



CIVICA

THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES

Our Vision for 2035

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CIVICA, The European University of Social Sciences unites ten leading European higher education and research institutions in the social sciences, humanities, business management and public policy. The alliance brings together **Bocconi University, Central European University, the European University Institute, the Hertie School, IE University, the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Sciences Po, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, the Stockholm School of Economics and the London School of Economics and Political Science.**

Mission Statement: Our Vision for 2035

This mission statement reaffirms our commitment to shaping an enduring European University Alliance and outlines a joint vision for 2035. We pledge to defend institutional autonomy and academic freedom, expand excellence in education and research, enhance our contribution to society, foster a diverse and inclusive community and build a framework for sustainable institutional cooperation. Through these efforts, we will solidify CIVICA's leading position in the social sciences, allowing us to make our mark on the global stage.

As we look ahead, the context within which we pursue this mission is becoming ever more complex and global events are placing increasing pressure on European life. Democracy and academic freedom are facing growing threats and Europe must confront difficult choices on security, demographic shifts, the green and digital transitions, as well as wider social and economic strains. For Europe to thrive, universities must be at the heart of efforts to respond to these challenges and **CIVICA is committed to playing a leading role.** As the European University of Social Sciences, we are uniquely placed to provide **research that informs public debate and guides policy making and we embrace the responsibility of nurturing the values, skills and**

critical thinking that equip the next generation of Europeans to contribute to a just and inclusive society.

Building The European University of Social Sciences

To realise this ambition, CIVICA is forming a truly integrated European inter-university campus, where access to innovative and flexible learning opportunities reaches across the continent and world-class research shapes the future of social sciences. We seek to foster vibrant communities, in which students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds are empowered and contribute to an ever stronger global footprint.

Our alliance embraces its civic responsibility for current and future European generations. CIVICA will continue to serve local and global communities and to defend the **core European values of academic freedom, autonomy, rule of law, solidarity, diversity and inclusion, openness, innovation and environmental sustainability**. Our mission is to build bridges between academia and civil society and to support policymakers in designing effective policy responses.

Since our foundation in October 2019, we have established sustainable governance bodies, common management structures and transnational teams of faculty, staff and students that bring to life our mission and vision at all levels of education and research. **CIVICA's governance structure encompasses all facets of the alliance and is guided by the principle of 'one CIVICA'.**

Our model has proven its resilience time and again. As an alliance, we have collectively withstood the shocks of Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine, as well as the forced removal of Central European University from its original home in Budapest. By enduring these trials, we have demonstrated that our alliance is built for durability and sustained cooperation.



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CIVICA has a key role to play in Europe's future. We are guided by the long term direction, set out by the European Council, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Member States of the European University Alliances, as the roadmap for our future. Our institutions already benefited from decades-long relationships, prior to the European Universities Initiative. We are now building on the significant achievements of its initial phases, as well as the strong support provided by policy developments at the European level. Given these foundations, CIVICA has reached a level of institutional maturity, allowing us to consolidate and deepen our collaboration.

This maturity and ambition are clearly evident in the way we work together. We not only welcomed two new partners seamlessly in 2022, but empowered them to take on fully active and influential roles from the outset. **Our growing cohesion allows us to make a meaningful impact within and beyond the EU,** from strengthening EU-UK academic ties, to supporting communities affected by conflict.

The enduring partnership with the London School of Economics and Political Science, a founding and privileged associate partner exemplifies this impact in practice. It stands as a beacon for harmonious and constructive EU-UK relations in the post-Brexit era, showing how **shared values and ambitions can transcend political shifts.**

We are also proud of our close and deepening ties with five Ukrainian universities. In response to Russia's ongoing invasion, we have moved beyond expressions of solidarity to pursuing active collaboration with our Ukrainian partners, placing us at the heart of efforts to **strengthen ties between the EU and Ukraine.**

Our success in forging strong institutional bonds does not exist in isolation. It is closely aligned with European policy frameworks that guide the development of higher education and research across the continent. **CIVICA actively supports the implementation of key European policy objectives.** This includes our ongoing commitment to the European Strategy for Universities and Bologna Process, ensuring compatibility, transparency and quality across European higher education. In parallel, we contribute to the Union of Skills agenda, by providing innovative cross-border learning opportunities and equipping our communities with the competencies needed for a competitive and resilient Europe. Furthermore, in alignment with European Universities policy priorities, we remain committed to exploring steps toward a common legal status for alliances and contributing to the implementation of the European Degree.

We will continue monitoring new European developments in higher education and research and support practical implementation of policy initiatives. Through these efforts, we help **strengthen the international standing and competitiveness of the European Education Area and European Research Area,** thus reinforcing Europe's position on the global stage.

Building on our alignment with European policies and our strengthening partnership, **CIVICA is turning its focus to the major transitions steering Europe's future.** These developments in sustainability, competitiveness, security, democratic governance and the digital and green transformations inform our vision for 2035 and guide the areas where we can make the greatest contribution.

To support this effort, our focus will be on advancement in the following key areas: **education, innovation and lifelong learning, research and scientific priorities, service to society, the continued development of a CIVICA community, global outreach and sustainable institutional cooperation and common infrastructure.**

Education

Education is at the forefront of our vision of a cohesive European academic space, with CIVICA partners advancing a shared and interoperable learning environment. **Our inter-university campus connects physical and digital ecosystems**, enabling growing numbers of students and early-stage researchers to benefit from enhanced mobility mechanisms and joint education offerings that respond to evolving societal and disciplinary needs.

This approach is exemplified by the CIVICA Engage Track, a multi-campus undergraduate experience that links CIVICA institutions and combines research-rich, international and multidisciplinary learning with civic engagement.

Beyond teaching and mobility, CIVICA is also strengthening the foundations that make such opportunities possible, extending access to academic resources through **close collaboration between our university libraries, guided by the principles of open science and breaking new ground in resource sharing.**

Together, these efforts lay the foundations for flexible and inclusive learning pathways, allowing growing numbers of students to combine courses across institutions and engage in collaborative opportunities. Our approach reflects a commitment to developing programmes that respond to evolving societal and disciplinary needs, while aligning with European frameworks for quality and recognition, paving the way for initiatives such as the European Degree.

As research-oriented institutions, we draw directly on the latest academic insights to inform our education offering. Together with CIVICA's challenge-based initiatives, this ensures students and early-stage researchers acquire the skills and competencies needed to confront emerging societal challenges. Guided by the principles of SHAPE (Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts for the People and Economy), **CIVICA is especially well positioned to prepare the next generation of social scientists.** Our students and early-stage researchers gain the capacity for critical analysis, creative thinking and responsible action, enabling them to tackle entrepreneurial endeavours, support digital and green transitions and address socio-economic issues across Europe.

Innovation and lifelong learning

CIVICA has integrated flexible and innovative learning approaches that support lifelong learning principles and align with the EU's higher education priorities. We seek to cast a wide net, not only reaching our students, but also non-traditional learners.

CIVICA values diversity in career paths and will provide learning opportunities for individuals at all stages of their academic or professional journey. We are expanding flexible and inclusive learning opportunities, such as joint Executive Education initiatives and micro-credentials that respond to needs in the labour market and wider society. In line with the Union of Skills framework, **these programmes will offer alternative ways to acquire knowledge across disciplines, helping learners develop skills that strengthen their employability and help confront societal challenges.**

Research and Scientific Priorities

CIVICA is an alliance of research-intensive universities. Our aim is to give a European voice to social sciences research, creating new knowledge that addresses the most pressing social issues of our times. Research informs all education and outreach activities and we will continue to deepen research collaboration, within and beyond the alliance.

CIVICA has long concentrated on specific thematic priorities, which serve as the focal points for integrated research and education activities. In light of the challenges faced by Europe, we are updating our focus to ensure our research remains forward-looking and serves the needs of our communities. Building on our existing foundation, we are expanding from four to five thematic priorities: **Democracy in the XXIst Century, Societies in Transition, Crises of Earth, Europe Revisited, Data-Driven Technologies and AI for the Social Sciences and Security and Resilience.**

To advance these themes, CIVICA will pursue integrated research and education activities across its inter-university campus, ensuring that research insights directly inform teaching and learning. The resulting knowledge will contribute to policy debate, while strengthening the educational experience of students and early-stage researchers. In line with CIVICA's commitment to open science, results will be disseminated in openly accessible formats, broadening access to knowledge and maximising societal impact.

To support our scholars, we are building a world-class joint research environment. We promote the circulation of people and ideas across our institutions, engaging researchers at all stages of their academic careers, from PhD students and postdoctoral researchers to faculty members. Our research and the sustained involvement of our scholars not only seeks policy-oriented outcomes, but also

strengthens the education dimension of our institutions, feeding into curricula and teaching and reinforcing the long-term sustainability of the alliance.

Building on our collaborative approach and expertise, CIVICA also seeks to foster the development of research and innovation capacities across Europe, supporting institutions that are still developing their infrastructure and capabilities. By sharing best practices, we aim to contribute to a more balanced and inclusive European Research Area and European Education Area, ensuring that the benefits of scientific progress are widely accessible.

Service to Society

Civic engagement is at the core of CIVICA's identity. We train diverse groups of citizens and prepare them for an engaged public life, following the European ideal of 'United in Diversity'. **Our vision for 2035 prioritises robust civic participation at the local, national and European levels for the entire CIVICA community.**

Our work towards this vision begins with inclusion. We aim to lead by example across the higher education landscape by **promoting the ideals of diversity, equity and inclusion** within and beyond our institutions. Through *CIVICA For All*, we are providing a safe and respectful space for students from marginalised groups, including first generation students, minorities, refugee learners and students with disabilities. The platform offers tailored resources and practical guidance that allows them to continue their studies in a supportive environment.

This dedication to inclusion extends to our work with partners in Ukraine. Our *CIVICA for Ukraine* initiative is strengthening cooperation and dialogue with five Ukrainian universities, fostering academic ties and supporting communities affected by the war. Through joint activities, mobility



opportunities and knowledge exchange, we are contributing to the resilience of higher education in the country and are supporting reconstruction efforts.

Looking ahead, our engagement also extends to shaping Europe's higher education landscape. Through *FOREU4ALL*, we make significant contributions to the co-creation processes that support the future design of the European Universities Initiative. In doing so, we help ensure that the perspectives of all our communities inform the evolution of a more inclusive and socially responsible European Education Area and European Research Area.

Creating a CIVICA Community

CIVICA is fostering vibrant communities of students, early-stage researchers, faculty and staff. Our students and ESRs play an active role in shaping the alliance, both on their campuses and through alliance governance. CIVICA ambassadors continue to expand their reach and impact with each new cohort, while student representatives are playing ever more significant roles at the highest levels of alliance decision-making.

We attach particular importance to engaging our faculty in teaching and research, as well as offering diverse opportunities to share best practices and create new avenues for joint initiatives. Meanwhile, researchers have established scientific networks and university staff are raising standards across the alliance through communities of practice and exchanges, which act as platforms to disseminate knowledge and expertise, as well as catalysts for closer collaboration.

Together, these initiatives prepare students to participate in society and civic life, by developing skills beyond the classroom. They also raise standards across our universities. In the years ahead, this sustained engagement will continue to strengthen CIVICA's impact and advance our community.

Global Outreach

Since 2019, we have been building a robust and cohesive alliance. **Now CIVICA is setting its sights on the wider world.** The next step is to establish itself as a globally recognised voice. We will expand our international presence through strategic partnerships with both academic and non-academic actors, including NGOs, multilateral organisations and think tanks. We will also participate in international forums and conferences, sharing our expertise.

Through this engagement, **CIVICA will strengthen its influence on global debates, enhance collaborative research and education opportunities and reinforce the alliance's contribution to the international standing of the European Education Area and European Research Area.**



Sustainable Institutional Cooperation and Common Infrastructure

CIVICA is an ambitious alliance that is establishing **systemic and long-term cooperation, based on shared values and principles**. By combining the strengths and commitment of all members, **our alliance generates clear added value for Europe**. The innovative models for governance and academic integration that we have implemented, consolidate prior achievements and enable measurable progress towards CIVICA's long-term objectives.

Our alliance stands on the solid foundations of six years of transnational partnership. **We will continue to strengthen institutional ties and thereby serve as a model of good practice, demonstrating the quality and international competitiveness of European higher education. Sustained by this enduring collaboration, CIVICA is poised to achieve its vision for 2035 and beyond.**

As leaders of our respective institutions, we endorse this long-term mission statement and affirm that it reflects the shared vision and priorities of our institutions.



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Leaders of the member institutions of CIVICA - The European University of Social Sciences:

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