



EPiCUR
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

EPICUR Annual Report

2024-2025



Co-funded by
the European Union



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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY



EDITORIAL



The academic year 2024 - 2025 marks a key milestone for the EPICUR Alliance. As the EPICUR SHAPE-IT project approaches its final phase, the Alliance is pursuing a double objective: delivering on its current commitments while preparing the next stage of its development beyond 2026.

Six years after its creation, EPICUR has reached a significant level of maturity. A shared vision has progressively emerged among the partner universities, supported by concrete and structuring achievements. The development of EPICURUS (EPICUR Unified System), the Alliance flagship illustrates our collective capacity to design innovative, visible and sustainable solutions for cross-institutional education and research at European level.

Clear priorities now guide EPICUR's actions. The development of our learning offer through learning pathways represents a major strategic focus, closely linked to the work on the European degree label, as well as the future EPICUR Master Degree offering a triple diploma.

By moving beyond a simple aggregation of courses, EPICUR aims to offer coherent European learning experiences that reflect the Alliance's distinctive approach.

Looking ahead towards 2030, EPICUR aims to evolve into a confederation of universities, strengthening cooperation while fully respecting the identities and strengths of each partner.

JEAN-MARC PLANEIX
STRATEGIC COORDINATOR

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MOBILITY, TEACHING & LEARNING

EPICUR Alliance continues scaling up its support to educators by providing hybrid events, trainings and tools that support cross-institutional collaboration. At the same time, EPICUR advances its educational offer, expanding and integrating programmes that combine physical and digital mobility, by working on new joint programmes on topics that are important for the European Higher Education Area. The EPICUR Forum 2025 that focuses now on educators, further reinforced the educational cooperation, generating concrete ideas for joint activities and strengthening connections across the Alliance.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR ALL

FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EPICUR TRAINING PROGRAMME

The main strategic representatives of the EPICUR partner institutions came together during the EPICUR 2025 Governance week (Karlsruhe, July 2025) to discuss the state of play of activities, align strategies and propose clear directions for the development of the EPICUR teaching and learning offer.

One of the main accents was put on **the development of EPICUR Learning Pathways, a flexible framework based on a competence-based approach and learning outcomes** that allows students to add a meaningful study trajectory to their degree programmes. They complement largely disciplinary curricula by:

- Fostering an interdisciplinary or unidisciplinary approach to learning;
- Strengthening intercultural competence, collaboration, and communication skills.

Each Learning Pathway created across and between EPICUR partner institutions brings together **a set of modules, which may be mandatory or optional and will often contain a short physical or hybrid mobility**. On completion of an EPICUR Learning Pathway a student could potentially gain ECTS credits, an EPICUR certificate, and when available a micro-credential.

The EPICUR Executive Board agreed in their July 2025 meeting to **open at least 4 new EPICUR Learning Pathways in the 2026-2027 academic year**.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

THE EPiC TLC

In 2024-2025, the EPiC TLC (EPICUR Centre for International Teaching and Learning) continued to advance teaching and learning across the Alliance by building and supporting the Community of Practice, offering a virtual space for collaboration, resource sharing, and professionalisation. With its continuously growing community of educators and teaching support staff, offering events and trainings both in person and via the virtual space, **the EPiC TLC plays a vital role in advancing high quality international education across EPICUR**.

In its second year, the EPiC TLC has already surpassed the original KPI of 450 registered users that was to be reached by the end of EPICUR-SHAPE-IT. The continuous membership growth as well as interest in EPiC TLC events, trainings, and workshops reflects **the growing demand for alliance-wide support in teaching and learning** and underscores the EPiC TLC's relevance as an alliance-wide joint service.

The platform has contributed significantly to increasing cross-institutional collaboration within the Alliance. For example, **the EPiC TLC developed and launched a CoTeachConnector Tool as to facilitate teaching collaborations across partner institutions**. In August 2025, it counted 45 profiles. The asynchronous support for innovative, international educational development was also of a great demand among EPiC TLC public, as well as its Best Practice Guide.

 **159**
available courses


 **2317**
available seats

 **840**
student participations

 **321**
users registered on platform during the academic year

 **643**
total users registered on the EPiC TLC platform

 **200+**
participants to the EPiC TLC events

 **11**
events, workshops, trainings

EPICUR MASTER DEGREE IN EUROPEAN GEOPOLITICS, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND LAW (EGISL)

EPICUR continues to expand its educational offer and strengthen inter-university cooperation. A major milestone in this process is the development of its first joint Master's-level study programme - **the EPICUR Master's in European Geopolitics, International Security and Law (EGISL)**.

This initiative reflects EPICUR's ambition **to broaden learning opportunities, promote seamless student mobility, and establish an innovative transnational model of education**. Jointly designed by the University of Strasbourg (Unistra), Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU), and the University of Southern Denmark (SDU), the programme will combine physical and virtual learning formats and integrate both European and international studies.

Building on 3 existing Master's programmes, the EGISL will enable the creation of an **integrated curriculum enriched with EPICUR modules** that align with the programme's core themes. This approach optimises resources and enhances collaboration through shared academic expertise and infrastructure.

EPICUR FORUM FOR RESEARCHERS AND EDUCATORS

The EPICUR Forum 2025, hosted by the University of Southern Denmark (SDU), brought together **78 participants from across the Alliance** to strengthen collaboration within the theme of Sustainable Transformation. The Forum aimed to connect teachers, researchers, and educational developers across 4 thematic areas to co-create ideas for joint learning activities.

Over 1.5 days, participants took part in **workshops, keynotes, exploratory sessions, and networking activities** - resulting in the development of 13 concrete ideas for educational collaboration. Evaluation feedback confirms that the Forum enhanced understanding of EPICUR, inspired future cooperation, and fostered meaningful academic relationships across partner universities.

Sub-themes discussed by the participants:

Sustainable Construction & Cities

Talking Climate: Communicating Change & Adaptation

New Technology as a Lever for Sustainable Health Systems

A Sustainable Future: Circular Economy & Smart Resource Management

September 2024

Foundation Phase

The first stage focused on identifying potential partner institutions, and on creation of a consortium between Unistra, AMU and SDU. The partners established the programme's strategic vision and academic foundations for the next stages.

December 2024

Curriculum Design and Alignment

The consortium began working on the curriculum and ensuring its academic consistency. Based on the programme mapping carried out during the Foundation Phase, complementarities across institutions were identified to support an integrated programme design. The curriculum was refined and aligned to ensure a coherent structure.

May 2025

Drafting the Cooperation Agreement

This stage marked the beginning of drafting the Cooperation Agreement, the document that formalises the programme's organisational structure, and operational framework.

August 2025

Delivery of Key Drafts

By this date, the consortium had produced the first version of the curriculum and the initial draft of the Cooperation Agreement. These two documents form the basis for the next stage, during which the consortium will finalise all academic and administrative elements in 2025/2026 to ensure the programme's launch in 2026/2027.

91%



According to the post-event evaluation, 91% of respondents felt they had gained new knowledge or inspiration on how to develop EPICUR research and/ or learning activities. This shows that the Forum effectively translated the Alliance's vision into tangible opportunities for engagement and collaboration.

Additionally, 94% of respondents reported that they made useful professional contacts during the Forum.



DIGITALISATION

EPICUR's vision is to offer unique opportunities to students and staff to participate in new ways of learning via innovative types of mobilities and course offerings. Those enhance the educational experience shaping the future European citizens. High-quality digital services and tools play a crucial role in this mission. As such, EPICUR is tightly connected to digitalisation, and this is demonstrated through the tangible results that have been produced such far.

As part of its core missions, the EPICUR Alliance has promised to develop digital tools, skills and processes necessary to enable efficient collaborative efforts across different university institutions within Europe. The digitalisation of the different processes related to the management of student mobilities in European institutions is regarded as revolutionary, expected to greatly simplify and offer great help in achieving the seamless facilitation of the corresponding services. **EPICUR aims to become the preferred supplier of European independent, public digital teaching & learning platforms for universities and academic networks.**

Thus, **EPICUR has developed the EPICUR Inter-University Campus (EIUC), an ecosystem that integrates different systems and platforms, which led to the creation of EPICURUS 1.0.** This enables a number of administrative procedures to be completed digitally, along with features that facilitate other important facets of the educational environment, such as course recognition and the facilitation of different kinds of mobility. Further improvements and finetuning steps, such as the interconnection of VURS (Virtual University Registrar System) with EU initiatives such as European Interoperability Framework, as well as its exploitation of other alliance's systems, are being pursued, especially with the view on the successful delivery of EPICURUS v.2.

As the digitisation of all educational resources is central in today's academic environment, highlighting the functionalities of EPICURUS 1.0, and especially VURS, is essential to moving forward. Moreover, it further accentuates the EPICUR Alliance as a whole, which can only aid in establishing its position as **one of the primary and leading figures across the rest of the European University Alliances.** During this year, VURS was explicitly presented and referred to in the European Higher Education Interoperability Framework (HEIF), resulting from the European Digital Education Hub and its Higher Education Interoperability Workgroup. EPICUR and its digital infrastructure was presented in a number of other outlets, for instance the Learning Impact Europe conference held in Barcelona in September 2024. The increased visibility was also highlighted by the number of **different alliances who openly expressed their interest in using VURS.**

During this academic year, **BOKU University inaugurated its own EPICUR hybrid classroom which was created in collaboration with Facility Management architects, AV-Technic and Didactics.** The student-centred seminar room is situated in the Ilse Wallentin Building (seminar room ILWA SE 25) and supports innovative forms of teaching and learning. The room is specially designed **to promote hybrid teaching and learning methods and to enable flexible use for face-to-face and online participants.** The flexible room concept and so-called "Meeting OWLs" also make it possible to organise group work virtually. The aim is to create a modern, interactive learning environment that meets the requirements of future-orientated higher education.

EPICUR team:

The space will significantly strengthen international visibility and networking, as well as innovation in teaching. The room is essential for collaboration in EPICUR, as we can now offer targeted teaching events in which innovative and experimental teaching formats involving the partner universities and their students are possible. The technical possibilities of the room are really great and BOKU has become a little bit more "future proof".

BOKU-IT/AV-Technic:

Thanks to the collaboration between EPICUR, teaching and building, and project management, a seminar room has now also been equipped with technology for hybrid teaching formats. [...] From BOKU-IT's point of view, the recognition value of the technology and standardised handling for the lecturers are particularly important.

Didactics:

With the right preparation and the right tools, teachers can maximise the benefits of these formats while overcoming the challenges. In the future, technological innovations such as virtual reality or artificial intelligence could further enrich hybrid formats and make teaching even more interactive.

RESEARCH AND TRANSFER

The Alliance is scaling up its engagement with society by advancing Citizen Science initiatives, making research more visible and accessible to the civil society. It also fosters stronger links between education and research through a financial scheme that ties collaborative interdisciplinary projects to teaching activities, encouraging mobility and supporting Early Career Researchers (ECRs). Finally, the launch of interdisciplinary hubs with tailor-made educational offer with thematic courses and lecture series, supports sustainable transformation and real-world problem solving.




ADVANCING THE CITIZEN SCIENCE

Active dialogue and exchange with societal stakeholders is an indispensable feature of EPICUR's education and research offer. Currently **the society is in need of solutions developed by universities**, and therefore seamless connections are needed beyond the education naturally provided, in order to make this knowledge available to the public.

By connecting citizens, society and science, **EPICUR aims to increase the public awareness of the importance and actual outcome of research**, and make science more accessible and comprehensible for the general community.

During the academic year 2024-2025, one of EPICUR's Citizen Science actions was **the Citizen Science Competence Development Programme** developed by Citizen Science Knowledge Center at SDU. The programme consisted of an online course and a summer school which could be followed separately. The online course was opened 1st of March and had 2 rounds (March-April and April-May) in the Spring 2025. The summer school took place 24th-25th of June in Odense.

 **133**
signed-up participants

 **80%** of them
were researchers

 **2931**
Views on the platform

 **80%**
Think to be able to apply CS

Most of the participants were researchers from many different research areas. They evaluated the online course positively, and most felt **competent to apply Citizen Science in both theory and practice to their work**.

SEED FUNDING SCHEME

The EPICUR Seed Funding scheme was born out of a vision that strengthening the synergies between education and research while ensuring the engagement of researchers/ teachers is fundamental to achieve the Alliance's mobility objectives. To receive funding the partners agreed that **a project must combine both the future submission of a collaborative research project and a teaching activity**.

The call for projects was open from 8th of July 2024 until 30th of September 2024. The projects will last for 12 months with mid-term meetings to assess progress being held during the Autumn 2025.

 **67150**
average project budget

 **30** scientific expert
evaluators

 **7**
funded projects

 **22**
researchers involved

The set-up of a joint scheme is seen as a strategic investment: it initiates a coordinated effort **to stimulate research partnerships and ensure a more efficient allocation of resources** than if each university were to independently create incentives for collaboration within EPICUR.

The EPICUR Seed Funding scheme is supported entirely through the member universities' own financial resources, and not through European funding.

n-SECBO: Unistra (lead), SDU, AMU, UFR; Border region studies, European Integration, Social science

REGENERATE: BOKU (lead), KIT, SDU, UFR; Social Ecology, Climate Research, Green Technology

SusPhotoPoly: KIT (lead), UHA; Photoresponsive Materials, Green Chemistry, Sustainable Materials

NAMASUTE: Unistra (lead), SDU, AMU, AUTH; Nano-optics, Photonics

GAME: BOKU (lead), UFR, KIT; Forrest value chain management, Environmental and natural resources

DEPMOOD: SDU (lead), UvA; Health science, Psychiatry

DILPBLAB: BOKU (lead), UvA, UFR; Social Ecology, Environment and Resources

EPICUR HUBS KICK-OFF

The EPICUR Hubs are a centralised platform for learning, networking and knowledge-sharing across the EPICUR Alliance, ultimately **supporting career development for Early Career Researchers (ECRs)**.

The EPICUR Graduate Hubs Kick-Off event took place on 8th April 2025, marking the official launch of **the first thematic hub on Sustainable Transformation**. The event attracted 225 participants from all EPICUR partner universities, as well as external stakeholders - partners from industry and civil society.

Following the successful launch, the EPICUR Hubs introduced new Hubs-branded courses within the EPICUR Course Catalogue in April 2025. **The EPICUR Hubs offer currently includes both thematic and transversal courses, as well as joint lecture series** specifically designed for the Hubs: Transformative Cities and Issues of Environment and Sustainability.

These courses, open to Master's students and ECRs, exemplify **EPICUR's commitment to interdisciplinary and sustainability-oriented learning**, offering participants opportunities to engage with real-world challenges through research-based collaboration across European institutions.

74 PhD/ Doctoral Candidates

66 Other roles

52 Master's students

33 Postdoctoral researchers

32 Senior professors

28 EPICUR-SHAPE-IT Staff members

11 Junior professors





SOCIETAL ENGAGEMENT

EPICUR values connecting citizens, society and science at the Alliance and inter-alliance levels. EPICUR therefore commits to actions that engage citizens across Europe and thereby increase their understanding of the global challenges that unite us across the continent.

THE ERASMUS GENERATION MEETING

From 3rd to 6th April 2025, Paul Favre, EPICUR Mobility Officer at University of Strasbourg (Unistra), and Marta Winkler from Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU) attended the Erasmus Generation Meeting, organised by Erasmus Student Network, the biggest student-led conference in Europe.

Paul Favre moderated **the session "Rethinking International Mobility in European University Alliance"** along with a FORTHEM Alliance representative. As a speaker, he also attended **the round-table "Building bridges: student participation in co-creating European Universities Alliance"**, organised by FOREU4ALL project, alongside Ulysseus European University, EC2U Alliance and Una Europa.

At the same time, Marta Winkler promoted EPICUR Alliance and answered questions from students about EPICUR and its initiatives.



SUPPORTING UKRAINIAN UNIVERSITIES: DIGIUNI PROJECT

University of Strasbourg (Unistra) and Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU) continue to support the Ukrainian Higher Education Area. From 1st to 4th October 2024, **Unistra organised a training course as part of the DigiUni project** (Digital University - Open Ukrainian initiative) funded by Erasmus+ (2023-2027). The training was designed to equip members of the DigiUni project team with practical knowledge on creating digital platforms, cooperation mechanisms and best practices in related areas. The aim was not only to share theoretical knowledge, but also **to provide tools and strategies that can be immediately applied**, such as consortium creation, digitisation, distance learning and course creation.



26 participants
in DigiUni project



36 participants in the training,
including rectors and vice-rectors



19
speakers

GOVERNANCE

EPICUR continues to work towards more sustainable and inclusive governance structure that will fully reflect the needs and capabilities of partner institutions. At the same time, the thematic committees are providing the governance bodies with their expertise in different strategic topics.



GOVERNANCE

The Alliance governance is designed to enable and facilitate the development of a vision, mission and actions for a common space for learning, training and research between the 9 partner institutions.

After two years of experimentation with a structure that aimed to move beyond project management processes and reflect existing university governance structures, thus encouraging the integration of the Alliance within each partner institution, several adjustments were advanced to render decision-making more efficient and agile. This included **clarifying the roles between the different layers of the strategic governance and detailing the competences of the operational governance level**. As a result, the Alliance has progressed on a number of strategic initiatives during the year including: the enhancement of the Alliance strategy through the definition of 5 priority working areas; the adoption of a teaching & learning policy with a focus on Learning Pathways and integrated learning experiences. Steps towards establishing a legal entity or enlarging the Alliance members have been prioritised as medium to long-term objectives.



8/9 Rectors/Presidents participated in at least one of the 3 meetings during the year of which 2 in-person.
4 Rectors/Presidents participated in all 3 meetings.



On average 6 vice-rectors/vice-presidents and 4 senior management/Professors participated in each of the 9 meetings during the year.
4 in-person/ hybrid meetings were organised.



22 strategic governance meetings organised: 15 individual, 1 combined board meeting and 1 governance week.

EPICUR THEMATIC COMMITTEES

After their creation during the academic year 2023-2024, the thematic committees worked tirelessly on providing the working groups with their expertise and supporting EPICUR governance's strategic decisions.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- ✓ Strengthened EPICUR's teaching and learning offer
- ✓ Relunched learning pathways across EPICUR's partner universities
- ✓ Provided input on the creation of common degrees
- ✓ Provided institutional frameworks for developing micro-credentials

RESEARCH & TRANSFER COMMITTEE

- ✓ Provided recommendations and evaluated Seed Funding project calls
- ✓ Discussed priority research areas for the Alliance
- ✓ Provided feedback on the EPICUR Research (SwafS) project
- ✓ Created proposals for connecting technology transfer offices and research infrastructure offices

DIGITAL STRATEGY COMMITTEE

- ✓ Provided strategic feedback regarding the interoperability of the partner universities' digital systems and the set-up of hybrid classrooms
- ✓ Provided feedback regarding the exploitation of the Virtual University Registration System (VURS)
- ✓ Discussed the future of digitalisation in the Alliance, linked to the usage of AI tools

MOBILITY COMMITTEE

- ✓ Provided strategic feedback on the set-up of a mobility office and the integration of first year students into the Alliance mobility offerings
- ✓ Provided advice for the successful set-up of the EPICUR mobility scholarship

STUDENT BOARD

- ✓ Met twice on-site: at the University of Freiburg (UFR) in November 2024 for the election of the new Executive Committee, and at the University Haute-Alsace (UHA) in March 2025
- ✓ Met with student associations to discuss student involvement on local and European levels
- ✓ Started working on an assessment report to analyse EPICUR's outputs in terms of student interests, with the ultimate goal to provide input for the +2 phase (2026-2028)
- ✓ The Student Board consists of 15 students from 9 EPICUR partner universities, including a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Communication Officer and a Secretary



EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS BOARD

- ✓ Met at the University of Freiburg (UFR) in June 2025 in order to provide the perspectives of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in EPICUR's outputs
- ✓ Published regularly its stances on EPICUR's work and accompanied the different rounds of the Seed Funding Initiative, through critical feedback and active participation in some of the projects
- ✓ Focused on recruiting new ECR Board members from the different universities, improving communication towards ECR's and updating their Terms of References



COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

The communication and dissemination activities of EPICUR are designed to ensure the success of the Alliance, both internally by providing regular updates to local communities and externally. This involves promoting the progress and overall successes of the EPICUR Alliance to a European and international public, resulting in the participation of our colleagues in dissemination actions and enhancing EPICUR's influence within the European Higher Education Area.



EXCHANGES WITH EUROPEAN COMMISSION

EPICUR participated in the European Commission-organised high-level and coordinators meetings "**Shaping the future: European Universities alliances for a competitive Europe**" held in Brussels on 26th and 27th February 2025.

During the closed meeting of European Universities Rectors and Presidents on 26th February, taking place in the presence of European Commission Executive Vice-President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs, and Preparedness, Roxana Mînzatu, **Rector Peter-Paul Verbeek (UvA) represented the EPICUR Executive Board** in a direct roundtable exchange with Executive Vice-President Mînzatu. The session focused on the future of the European Universities initiative, as well as on **the strategic role of the alliances** in the context of the upcoming Union of Skills initiative, for driving transformation, progress and reducing fragmentation in the European higher education sector.

CHOOSE EUROPE!

The EPICUR Alliance, represented by the University of Strasbourg was present at the launch of "**Choose Europe**" at the Sorbonne University in Paris on 5th May 2025, where presidents Emmanuel Macron and Ursula van der Leyen called for Science to fuel Europe's progress and competitiveness. In the afternoon, Strasbourg University Vice-President for academic partnerships and EPICUR Strategic Coordinator Jean-Marc Planeix took part in roundtable at a high level workshop at the French Ministry of Higher Education on the "Future of European Universities alliances: progress and developments".

FORUM OF ALLIANCES IN WROCLAW

On 12th and 13th June 2025, the University of Wrocław organised the "Forum European Universities Alliances". Prof. Rafal Witkowski, Vice-Rector for International Cooperation, Karolina Choczaj, EPICUR Institutional coordinator, Dominika Dąbrowska, EPICUR Project Manager (all from Adam Mickiewicz University - AMU) and Sabine Menu, EPICUR Liaison Officer in Brussels (University of Strasbourg - Unistra), represented the Alliance. **This Forum is a continuation of events serving as a platform for dialogue and exchange of experiences**, bringing together academic and administrative representatives of individual networks, national agency officials, and policymakers.

EAIE 2024

From 17th to 20th September 2024, EPICUR participated for the first time to the European Association for International Education (EAIE) conference in Toulouse (France), alongside with more than 20 European Universities alliances. This conference is the most important event dedicated to the internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe and the second largest in the world!

During the conference, Alison Garnier-Rivers (Unistra) and representatives of partner institutions met with European decision makers and promoted EPICUR by disseminating its results and successes and sharing the EPICUR experience. More than 30 EPICUR annual activity reports 2022-2023 were distributed, and the document received a positive feedback not only from peer alliances, but also from the European Commission representatives.



EPICUR IN FOREU4ALL

FOREU4ALL, a community of practice between the 65 European Universities alliances and 7 Seals of Excellence, provides a collaborative and supportive platform to share best practices, exchange experiences, and strengthen cooperation.

EPICUR, through its coordinator (University of Strasbourg), is a full member of the Erasmus+ project launched on 1st November 2024 that drives this initiative. As co-lead of the work package developing the community of practice, Unistra guides together with the other members of the WP Board **the implementation of the 20 cross-alliance topical groups and the organisation of transversal workshops**, two of which will take place in Strasbourg in 2026 and 2027.

Additionally, Prof. Thrasylvoulos-Konstantinos Tsiatsos (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), is currently co-chair of the IT & Digitalisation topical group, which aims to develop shared solutions, influence legislation, and contribute to the construction of a more connected and secure European Higher Education digital ecosystem.

 **22** participants
in FOREU4ALL topical
groups

 **4** participants in chairing teams
of topical groups



EPICUR HIGHLIGHTS 2024-2025

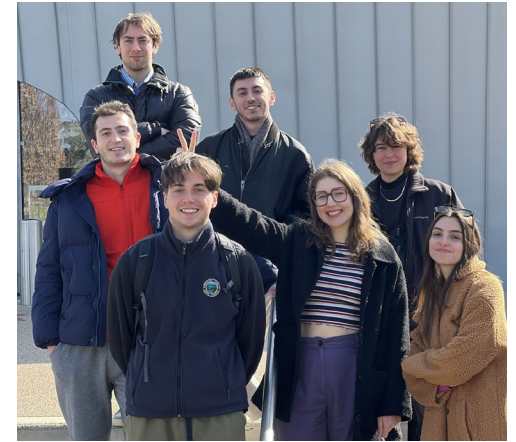


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p. 32-33 - Maxime Lantz
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p. 37 - Margarita Ialtryr
p. 38 (from the top left to the bottom right)
- Maxime Lantz (2), Marina Jones (UFR), Sandra Göttisheim (KIT), AMU, Margarita Ialtryr
p. 39 (from the top left to the bottom right)
- Margarita Ialtryr, Widad Talbiri, Maxime Lantz, SDU, Teona Goreci, Taha Musullu

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