

Transform4Europe:

The European University for
Knowledge Entrepreneurs
Erasmus+ European Universities
EPP-EUR-UNIV-2020
Project No. 101004048
02/10/2023

TRANSFORM4EUROPE: THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY FOR KNOWLEDGE ENTREPRENEURS

Tranform4Europe Week Implementation Report

Lead Beneficiary

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transform4Europe Week was planned for the Pilot edition at the University of Silesia in Katowice in May 2022 with participants from all 7 universities, involving representatives of all academic groups: students, academic and administrative staff as well as management. The event took place at the university campus in Katowice, Cieszyn and Sosnowiec. The number of participants amounted to ca. 250 participants.

In 2023 it has been decided that T4EU Week will not take place simultaneously at all institutions, but a schedule of events will be prepared starting in the spring semester 2022/2023, ending in the early winter semester 2023/2024. T4EU Weeks were mostly targeted to consortium students or PhD students.

Students were a target group at:

- Vytautas Magnus University,
- University of Silesia
- Saarland University,
- Alicante University,
- University of Trieste,

PhD students were a target group at:

- Estonian Academy of Art in Tallinn – PhD students in artistic disciplines
- Sofia University – PhD students

Additional activities were prepared for administrative and research groups, always accompanied by cultural programmes, with the aim of making participants acquainted with local history, art and cuisine. Meetings of consortium decision-making bodies were held at some events as well – Management Board and Institutional Coordinators.

The number of student/PhD student participants was approximately 50–70 at each event.

2. TASK DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

2.1. Concept

The Transform4Europe Week was designed as short-term inclusive mobility options that boosted the internal and external visibility of the alliance and the intra-alliance mobility of students and staff. Travel gave both students and staff a chance to meet people from other countries, experience new cultures and gain a global perspective.

Transform4Europe Week Concept & Pilot Plan was prepared after consultations with partners. The date for the pilot of the event was set for **9–13 May 2022** in **Katowice**. From November 2021 till April 2022, activities for each target group – students, PhD students, academic and non-academic staff and members of governing bodies were developed.

The programme comprised following streams: educational, doctoral, researchers, administrative, artistic – cultural, and social.

2.2. Implementation and communication

The pilot edition was carried out in May 2022 at the University of Katowice with the attendance of representatives from all partner universities. The preparation of the event involving selection of educational courses from all partner universities and subsequent recruitment of students was very complex and required intensive communication and coordination.

The number of admitted ECTS and their recognition became problematic both in planning and implantation phases. It was due to the delivery of classes by professors from different partner universities, where different number of ECTS was considered for a number of classes and student involvement planned.

Online participation in the classes was made possible for remote participants. Making classes available in a hybrid format along with preceding and succeeding online sessions, posed an organisational and administrative challenge, also due to technical issues.

Simultaneous organisation of governing bodies meetings along with administrative/research/doctoral streams induced the involvement of many additional staff members and working time. The location of the event at three different campuses (Katowice, Cieszyn and Sosnowiec) made the logistics very challenging and could have caused some burden for some organisers and participants, who do not handle commuting and wandering very well. On the other hand delivering the event partly in the artistic campus of Cieszyn made the event special.

The inauguration ceremony, which was held in historic Silesian Senate's Hall, gathered all participants and representatives of local/regional authorities for the celebration highlighted by the speeches of rectors and concerts of university choirs/bands.

The event was considered successful and exciting by majority of participants with a recommendation to diminish the intensity of the programme for the future editions.

Analysis of the pilot was conducted in the Transform4Europe Week Feasibility Report/Recommendations (D38). Institutional Coordinators decided that each partner would select a date to organise the second edition of the event at their university.

With the purpose of continuation, the University of Silesia prepared a guidance for the second edition of the event.

In 2023 the schedule of T4EU Weeks was created including 7 events at partner universities in the time span of March to September.

1. T4EU Week at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, "Critical Heritage", 20–24 March 2023

The overall focus of the T4EU week this time was the **Critical Heritage** course, which dealt with the difficult legacies of modernity and the Cold War.

The „Critical heritage“ topic was chosen because of its relevance to today's society and the topic's direct connection to the pillar ideas of T4EU, especially societal and environmental transformations. As the focus group, VMU T4EU students, because the program was the most rewarding for this specific group. Professors from partner institutions were invited to teach

during the T4EU week and to discuss possible future cooperation. Professors from VMU, UniTS, USil and EKA participated in the T4EU week.

Around **100 students and university employees** from T4EU universities exchanged knowledge and discussed the vision of a joint future university.

During the week, lectures were taught by experts from Lithuania, Poland, Estonia and Italy. The topics they tackled include **nuclear industry, European industrial culture, borderlands, urban ethnography**, and Kaunas on its way to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Apart from lectures, cultural programme was realized: guided tours on industrial sites and modernist architecture in Kaunas, an audiovisual city walk “The Spirit’s Guide to the Old City”, a movie night.

As a result of the event „**Cultural Heritage LAB**” was created.

2. T4EU Week at the University of Silesia, “Fair Transition”, 24–28 April 2023

The theme was **fair transition** toward **climate neutrality** with the focus on various aspects of transformation ahead of post-industrial regions. The event was divided into following streams: didactic, research, administrative and cultural.

In the framework of didactic stream students could choose out of five modules and receive 3 ECTS credits.

Within the ‘Languages for Lunch’ initiative, they had the chance to learn the basics of Polish during classes conducted by lecturers of the School of Polish Language and Culture as well as teachers and students of the International Polish Studies. Prof. Giovanni Bacaro from the University of Trieste delivered the lecture ‘**Green Transition and the City: UrbanForests for Human Well-being.**’

The main goal of the research stream was to exchange experiences in education and research in law and related fields such as administration, entrepreneurship and business.

The administrative employees of the T4EU University listened to the lecture ‘**Erasmus+ Capacity Build for Higher Education (CBHE) projects – application and implementation**’ delivered by Noelia López del Castillo and Olga Błoshchinska from the University of Alicante.

The guests took part in several integration workshops on, e.g. the idea of design thinking or good practices in obtaining funds from the European Union for the implementation of various projects.

Transform4Europe Week was also a chance to discover Upper Silesia, the region of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie and Cieszyn Silesia. The guests were exploring Katowice, including Nikiszowiec and took part in walking trip throughout the Śródula district in Sosnowiec.

3. T4EU Week at Saarland University, 8–12 May 2023

The T4EU Week at USAAR was open to all target groups: **students, academic staff and administrative staff**. Students had a chance to take part in courses:

- in quantum information science and
- foundations of Europe,

for the completion of which they received 3 ECTS credits

The focus theme was "Europe in Transformation", because this topic encompasses the alliances' main areas and allows for a broad range of courses and activities to choose from. USAAR also chose a broad topic because the week was open to any target group (see below.) The courses were offered in presence, hybrid or online (depending on the course).

Saarland University offered a wide range of scientific courses, lectures (also open dual lectures), languages courses, workshops and so on, so that any kind of interested person from different fields could choose their own programme according to their needs.

The T4EU Week at USAAR was open to all target groups: students, academic staff and administrative staff. Students were able to choose two main courses (Quantum Theory or Foundation of European Politics) with credit points and could also take part in further courses.

4. T4EU Week at the University of Alicante, "Digital Transformation", 8-10 May 2023

Students had a chance to take part in courses for the completion of which they received ECTS credit.

Four specialisation workshops in **digital transformation** were held, addressing current issues such as the management of massive data, the use of technologies for second language learning, the retrieval of musical information or how to become a Knowledge Entrepreneur.

Each course had a duration of 21 hours (14 classroom hours + 21 homework hours), the equivalent of 1.4 ECTS.

The participants could experience various cultural activities, such as a visit to the emblematic Santa Bárbara Castle or a visit to the Alicante Casino.

5. T4EU Week at the University of Trieste, "Transborder Europe", 5-9 June 2023

University of Trieste organised a didactic, an administrative, and a cultural/social stream, workshops and sport activities.

The guiding topic was "**Transborder Europe**" and was decided based on the following:

- need to find a topic that could be a common ground for all partner universities, i.e., proximity to a border
- need to communicate the idea that we have to cross borders if we want to create new synergies, make connections, start collaborations, cooperate in a constructive and fashion, learn from others
- inclusiveness: all target groups were invited to participate to offer everyone the chance to experience what "life the border" is like here
- will to enhance what our territory has to offer in terms of cultural, environmental, and language varieties

Didactic stream comprised of following courses/workshops/visits:

1. Workshop: *Cultural differences in global communication*
2. *Public History in a Transborder Area*
3. *Geographic Information Systems for ecological and economical studies* – prof. Bacar o, prof. Borruso
4. *Environmental and Climate Constitutionalism*

5. *Bridging the gap between stakeholders through student's commitment within the T4EU Alliance*
6. *How unicorns arise: the key words, the patterns and the trends of the innovation Workshop on Innovation_*
7. Visit Val Rosandra
8. Visit Miramare Marine Reserve and the BIOMA Museum

In addition, parallel events were running: the Management for Innovation Conference (MIC), an Open Dual Lecture, three International Visiting Lectureships, a Stakeholder Engagement workshop, and a lot of activities dedicated to student networking.

Some of which running at the same time, for all target groups. The organisation was complex and required extra attention to details, precise planning, and a good communication flow. It was an enriching experience for most participants, even though some of them found there were too many activities and could not participate in as many as they would have wanted to.

6. T4EU Week at Estonian Academy of Arts, "Design & Sustainability", 13-17 June 2023

PhD students in the area of Arts (or MA students with very strong and suited research topics), who were a target group of the event, had a chance to get to know about **artistic research, situated writing, curating in the art museum, artist originality in the age of digital technologies, mending textiles** and the **future of fashion**.

Sustainability is one of the core values of EKA – Estonian School of Art promotes sustainable thinking and green transition on every level, and integrates it in our teaching, research and artistic activities. When planning activities, the ecological footprint and the impact of people's behavioural habits is assessed.

The T4EU Week had 2 tracks, one for students and other for T4EU and T4RI Management Board and Virtual Communication Office. The programme involved strong sustainable education aspects.

Students were offered to take part in the week-long programs or take smaller bites (lectures and workshops) and receive 3 ESTC points. The program had a compulsory virtual component which included pre-recorded expert video-interviews (20-30 minutes) about different aspects of sustainability.

A grand exhibition TASE and ERKI Fashion Show became the closing celebration. TASE is the annual theses festival of the Estonian Academy of Arts, where the faculties of architecture, design, art culture and liberal arts present this year's master's theses and a selection of bachelor's theses and portfolios. ERKI Fashion Show brings young designers to the public both in Estonia and abroad. The preparation and execution of the ERKI Fashion Show is carried out by young art students under the guidance of the Estonian Academy of Arts. It is also noteworthy that the organization of the ERKI Fashion Show is one of the most comprehensive professional events on the Estonian landscape, which is organized almost exclusively by volunteer students/young people.

For planning the program organisers offered to all the departments in EKA to host a course or any kind of activity for the guests. Cultural Heritage Lab Mukola organized a weeklong

workshop, the Faculty of Fine Arts held an AI conference, a PhD student invited specialists to conduct a wider workshop for her research area, additionally guest lecturers were invited to give inspiring lessons.

Given the project's emphasis on fostering student engagement, EKA strategically incorporated students at various roles in the T4EU Week. A number of students acted as volunteer guides. In addition, the organisers facilitated the organization of a Design Thinking workshop conducted by design students. Workshop was specifically tailored for members of the T4EU Management Board. This workshop was planned in collaboration with the academic faculty within the design department.

7. T4EU Week at Sofia University, "Becoming a researcher", 26–30 September 2023

Participants could take part in courses, after which they received ECTS credits:

1. General (All T4EU Thematic areas):

– *Becoming a researcher* – 5 ECTS

The focus of this course was on the process of doing a doctorate: from the preliminary decisions about topic through analysis of scientific literature, determining an appropriate methodology to presenting and analysing data and the significance and potential impact of the findings.

2. Specialized (Environmental Transformation):

– *Digital geo-twinning for a more effective adaptation of urban environments to climate change* – 2 ECTS

The course included training in unmanned aerial vehicles (UAS) based geodata collection, processing, analysis and geovisualization of the results.

3. Specialized (Societal Transformation):

– *Access to information in digital platforms. Media and media structure in Bulgaria* – 3 ECTS

The course focused on formats of media content and generation differences in access and usage of media content in digital platforms. One of the emphases was on the transformation of media systems in Bulgaria over the past 20 years.

Event for Art Students was prepared and delivered: Plein air "Memory and Architecture", including presentation on the history and architectural features of the Rectorate and the Faculty of Biology and a guided tour with an emphasis on specific spaces, architectural and decorative details. Exhibition at the Alma Mater Gallery opened the event.

Some universities communicated the call among all university professors to offer courses and workshops in order to ensure large involvement and to offer a variety of topics and courses. The range of different formats, registrations and specific needs of the professors, made the organisation extremely complex, as reported by partners. Whenever there was a focus of the educational stream to be delivered and organisers reached out to the professors, who could conduct the classes in a limited number and topics, the realisation became more manageable. One of the partners (EKA) noted that the empowerment of faculties during the

planning phase to define their focus areas within certain framework and organise the events accordingly, was a very effective work practice.

The weeks were advertised to the communities on social media, via mails, in monthly university's T4EU meetings and newsletters. The registration of the students was pre-defined to 50 students per partner for the Pilot edition and 10 students per partner for the 2nd edition, which was managed first on the partner level and only then the registrations were completed by the selected students in the system/form of the organising institution.

3. TRANSFERABILITY

What are main the lessons learned regarding the task development and implementation?

Which advice do you have for the continuation and sustainability of the task?

Which advice do you have for partners who might take over the task for other HEIs planning a similar activity?

Overall, the event format proves very successful at each partner institution. The students appreciate the chance to meet their peers from partner universities and participate in educational as well as cultural activities that provide insight into other cultures and inspire them with new ideas for their studies and future careers. For academic and administrative staff participants, the event is an opportunity to exchange experiences and create working relations, which they can benefit from in everyday cooperation.

For the staff members involved in the organisation of the event, it is an opportunity to create an extraordinary learning and networking context, however time and effort-consuming, it is. Having this in mind it is highly recommended to start the planning process of the event at least half a year prior. Also choosing one of the focus groups instead of all helps to make the organizational matters easier and ensures a higher quality of the event.

The organisation of caterings and the reservation of rooms also require longer planning, thus it is recommended to book suitable rooms (with online/hybrid equipment if needed) several months in advance.

For future T4EU weeks, partners find it important to organise fewer events, to make sure participants don't have to choose between two or more activities they like. Current format of the T4EU Week, where each university conducts its own week within a relatively short time frame poses difficulties in terms of student participation across all weeks in different countries.

Moreover, to enhance sustainability and foster collaboration, it may be advantageous to tailor the event to specific curriculum segments, thereby bringing together students with shared academic interests. Typically, when attempting to appeal to a broad audience, the event may fail to resonate with anyone in particular.

Common remark from the participants should be taken into consideration – not to overload the programme with the events, especially those taking place at the same time. The organisers should leave time for the participants to explore the cities and meet informally in side or outside the campus