

From Widening to Transformation:

European Universities
as Engines of Inclusion and Innovation

17-18 June, 2026

Venue: NCBR Centre, Rue Belliard 40, 1040 Brussels, Belgium

Programme

Day 1 – "A Shared European Vision"

13.30 – 14.00 Registration and Welcome Coffee

14.00 – 15.00 Opening of The Conference

- **Waldemar Dubaniowski**, Director of NCBR Brussels Office
- **Prof. Arkadiusz Wójs**, Rector of Wrocław University of Science and Technology
- **Prof. Cecília Maria Pereira Rodrigues**, Vice-Rector of ULisboa Representing ULisboa

15.00 – 15.30 "A Shared European Vision" - Inauguration Lecture

- **Diana Jabłońska**, Director for Youth, Education and Erasmus+ within the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC)
- **Joerg Niehoff**, Deputy Head of Unit ERA, Spreading Excellence & Research Careers, DG R&I

15.30 – 16.30 "Bridging the Gap: Academic and Policy Insights into European Research Integration" - Individual presentations, followed by Q&A

- **Prof. João Freitas Coroado**, The President of the Polytechnic University of Tomar and President of the KreativEU Alliance
- **Brigitte Hasewend**, Director and Member of the Governing Council of the European Sustainable Energy Innovation Alliance (ESEIA), Director International Strategic Research Partnerships (ISP) at TU Graz.
- **Peter Hošťák**, PhD, Leader of the research management team at FunGlass -TnUAD, coordinating the GlaCerHub Excellence Hub and CLiCAM ERA Talent projects
- **Prof. Nataliya Shakhovska**, Rector of Lviv Polytechnic National University

Focus: Experiences and Perspectives in research, innovation, and collaboration across Widening and Non-Widening partners; policy and academic insights; discussion of shared European objectives.

16.30 - 16.50 Coffee break

16.50 – 18.20 “Widening in Practice: Successes, Challenges and Lessons for European Universities” - Roundtable discussion followed by Q&A

- **Mattias Björnmalm**, PhD, Secretary General of CESAER (Conference of European Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research)
- **Prof. Célio Gonçalo Marques**, Vice-President of the Polytechnic University of Tomar and Secretary-General of the KreativEU Alliance
- **Prof. Vivien Quema**, President of Grenoble INP - UGA university and President of the Unite! European University Alliance
- **Prof. Nataliya Shakhovska**, Rector of Lviv Polytechnic National University
- **Prof. Arkadiusz Wójs**, Rector of Wrocław University of Science and Technology (WUST), Vice President of the Unite! European University Alliance

Moderator: **Ricardo Miguéis**, Phd, Head of Office of INESC Brussels HUB

Focus: Experiences of integrating less research-intensive universities into EU initiatives, highlighting successes, challenges, and lessons learned

18.20 - 20.30 Networking Reception & Cocktails

Day 2 – “Widening and institutional transformation”

09:00 – 09:30 Coffee and Networking

09.30 – 10:30 “Bridging Research Capacity and Institutional Transformation in Europe” -

Keynote speeches

- **Prof. Josep M. Garrell**, President of the European University Association
- **Prof. Manuel Heitor**, Full Professor at Instituto Superior Técnico and Director of the Center for Innovation, Technology and Policy Research, IN+
- **Prof. Leszek Kaczmarek**, Professor at the Nencki Institute of Experimental Biology (PAS) and Member of the ERC Scientific Council

10:30 – 10:50 Coffee break

10:50 – 11:50 “A Strategic Look from Key Actors” - Roundtable discussion

- **Prof. Josep M. Garrell**, President of the European University Association
- **Prof. Manuel Heitor**, Full Professor at Instituto Superior Técnico, Lisbon and Director of the Center for Innovation, Technology and Policy Research, IN+
- **Prof. Leszek Kaczmarek**, Professor at the Nencki Institute of Experimental Biology (PAS) and Member of the ERC Scientific Council

- **Prof. Renata Krzyżyńska**, Vice-Rector for Research and Innovation at Wrocław University of Science and Technology (WUST), Vice-President of T.I.M.E. Association
- **Krzysztof Kuik**, Director, Clean Planet Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, European Commission
- **Moderator: Prof. Fátima Montemor**, Instituto Superior Técnico da Universidade Lisboa, Unite!Widening Project Coordinator

Focus: Exploring strategic pathways to bridge innovation gaps and amplify the collective impact of cooperation across the European Research Area. By discussing strategies to empower education actors, the panel aims to foster a more cohesive and globally competitive scientific ecosystem.

11:50 – 12:00 Break

12.00 – 13:00 “Widening & EUI as Catalysts for Transformation” - Moderated discussion followed by Q&A

- **Prof. Raquel Barreira**, Polytechnic University of Setúbal, Representative EUDRES
- **Magdalena Sikorska**, Phd, General Secretary, EUNICE
- **Prof. Bernard Vanheusden**, Rector of Hasselt University, Chair of the Flemish Interuniversity Council

Focus: Exploring how European University Alliances drive institutional transformation and innovation, and how widening participation supports these efforts to achieve ERA ambitions.

Moderator: Anshika Suri, Deputy Secretary General Unite! University Alliance

13:05 – 13:20 Closing Remarks, Presentation of Draft Conclusions and Announcement of Follow-Up Actions

- **Prof. Fátima Montemor**, Unite!Widening Project Coordinator
- **Prof. Agata Klaus Rosińska**, Wrocław University of Science and Technology Unite!Widening Project Coordinator