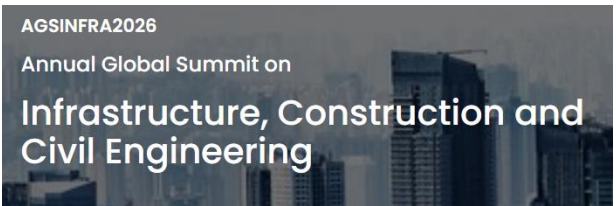
<https://foss4g.asia/2026/>

09-12.03.2026	Geo-Congress 2026	Salt Lake City, UTAH
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<https://www.geocongress.org/>

24- 26.03.2026	Annual Global Summit on Infrastructure and Construction and Civil Engineering	Lisbon, PORTUGAL
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<https://vividglobalsummits.com/2026/infrastructure>

Date	Event	Place
13–16.04.2026	20 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on Engineering, Science, Construction and Operations in Challenging Environments	Texas A&M University, USA



<https://www.asce.org/education-and-events/events/meetings/earth-and-space-2026>

16-17.04. 2026	8 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on Geotechnics, Civil Engineering and Structures (CIGOS)	Ho Chi Minh city, VIETNAM
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<https://cigos2026.sciencesconf.org/>

15-21.05.2026	WTC 2026 — World Tunnel Congress (WTC) and the ITA General Assembly 2026	Montréal, CANADA
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<https://wtc2026.ca/>

Date	Event	Place
03.06.2026	2026 Conference – Connecting Research and Practice	Neuchâtel, SWITZERLAND





## 2026 Conference

<https://www.enisnetwork.com/>

22-26.06.2026	16 <sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Civil Engineering	Athens, GREECE
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16<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Civil Engineering

 22-26 June 2026  Athens, Greece

<https://www.atiner.gr/civileng>

01 – 03.07.2026	ICERS — International Conference of Environmental Remote Sensing and GIS	Zagreb, CROATIA
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<https://alcar.geof.hr/icers-conference/>

Date	Event	Place
02-03.07.2026	XXXII <sup>nd</sup> Global ISSA Construction Conference	Limassol, CYPRUS



**XXXII<sup>nd</sup> Global ISSA  
Construction Conference**

2 to 3 July 2026 | Limassol - Cyprus

<https://www.issa.int/events/prevention/construction-2026-limassol>

07-08.09.2026	CREST 2026 — 3rd International Conference on Construction Resources for Environmentally Sustainable Technologies	Cambridge, UNITED KINGDOM
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<https://engage-events.ifm.eng.cam.ac.uk/IC-CREST2026#/>

20-25.09.2026	8 <sup>th</sup> World Tribology Congress (WTC 2026)	Rio de Janeiro, BRAZIL
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[https://www.wtc2026.org/welcome\\_message/](https://www.wtc2026.org/welcome_message/)

