Innovative mobility formats and what about the 50% mobility ambition?

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TCA European University Alliances, 3 April

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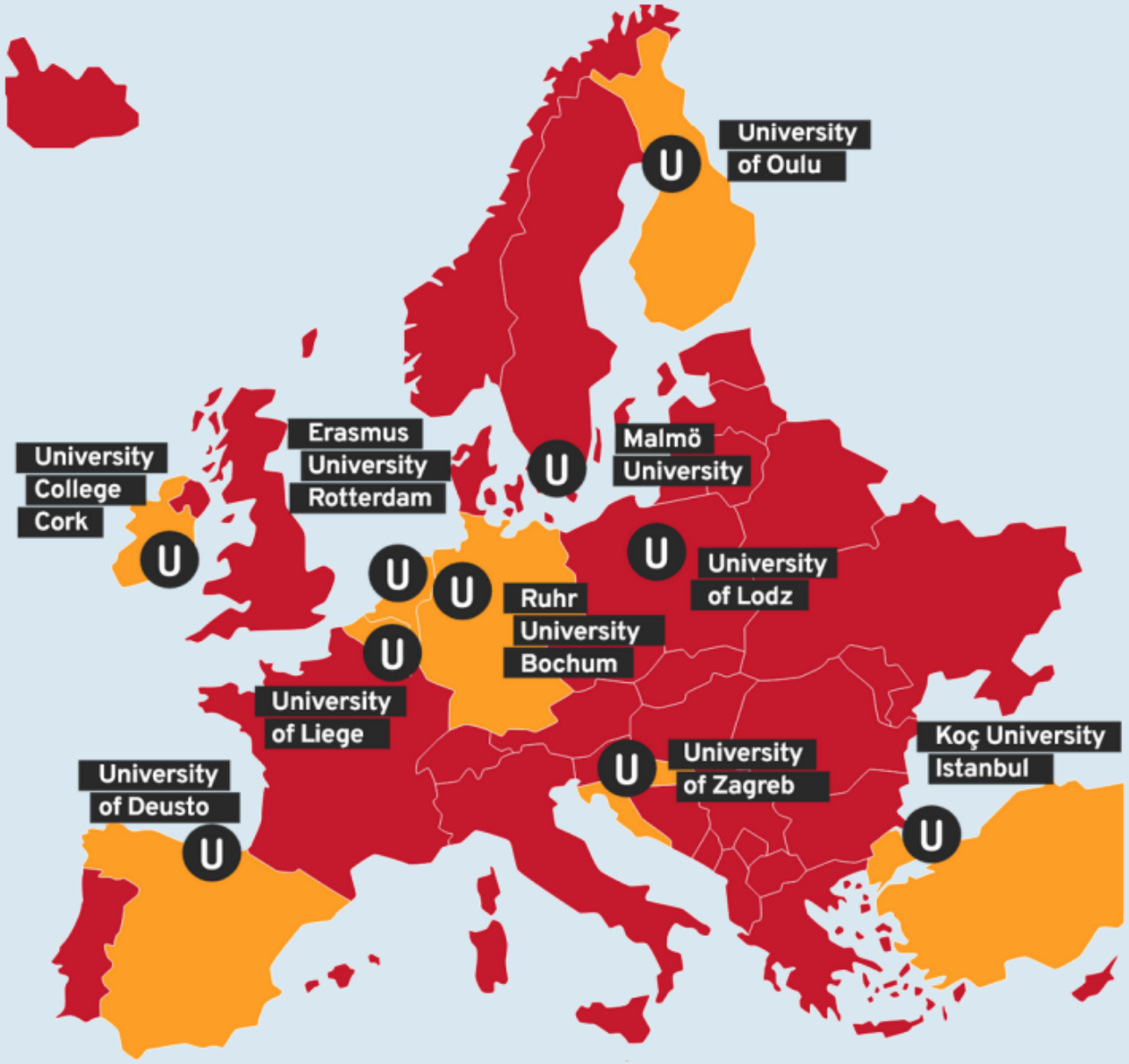
UNIC mobility

Committed with virtual mobilities

formats

Co-funded by the European Union

UNIC universities



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Université de Liège
(University of Liège, Belgium) •
Uniwersytet Łódzki
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Malmö universitet
(Malmö University, Sweden) •
Oulun yliopisto
(University of Oulu, Finland) •
Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam
(Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands) •
Sveučilište u Zagrebu
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(University of Deusto, Bilbao, Spain) •
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Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh
(University College Cork, Ireland) •

TIMELINE

UNIC kicks off in October 2020

2020

UNIC launches **free online language modules**, a celebration of linguistic diversity. Hundreds of students and staff members have started learning. UNIC's **Handbook on Physical and Virtual Mobility** unveiled.

2021

UNIC4ER, our research program and focus on **Engaged Research,** launches. It has since developed a UNIC Seed Fund, Open Science Campus, and an Engaged Research Declaration for collaborative research for, and with, society.

UNIC's Erasmus Mundus joint masters programme **RePIC - Redesigning the Post-Industrial City** - launches across eight universities.

2022

2023

UNIC's new phase kicks off October 2023

Highlights UNIC 1.0

WP1					
8 Universities and City Councils	7 EU Member States and Turkey	277,000 Students	20 million Citizens (City Populations)	29,000 Staff	+2 New Partners - Malmo and Lodz
WP2					
1 Joint Governance Structure	16 Student Board Representatives	8 Cultures of Governance and ICT mapped	2 Universities in European Student Card pilot	1 Virtual Campus for 8 Institutions	8 Mobility Hubs
WP3					
1 Handbook on Physical and Virtual Mobility	2 UNIC Joint Master Degree Programmes	5+ Joint Degree Programmes	400+ UNIC Online Opened Courses	8 Online Language Modules	24 Teacher Trainings
WP4					
1 Superdiversity Academy	2 Academic Seminars on Superdiversity	1 Superdiversity Classroom Guide	6 Superdiversity Schools	400 Buddy Couples	120 Open Cases on Superdiversity
WP5					
1 Systematic Lit Review + Benchmark Analysis	50 Pop-up CityLabs	48 Virtual Meeting Platforms	3 International CityLabs Festivals	7 Academic Publications on CityLabs	195 CityLabs cases in Open Case Repository
WP6					
1 Communication and Dissemination Plan	4 UNIC Conferences	80+ Targeted Mailings	75,000 Website visits / year	1184 LinkedIn Engaged Followers	100+ UNIC events across the consortium

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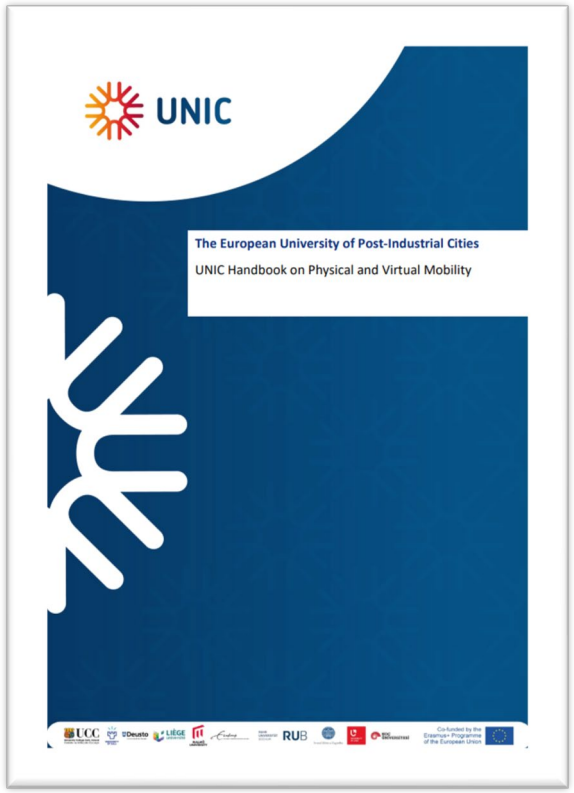
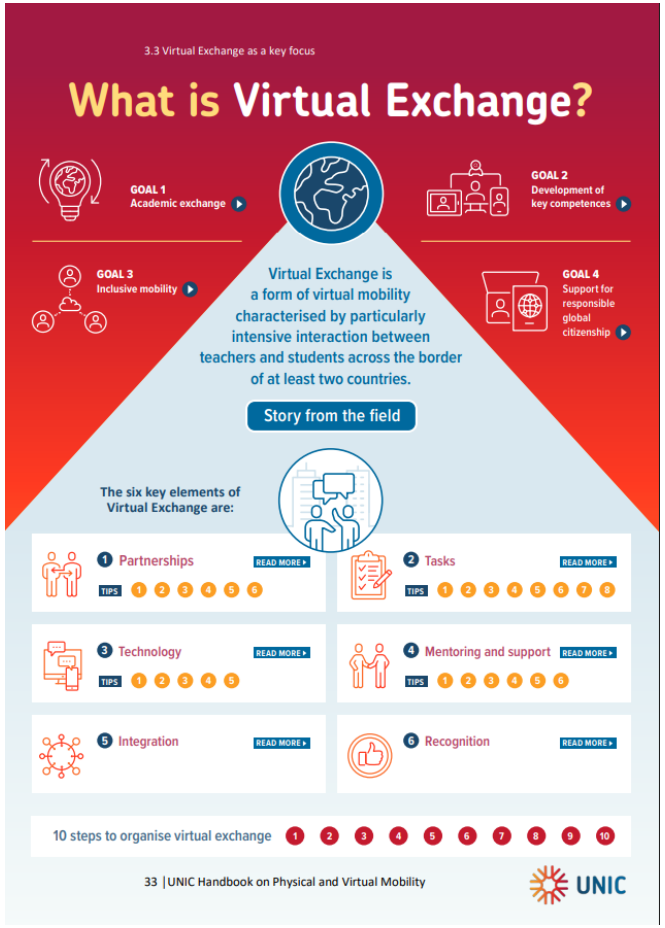
Handbook UNIC 1.0





8.1 What teachers can do – reflection checklists

The following checklists could help teachers in reflecting on their teaching and designing it in a more intercultural way. The blank fields are for teachers' individual reflection and thoughts. The topics of the checklists are based on the explanations in chapter 2.

Expectations, roles and rules – reflection checklist

	What could I do/change in my course? How can I encourage my students to use the new measure?	How can I explain it to my students and encourage them to ask questions about the measure?	How did it work?
a) **Put yourself into the place of an international student**: where would you see yourself stumble, where need extra explanations?			
b) **Formulate clear learning objectives** and communicate them both verbally and in the material accompanying your course.			
c) **Follow the principles of UDL: ensure multiple means of engagement, representation and expression.**			
d) **Respect and integrate time for getting to know one another and explaining different university systems**. Have a written description of all tasks.			
e) Not all students have connections to other learners in the group outside of class. **If you want your students to participate in group work, make sure to organise this in class**.			
f) **Integrate an intercultural aspect into the learning objectives, students' tasks and the assessment**.			
g) **Explain the teaching and learning culture considering how this might differ elsewhere**.			
h) Since the **understanding of deadlines** can differ according to cultural character, the more or less binding nature of them in your course must also be explained.			

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Commitment to Virtual Mobility UNIC 2.0

UNIC Alliance commits to virtual mobility for the following reasons:

•**Enhanced Internationalization:** Virtual mobility diversifies and amplifies internationalization
opportunities

•**Inclusive Global Engagement:** Virtual mobility fosters equitable opportunities regardless of economic means or personal circumstances.

•**Sustainability in Learning:** Embracing an environmentally conscious approach. It significantly reduces carbon footprints compared to physical journeys.

•**Catalyst for Exploration:** Virtual mobility incentivizes and overcomes barriers for students hesitant to travel abroad.

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Mobility formats UNIC 2.0

Virtual mobility:
- UNIC **Lightning Bites** sessions: 6 different online sessions of 30 minutes each, spread out over one week. Each Lightning Bites event has a different topic and is organized by a different UNIC partner
- **Open Online Courses** (OOC): regular courses, fully delivered online, that offer places to students from UNIC partner universities for free

Physical mobility:
- UNIC **City Labs**: 25-30 students from EUR attend a UNIC City Lab at another UNIC partner.
- Summer courses at a UNIC partner: thanks to external funds A.A. van Beek Fund
- **International Student for a day:** one-day trip to a UNIC partner close by (reachable by bus)
- Staff exchange + Staff week: Communications staff week at EUR (2024)
- **Mobility of our student board representatives**: UNIC conference, UCC Sustainability Week, ...
- Joint Degrees: UNIC masters (RePIC and SEOS) + promoting joint and double degrees between partners.

Blended Intensive Programs (BIP):
- **BIP funding** sometimes pre-allocated by the National Agencies and sometimes based on applications
- **Guidelines and workshops for teachers** (e.g. BIP for UNIC educators guide)
- UNIC also actively supports teachers through **funds (the VIP fund) and trainings (InterTeach** programme)

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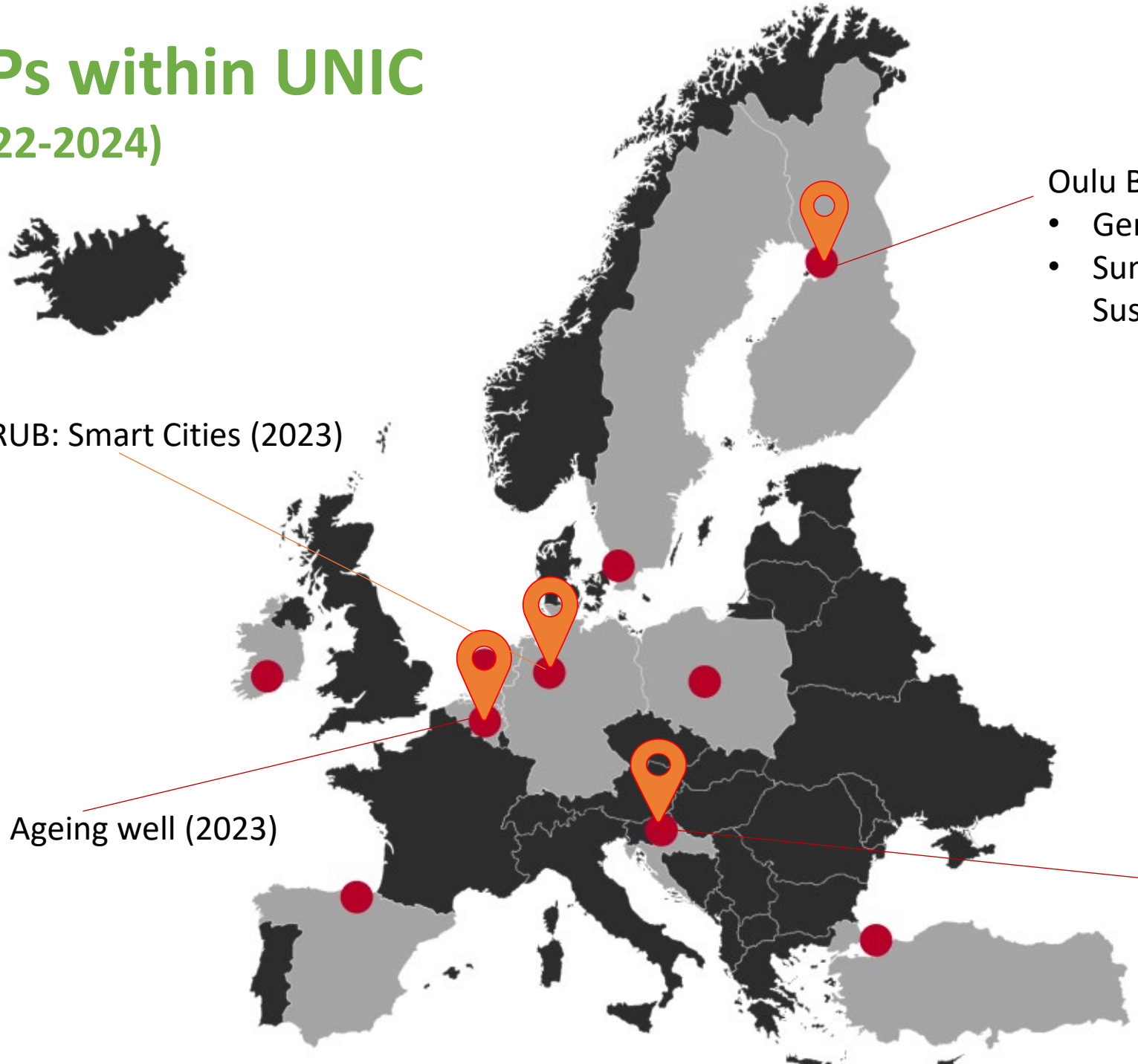
BIPs within UNIC

(2022-2024)



Oulu Business School:

- Generations' Lab (2022)
- Summer School BIP Resilience and Sustainable Development (2024)

RUB: Smart Cities (2023)

ULiège: Ageing well (2023)

UZagreb: Summer school BIP on Mathematics (2024)

BIP for UNIC educators guide

Webinar 1 April 2025 offered by UNIC partners

1. "Start **planning early**"
2. "Provide a clear and transparent structure and organisation"
3. "Recruit **more students than the minimum requirement**"
4. "**Involve the international office** in planning"
5. "Facilitate collaborative & **interactive methods** (esp. online)"
6. "Include social and **cultural activities** (esp. in physical mobility)"
7. "Maintain **close communication with partners** & students and develop a good working relationship with your partner teachers and international offices"

(O'Dowd & Werner 2023)

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Stay in Touch

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→ Six focus areas

- Health and Well-being
- Digitalization
- Climate Change
- Energy and Circular Economy
- Equity
- Culture and Creativity

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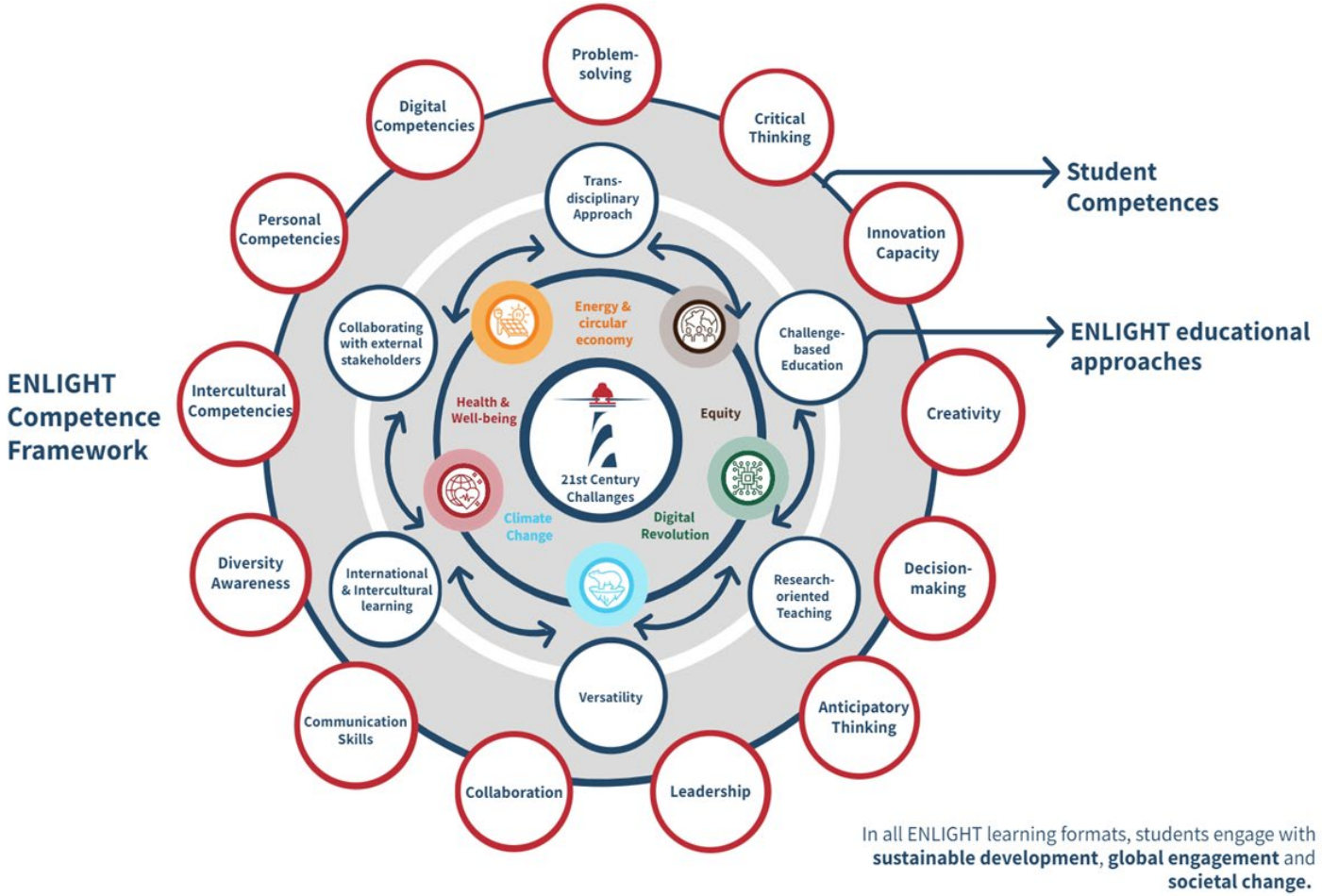
ENLIGHT MISSION

- Establish an **open space** where students, teachers and researchers have easy access to education and research across the network
- Promote international learning by increasing access to **flexible, future-proof learning opportunities**
- Stimulate **knowledge-creation** with maximum impact by supporting interdisciplinary, international academic teams



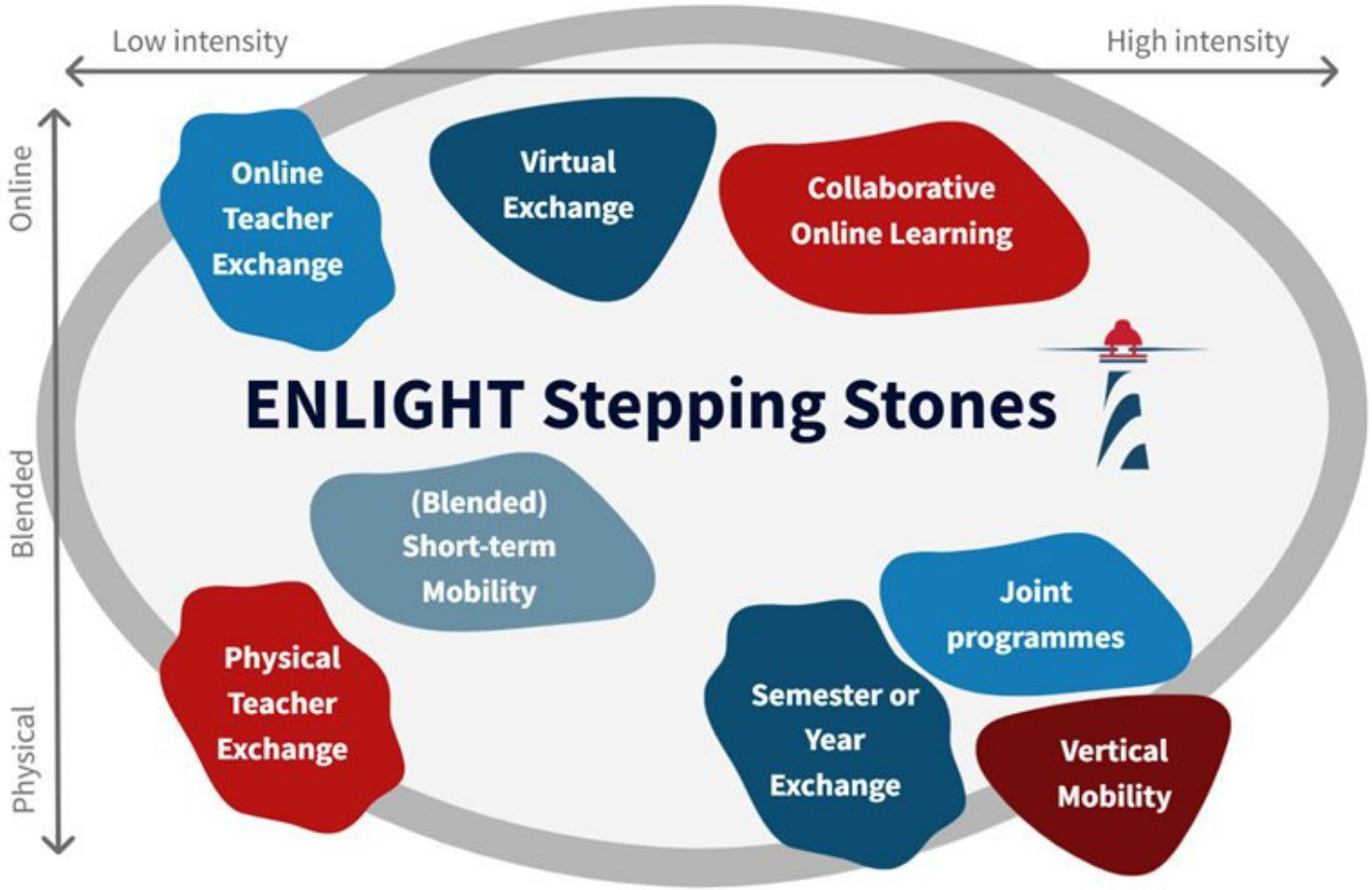
STEPPING STONES

- Framework for integrating flexible "windows" for international learning experiences in curricula

- ENLIGHT calls: funding to develop joint educational initiatives, **strand for joint programmes.**

Challenges:

- Usually bottom-up process
- Many hurdles (admin/leg/fin)*
- Rationalisation

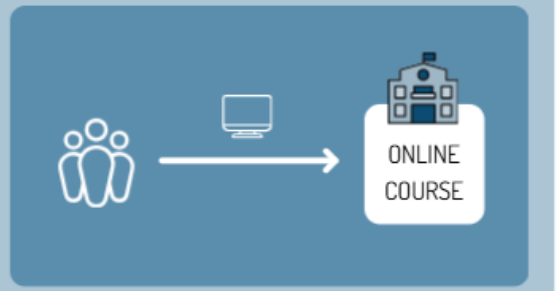


** Example Flemish Ministry: light-weight procedure accreditation Erasmus Mundus + European Universities*

NEW VIRTUAL/BLENDED MOBILITY FORMATS

Importance of recognition: "no mobility without recognition"

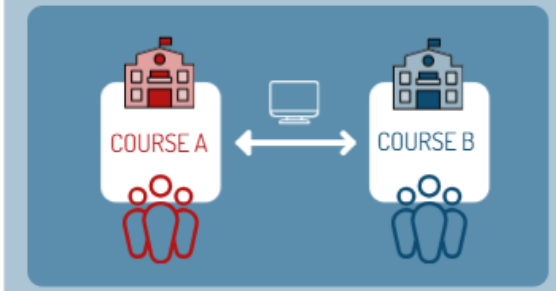
VIRTUAL MOBILITY



Students take an online course of another institution outside their own country, without physically leaving their home. Credits or certification are recognised at the respective home institution.

Also known as: online (distant) course

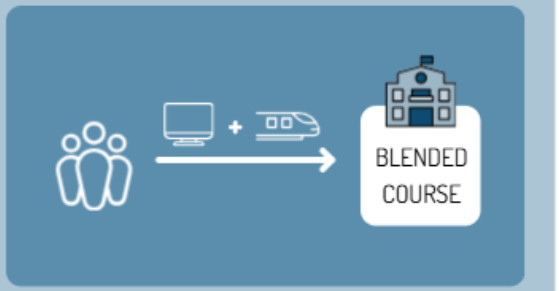
VIRTUAL EXCHANGE



Student groups from courses at different universities, come together online to undertake collaborative activities. Students are enrolled in and obtain credits at their home university.

Also known as: COIL, virtual teams, online intercultural exchange, joint classroom

BLENDED MOBILITY



Students take a blended course at another institution outside their own country, which includes an online component and a physical component. Credits or certification are recognised at the respective home institution.

Also known as: blended intensive programme (BIP)

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NEW VIRTUAL/BLENDED MOBILITY FORMATS

- Blended mobility: ENLIGHT piloted 39 BIPs (2020-2025)

  - Positive feedback from students
  - Opportunity to work interdisciplinary
  - BIP Erasmus+ scholarships available
  - inclusive due to short duration

  - High workload, small group of students
  - Difficult recruitment process (top-down..)
  - Difficult registration process
  - Different student information systems
  - Different interpretation of rules by National Agencies

- Virtual mobility/virtual exchange: 12 ENLIGHT pilots

  - Low threshold to participate
  - Cooperation between academics

  - How to monitor student participation?
  - Cf. above..

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INNOVATION IN PHYSICAL MOBILITY ?

- ENLIGHT multilateral Erasmus+ agreement: staff, BIPs and (limited) student mobility
- Drafting ENLIGHT joint PhD Framework Agreement
- Is there margin to increase/shift physical mobility?
  - Limitations: housing, resources (funding, HR, logistics)
  - Opportunities: bold choices, underestimated formats, geopolitics?
    - Shift in agreements? Ex Uppsala: central agreements ENLIGHT only - Ex UGent
    - MA thesis, double degree schemes, fixed mobility windows, vertical degree mobility..
    - Geopolitics: focus more on Europe?
  - Condition: strategic decisions, make it structural, communicate with your partners

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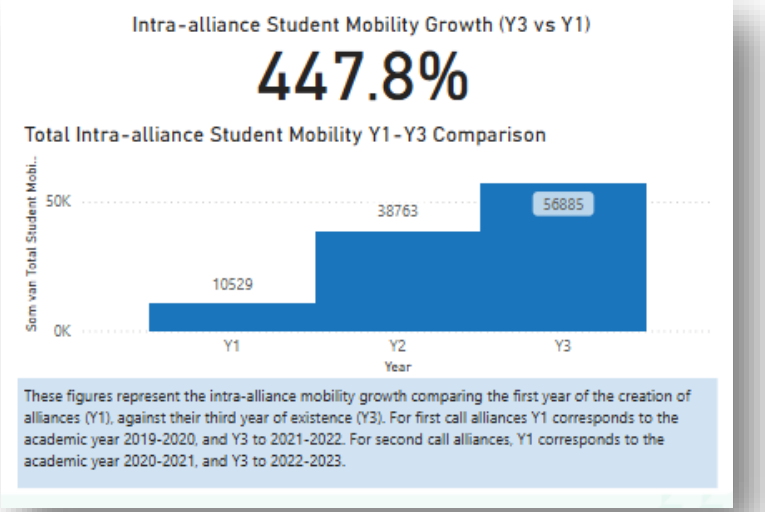
50% MOBILITY TARGET

- "I can prove anything by statistics except the truth" (George Canning)
- Unclear definition – different interpretations by alliances
  - 50% of which cohort?
  - What is "mobility"
  - 2023 Council Recommendation: 25% (Europe on the Move)…
- Reporting required:
  - Intra-alliance mobilities
  - Per academic year
  - Per funding source: alliance + other
  - Per mobility type: virtual, blended, physical
  - Students (BA-MA-PhD) + staff



Graph: power BI tool EU

- Need a systematic approach in data collection for all mobility types + the tools to track!

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50% MOBILITY TARGET: ENLIGHT APPROACH

- Mobility: learning/training/teaching experiences – "credit-bearing international learning experiences"
- Mobility numbers:
  - All mobility funded by to KA131,107 ("regular Erasmus", physical + blended)
  - All mobility funded via alliance + other sources: our Excel activity tracker (manual tracking!)
- Cohort: ideally # graduates with an international experience DURING their curriculum (not # students registered)
- We report 4 options (ex 2022-2023):
  - % of total student body with internat. experience "intra-alliance": 0,58%
  - % of total student body with internat. Experience to any partner: 2,74%
  - % of graduates with internat. Experience "intra-alliance": 2,74%
  - % of graduates with internat. Experience to any partner: 17% (if DURING studies: 19%)

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PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS?

- What innovative mobility formats has your university implemented through the alliance?
- What challenges have you faced in reaching the 50% mobility target?
- What strategies do you think could help achieve the 50% mobility target?
- How do you envision the future of European University alliances in terms of mobility and collaboration?