MISSION STATEMENT
MARCH 2022

EPICUR European University
Updated Mission Statement

Our Vision

Europe has entered an era of radical transition. Seven decades after the launch of its integration project, Europe is facing more complex challenges than ever before, ranging from climate change, a global pandemic, an ageing population and digital transformations to daunting geopolitical tensions. Its universities have a crucial role to play in this context, and they need to undergo far-reaching transformations to answer renewed societal needs and boost their contribution to the public good. This requires unprecedented efforts and creativity within our academic communities.

The EPICUR European alliance is in a unique position to address these challenges. EPICUR brings together the distinctive and complementary forces of its 9 member universities as well as the experience and creative potential of their regions. Its knowledge-creating teams are joining forces to work on some of the most demanding global challenges of our days, including EPICUR's initial priority areas **Sustainable transformation, European values, Global health and Future intelligence**. Such an endeavour requires interdisciplinary approaches and strong connections with our regional academic and socio-economic ecosystems. EPICUR therefore must create a polycentric network of mutually empowering regional knowledge hubs future-proofed for tackling these global challenges.

EPICUR has come a long way since its inception in 2019. We have laid the groundworks to establish a common space for training and research among our universities. EPICUR already created an extensive collaborative infrastructure and has a proven track record of developing and running new learning pathways and formats. These developments come to life in the EPICUR Inter-University Campus and our concept of flipped mobilities, providing a unique space for learning, teaching and researching. Our Model Language Policy has also led the way in turning Europe's multilingualism and cultural diversity into a strength, nurturing intercultural skills, enhancing the inclusiveness of our academic programmes and helping to develop bi- or multilingual universities within the European Education Area.
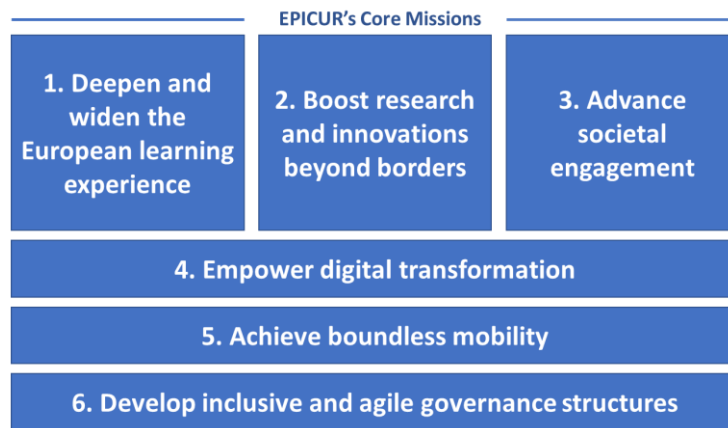
Building on this solid foundation, we are now opening a new chapter in EPICUR's history. Over the next 10 years, EPICUR will strive to foster and develop ever closer collaborations among its academics, students and administrative staff to **become a full-fledged federation of universities offering a European learning and academic training experience to all**. Such an ambition requires setting up an efficient and inclusive governance supported by joint services, integrated training offers and shared infrastructures. It also entails developing a thriving community bringing together our faculty, students and staff across national, linguistic and disciplinary boundaries around European values and a shared sense of belonging.

Our Mission

The EPICUR alliance's core ambition is to **transform education, research and transfer practices and opportunities across its member universities** in order to develop original cutting-edge solutions and train new generations of European change makers able to shape a European society in transition and help overcome the daunting challenges.

This ambition relies on **a shared set of values which stand at the core of the European project**: academic freedom, sustainable transformation, multilingualism and interculturality, and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) throughout all aspects of life. These values shape how we develop our European teaching and learning as well as our research and innovation practices.

Our ambition is structured through **6 core missions** aiming at deepening and scaling-up our ability to offer a European training, learning and research experience on the EPICUR multilingual, research and transfer -inspired and stakeholder-engaging inter-university campus:

EPICUR's Core Missions

1. Deepen and widen the European learning experience	2. Boost research and innovations beyond borders	3. Advance societal engagement

4. Empower digital transformation

5. Achieve boundless mobility

6. Develop inclusive and agile governance structures

Figure 1: EPICUR Missions

1. **Deepen and widen the EPICUR European learning experience.** Building on our initial portfolio of flexible learning formats and mobilities, we will redesign our curricula to integrate shared courses and innovative pathways to offer a truly European learning experience. Joint training and support will be provided to our academics to embrace and adopt innovation in teaching practices.

2. **Boost research and innovations beyond borders.** Academic research and higher education are intrinsically boundless. EPICUR research will go beyond national borders, disciplinary boundaries and frontiers between upstream and applied research. It will actively share its outcomes to inspire socio-economic innovation and help strengthen Europe's worldwide talent attractiveness.

3. **Advance societal engagement.** The dialogue between academia, economy and society is a cornerstone for the idea of a European university. We will continue our efforts to foster an entrepreneurial mind-set among our students and researchers and encourage civic engagement within and across our regions by building on our respective experiences and networks.

4. **Empower digital transformation.** We will transform European university cooperation by developing the digital tools, skills and processes necessary to enable successful and efficient collaborations. Our ambition in this respect is to become the preferred supplier of European independent, public digital teaching & learning platforms for universities and academic networks.

5. **Achieve boundless mobility.** By 2030, all students graduating from our universities will have been offered an EPICUR mobility experience and received recognition for their achievements. Widening access to our education offer, EPICUR will create tools and support measures to live up to EDI standards and enable a successful European learning experience for all, including research and support staff.

6. **Develop inclusive and agile governance structures**. Our ambitions call for efficient and inclusive governance, able to develop and sustain a thriving community across national, linguistic and disciplinary boundaries, united around European values, the challenges pertaining to EDI and a shared sense of belonging.

How we will achieve our objectives

The EPICUR alliance has been designed to achieve together that each of our universities cannot achieve alone. Its ambition clearly exceeds the capacity of its member institutions taken on their own. But it also requires moving past traditional inter-university collaborations and project-based approaches to drive whole-of-institution transformations. Cooperation is in this respect not enough. Integration is in order.

EPICUR will take up the challenge in a stepwise manner by building a federation of universities, a new model of integration which entails:
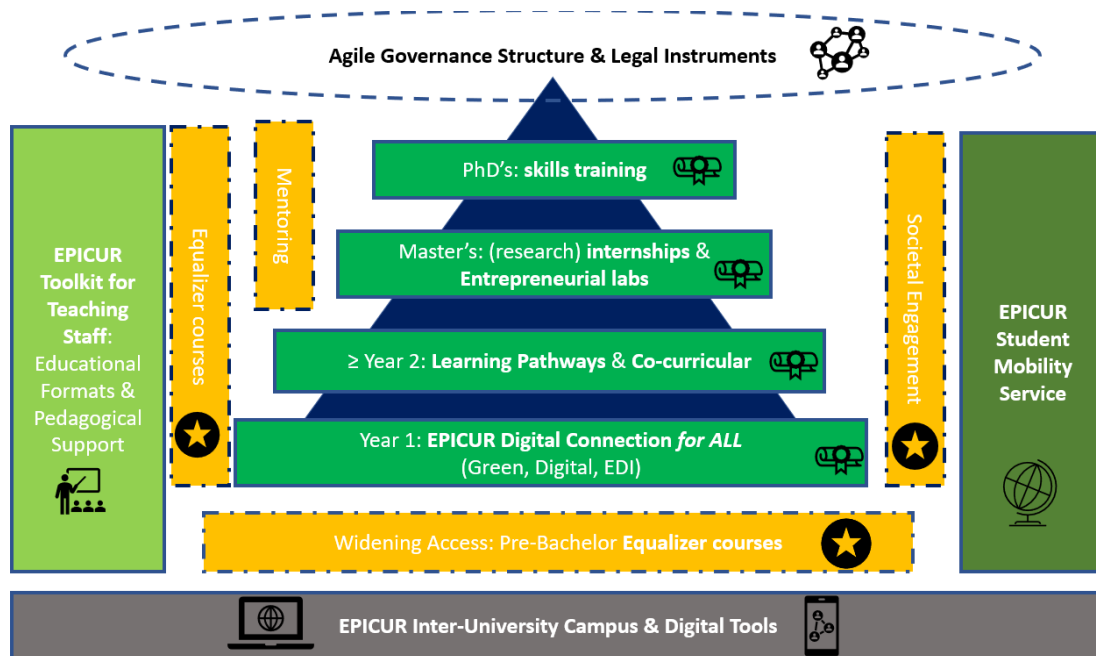
- **Developing sustainable governance structures** catering for substantive long-term integration in teaching and research. This requires setting-up relevant bodies, processes and legal instruments preserving **agility**, fostering **inclusiveness** and buy-in within the community (EDI, Model Language Policy, student participation) and limiting the overall workload;

- **Combining resources and competences to strengthen and scale-up our enabling levers**, most importantly the EPICURUS **joint digital services** (interoperable with European instruments like Europass, Erasmus without Papers and the European Student Card Initiative), our '**flipped mobility**' concept (opening-up institutional resources and facilitate new ways to participate in remote, blended and physical mobilities for all) and our alliance-wide **integrated teaching & training formats** covering all interdisciplinary areas;

- **Facilitating community participation** and enhancing institutional engagement by developing a whole-of-institution approaches through participatory governance, training and support services and communication activities throughout all faculties, departments and professional units. The EPICUR community must live and own the transformation to unleash its full potential;

- **Structuring cross-network collaborations** to disseminate and promote uptake of our tools and procedures **across and beyond Europe**, by actively engaging our partners in FOREU and national forums, and developing cross-alliance collaborations with our associated partners (EPIConnect), regional ecosystems and peer alliances.

EPICUR's Long-term Education Strategy:
EPICUR in 2030

Building on the vision expressed by EPICUR members in the Mission Statement, this document sets out to articulate the strategic goals and initiatives of the Alliance by 2030.

EPICUR's long-term joint strategy for education involves a systemic approach to developing flexible curricula, building on embedded mobility formats and training offers for all learners. Taking a stepwise approach, these learning and training pathways will connect the best of our institutional offerings at the European level. The EPICUR student pathway (cf. figure below) will start on boarding students from all nine EPICUR members from day 1 in their freshman year! Furthermore, the approach will cater for students and learners throughout all stages of academic training: offering embedded mobilities from pre-bachelor through Bachelor's, Master's and PhD as well as after graduation (alumni). In doing so, EPICUR will put the spotlight on empowering students and learners from a wide variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds to benefit from a European learning experience at all stages of their learning journey.

Agile Governance Structure & Legal Instruments

EPICUR Toolkit for Teaching Staff: Educational Formats & Pedagogical Support

Equalizer courses

Mentoring

PhD's: **skills training**

Master's: (research) **internships** & **Entrepreneurial labs**

≥ Year 2: **Learning Pathways** & Co-curricular

Year 1: **EPICUR Digital Connection** *for ALL* (Green, Digital, EDI)

Societal Engagement

EPICUR Student Mobility Service

Widening Access: Pre-Bachelor **Equalizer courses**

EPICUR Inter-University Campus & Digital Tools

By 2030, the EPICUR offer will include seamless student pathways, services and support structures for all staff involved. Ultimately, this approach will enable all students and staff to gain a truly European personalised learning and work experience. EPICUR will ignite systemic change inside out!

Achieve boundless mobility

Making boundless connectivity of students a reality has been a key EPICUR objective from its inception. Against the backdrop of the global pandemic, EPICUR successfully accelerated, piloted and scaled-up the development and deployment of new virtual mobilities, including Learning Pathways and short learning experiences. Despite these successes at alliance level, EPICUR is aware of the inconvenient truth that mobility experiences are still inaccessible to the vast majority of students across Europe. By pursuing an actionable approach of deploying 'flipped mobilities'[1], EPICUR seeks to overcome the long-term hurdles to widening European participation in mobilities and contribute to closing the mobility gap. In doing so, EPICUR aspires to be a lighthouse for other alliances and Higher Education Institutions.

---

[1] In flipped mobility, it is no longer the student who goes on mobility but the mobility that comes to him/her, thanks to several different formats of mobility, whether hybrid, online or physical, as well as resource sharing.

Strategic goals until 2030
- EPICUR Digital Connection 1st year course for all learners
- The majority of EPICUR students will participate in an EPICUR mobility by 2026

Empower digital transformation

In reaching substantial leaps in quality of European Higher Education with specific focus on fostering innovation and inclusion, digital transformation is one of the most fundamental drivers in catering for the needs of students, teaching staff and universities as a whole. EPICUR's achievements in the area of digital transformation during its pilot phase exceeded all expectations: only half-way into the project, EPICUR hit a huge milestone by reaching the point that every course can be shared amongst EPICUR members via the EPICUR Inter-University Campus. Working together in an alliance provides EPICUR members with the complementary expertise and scale to accelerate innovation. At the same time the alliance is committed to guiding responsible digital transformation with a view to preserving independence of the public space for education and research. EPICUR's unique collaborative digital infrastructure gives the alliance the strategic edge and critical mass to achieve both ends, by developing a next-level trusted digital ecosystem made *by universities for universities*.

Strategic goals until 2030
- Design of the next-level Inter-University Campus: EPICURUS
- A network of inter-connected hybrid classrooms across the alliance

Deepen and widen the EPICUR [European] learning experience

EPICUR's initial set of successful Learning Pathways and short mobility experiences in LAS provides a solid foundation for deepening and widening the permanent EPICUR educational offerings. Must-haves in all EPICUR learning experience include immersive European classroom experiences, transition-focused inter- and transdisciplinary approaches (STEAM), and innovative physical, blended, hybrid mobility formats. EPICUR learning experiences are embedded into its members' current study programmes or part of new alliance wide curricula, while leaving room for specific individual learning outcomes. Taken together, these features constitute disruptive, enriching, accessible learning experiences strengthening awareness to a shared set of European values and know-how for international contexts for all EPICUR students and life-long learners. Over and above, that these new learning experiences will help EPICUR members to achieve a substantial leap in quality and contribute to the attractiveness and visibility of European Higher Education at global level. The EPICUR education offer aims to respond to some of the most demanding global challenges of our days such as Sustainable transformation, European values, Global health and Future intelligence.

Strategic goals until 2030
- EPICUR Learning Pathways embedded in local curricula
- EPICUR Joint Teaching and Learning Centre

Advance societal engagement

EPICUR is thoroughly aware of the important responsibility universities carry in finding solutions to help building a more sustainable and resilient European society. Living up to these expectations will require extraordinary scientific and academic training efforts at a European and global scale. In addition, current generations of students are eager to 'feel society' and get prepared for future proof jobs in academia or society-at-large. Over and above that, EPICUR is looking to increase its local impact by sharing results and outcomes with regional stakeholders. For this reason, EPICUR is determined to step-up its efforts in advancing interactions with societal stakeholders.

Strategic goals until 2030
- EPICUR Life-long learning offers to re-skill and up-skill the existing European work force
- A joint framework for Citizen Science

Boost research and innovation beyond borders

As an alliance of comprehensive research universities, strengthening the research-teaching nexus in EPICUR's new mobility formats and permanent EPICUR educational offerings is part of our raison d'être. Moreover, EPICUR is fully aware of the importance of preparing future graduates for a career in or beyond academia, in which they can unleash their knowledge and creativity to boost Europe's societal welfare. EPICUR's specific contribution will, therefore, focus on developing a set of training pathways with a view to boosting opportunities for skills development of graduate students and PhD candidates. These transversal skills include communication skills, linguistic and inter-cultural skills as well as research-based analytical and critical thinking. As such, EPICUR graduates will be fully prepared to take on a role as natural inter-locators to promote knowledge transfer between the alliance and non-academic stakeholders.

Strategic goals until 2030
- Creation of a polycentric network of regional knowledge hubs for Research- and Transfer-oriented Teaching

Develop inclusive and agile governance structures

EPICUR's systemic approach, including the enhancement of seamless student pathways, services and fully-fledged staff toolkits and support structures, requires an agile governance structure that can adapt quickly and facilitates active engagement from all stakeholders across the EPICUR members. EPICUR will hugely benefit from instruments developed during its pilot phase, including the Model Language Policy and EPICUR multilateral Exchange Agreement to reach increased levels of institutional engagement and a sense of belonging to the alliance. Deployment of further joint policies and new or existing legal instruments reflect the gradual development of the alliance into a fully-fledged federation of universities.

Strategic goals until 2030
- Ensure alignment between the EPICUR governance structure and institutional decision-making processes
- Establish a legal framework for the EPICUR federation of universities
- Measure EPICUR's transformational impact through an impact observatory
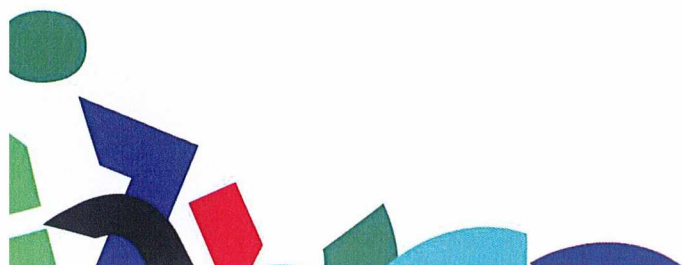
<div align="center">***</div>

The undersigned declares that this mission statement has been endorsed by the relevant decision-making bodies of the *University of Strasbourg*.

Prof. Michel Deneken
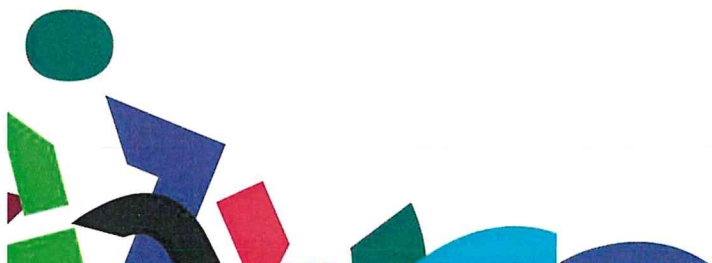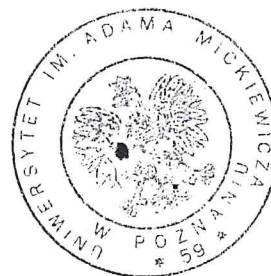Président de l'Université de Strasbourg

P1, UNIVERSITE DE STRASBOURG

The undersigned declares that this mission statement has been endorsed by the relevant decision-making bodies of the *Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań*.

Prof. Dr. Hab. Bogumiła Kaniewska
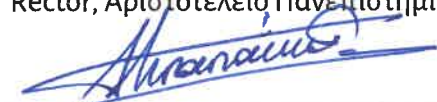Rektor, Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu

P2, UNIWERSYTET IM. ADAMA MICKIEWICZA W POZNANIU

The undersigned declares that this mission statement has been endorsed by the relevant decision-making bodies of the *Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.*

Prof. Nikolaos G. Papaioannou
Rector, Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης

P3, ARISTOTELIO PANEPISTIMIO THESSALONIKIS

The undersigned declares that this mission statement has been endorsed by the relevant decision-making bodies of the *University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna.*

Univ.-Prof.in MMag.a Dr.in Eva Schulev-Steindl
Rektor der Universität für Bodenkultur Wien

P4, UNIVERSITÄT FÜR BODENKULTUR WIEN

Signiert von:	Eva Schulev-Steindl
Datum:	17.03.2022 18:18:14

Dieses mit einer qualifizierten elektronischen Signatur versehene Dokument hat gemäß Art. 25 Abs. 2 der Verordnung (EU) Nr 910/2014 vom 23. Juli 2014 ("eIDAS-VO") die gleiche Rechtswirkung wie ein handschriftlich unterschriebenes Dokument.

Dieses Dokument ist digital signiert!

Prüfinformation:
Informationen zur Prüfung der elektronischen Signatur finden Sie unter:
www.handy-signatur.at

TRUST
einfach sicher

The undersigned declares that this mission statement has been endorsed by the relevant decision-making bodies of the *Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), Karlsruhe.*

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Holger Hanselka
Präsident des Karlsruher Institut für Technologie

P5, KARLSRUHER INSTITUT FUER TECHNOLOGIE

The undersigned declares that this mission statement has been endorsed by the relevant decision-making bodies of the *Université de Haute-Alsace, Mulhouse-Colmar.*

Prof. Pierre-Alain Muller
Président de l'Université de Haute-Alsace

P6, UNIVERSITE DE HAUTE-ALSACE

The undersigned declares that this mission statement has been endorsed by the relevant decision-making bodies of the *Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg*.
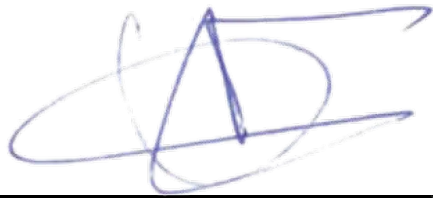
Prof. Dr. Kerstin Krieglstein
Rektor Der Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg

P7, ALBERT-LUDWIGS-UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG

The undersigned declares that this mission statement has been endorsed by the relevant decision-making bodies of the *University of Amsterdam.*
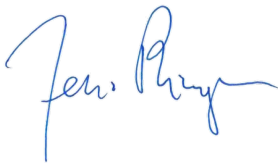
Mw. Prof. dr. ir. K.I.J. (Karen) Maex
Rector Magnificus van der Universiteit van Amsterdam

P8, UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

The undersigned declares that this mission statement has been endorsed by the relevant decision-making bodies of the *University of Southern Denmark.*

Prof. Jens Ringsmose
Rektor for Syddansk Universitet

P9 SYDDANSK UNIVERSITEIT