



## COLOPHON

ECIU is the leading international consortium of research intensive universities, with collective emphasis on innovation, creativity and societal impact, driving the development of a knowledge-based economy.

[www.eciu.org](http://www.eciu.org)

ECIU Magazine is a publication of the ECIU PR-Group and was created in collaboration with U-Today, the independent journalistic medium at the University of Twente.

### **Editorial team**

U-Today & PR-Group ECIU  
This edition was created by Maaïke Platvoet (editor-in-chief at U-Today), Sandra Pool (editor at U-Today), Rik Visschedijk, Michaela Nesvarova, Rense Kuipers and Jelle Posthuma (editorial team of U-Today), Katrin Dirksen (Secretary ECIU), Hinke Mulder (Strategic PR Manager UT)

### **Coordinated by**

Sandra Pool &  
Katrin Dirksen

### **Design and layout by**

Marloes Jansink,  
design agency Vanille  
([www.ikwilvanille.nl](http://www.ikwilvanille.nl))

### **Printed by**

SMG Group  
([www.smg-groep.nl](http://www.smg-groep.nl))

## 12 UNIVERSITIES

## FOREWORD

# THE FUTURE OF UNIVERSITIES

The university of the future, what does it look like? Or, to put it in another way: do universities, as we know them today, still have a future? One thing may be clear, for a start: society's expectations are sky high. They should be. We have to offer study programmes that match trends like digitalization and large-scale availability of knowledge. Current and future generations of students simply have a different approach to learning and knowledge. We have to do research with an impact that goes beyond citation indices. Society expects us to play a decisive role in the sustainable development goals of the United Nations, for example. For this, we have to build networks with industry, governments and NGO's, in our own region as well as worldwide.

The members of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) are all the living proof of this vision. They introduced new teaching models and, by doing so, inspired each other within the network. They all act as engines of regional transformation, introducing new technology and innovative business in their respective regions. New partners like Tampere University of Technology and the University of Not-

tingham further strengthen the competitive position of the network. 'Challenging conventional thinking', as we call this redefinition process, already leads to future-proof universities, you might say. There is, however, a big concern: Europe has to make clear political choices in education, research and innovation in order to stay competitive and give talents room to flourish. This, in our opinion, has to lead to radical changes in budget priorities. We are making sure this is heard in Brussels.

So far so good. Mission accomplished, you might say. But let's be honest: isn't that conventional thinking as well? I already mentioned the changes in the way young people deal with knowledge and creativity. Add to that the rapidly changing labour market and a growing need for lifelong learning, and you might raise the question if there is still a future for universities with their fixed programmes and structures. Innovative frontrunners like the ECIU universities shouldn't be afraid of questioning the university system as a whole. After 20 years of existence, we simply can't sit back and relax: we would lose our competitive edge in very short time. We will have to stay sharp.

This magazine shows some great examples of the way ECIU universities work, innovating teaching and research and enhancing academic leadership. Challenge us!

Victor van der Chijs,  
President, ECIU

Aalborg  
University



Universitat  
Autònoma  
de Barcelona



Tampere  
University of  
Technology



Kaunas  
University of  
Technology



University  
of Twente



Tecnológico  
de Monterrey



Linköping  
University



Dublin City  
University



University  
of Aveiro



University  
of Nottingham



Hamburg  
University of  
Technology



University  
of Stavanger



Photo  
Rikkert Harink

## CONTENT

### 4 QUESTIONS ABOUT ECIU

04

### MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR STUDY

06

### ECIU OFFICE BRUSSELS

10

### STAFF EXCHANGE

12

### INFOGRAPHIC

14

### THE RUNIN PROJECT

16

### EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

19

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

22

### 20 YEARS OF ECIU

24

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

26

PROGRAMME

## 7 THEMES

Innovation

Cooperation

Education



Science



Entrepreneurship



Mobility



Regional  
development



ECIU



today

# A success story of like-minded friends

What do they represent? What is their key focus and where do they find each other? Four questions for Katrin Dircksen, ECIU Secretary General, about the European Consortium of Innovative Universities.

## **What is ECIU all about?**

'It is a consortium of twelve young universities that share their core values. Innovation and entrepreneurship are in the DNA of our members. We all come from regions where the economy came under pressure following the decline of traditional sectors such as textile and shipping. The universities are the result of a regional need to have highly educated people for the economy of the future and to develop new industries. That is why all partners have very close ties to their region and the industry, while also having an international mindset.'

## **What does the consortium do?**

'We know each other very well. We learn from each other about governance, the structure of our education and entrepreneurship. We all value mobility and internationalisation and we encourage our employees and students to seek out collaboration. We do that by offering shared minors, joint masters, and travel grants for researchers. Project- and problem-based learning are at the core of the ECIU universities' education. Students combine theoretical and practical aspects so they are optimally prepared for the world of tomorrow.'


## **Why is this collaboration so important?**

'We speak with a single voice and protect our interests together, for example in our dealings with the European Union. Universities are hardly heard as a single institution. Instead, they have a voice with impact as a member of a group of likeminded universities. The advantage for policy makers is that they speak to a group of universities across Europe with a long track record in regional innovation, entrepreneurship and innovative teaching. This lobby allows us to put important themes on the agenda and promote our expertise.'

## **What does the future hold for the ECIU?**

'The world around us is changing rapidly and we face new questions from society and industries. We want to create significant impact on society. That is why we embrace our role as life-long educators. With interdisciplinary research, open innovation and international education we link our universities to society. In ECIU our shared background and values are crucial for our collaboration. We will continue our efforts to make a difference at regional, national and international level.'

**Text**  
Rik Visschedijk  
**Photo**  
Gijs van Ouwerkerk



**‘We have  
a voice  
with impact’**

# Make the most

# of your study



Text

Rik Visschedijk

Students from the ECIU partner universities can make the most of their studies by choosing one of the two available joint masters: Cities & Sustainability or Global Technology and Innovation Management & Entrepreneurship. You study at different universities of your choice. Two students talk about their experiences.

## Malte David Krohn

Malte David Krohn of the Hamburg University of Technology (TUHH) finished the Global Innovation Management (GIM) master's programme last year and is now a PhD researcher in Hamburg.

### Why did you choose this master?

'I have a bachelor's degree in engineering and I wanted to do something different for my master. In the end, I chose this programme. I do not regret my decision, although it was not an obvious choice per se. Tuition fees in Germany are very low, which was not the case for the GIM master's programme. The fact that I still chose this programme proves how motivated I was. It was clear that my fellow students shared this intrinsic motivation.'

### What did you do?

'Half my lectures were in Hamburg. During my second year, I attended the University of Strathclyde in Scotland. The international aspect made this a remarkable learning experience. This programme is not only unique because of the contact you have with other international students, but also because of the broader perspective on innovation management that it instils.'

### Would you recommend this programme?

'Yes. As a PhD, I am now working on the follow-up to this master's programme, together with five partner universities. This will make the programme even better and more comprehensive.'

## Anthony Liew

Anthony Liew is enrolled in the joint master Cities & Sustainability at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. He travelled all the way from Australia for this master's programme.

### Why did you choose this master?

'Our world is becoming increasingly connected. That is especially true for my studies. I love the fact that you study and work together with people from different cultures. That expands your horizon. As an Australian, I always wanted to go to Europe. This master's programme gives me the opportunity to make it more than just a holiday. I have already made a ton of new friends from all kinds of cultures. It has enriched my life.'

### Would you recommend this programme?

'Just go for it,' he says. 'It challenges you to bring out the best in yourself. It can only be good for you to enrol in a study programme in a new field. On top of that, you develop a whole lot of new social contacts.'

ECIU partners Cities & Sustainability: Aalborg, Aveiro, Barcelona and Hamburg.

ECIU partner Global Technology and Innovation Management & Entrepreneurship: Aalborg, Kanaus and Hamburg.

# Mechanical Engineering

Alonso, Guillermo and Saul came all the way from Mexico to Stavanger to study mechanical engineering. They are pioneers in a new, tailor-made exchange programme for ECIU students.

'The way of teaching is different', says Guillermo Mortera. 'Here, you are more independent. You need to decide for yourself whether you go to class or not.' Saul Rivera enjoyed the close ties between theory and practice. 'I like that the laboratory work is complementary to theory. I was a bit lost in one course, but when we did the lab exercises, it all made sense and I understood everything.'

This is the first ECIU minor programme other ones are expected to follow. You can find the offer on the ECIU website: [www.eciu.org/for-students/minor-programmes](http://www.eciu.org/for-students/minor-programmes)



Exchange students Saul Rivera, Alonso Macias and Guillermo Mortera in the mech lab at UiS.

## Minor programme

The ECIU Minor programmes allow students to spend a semester at a like-minded ECIU partner university. Students can choose their host university themselves, as each of the partners offers different courses and specializations completely in English. There are for example thirteen modules available for Mechanical Engineering, starting in spring and autumn.

### Why should I go for an ECIU Minor?

The ECIU Minors are a fixed set of pre-approved courses of 30 ECTS. They fit into the curriculum set of courses at your home institution. Credits will be fully recognized. The ECIU Minors are suitable for groups of students and offer an

excellent study experience at a well-known and like-minded partner institution of the ECIU network.

### How to apply?

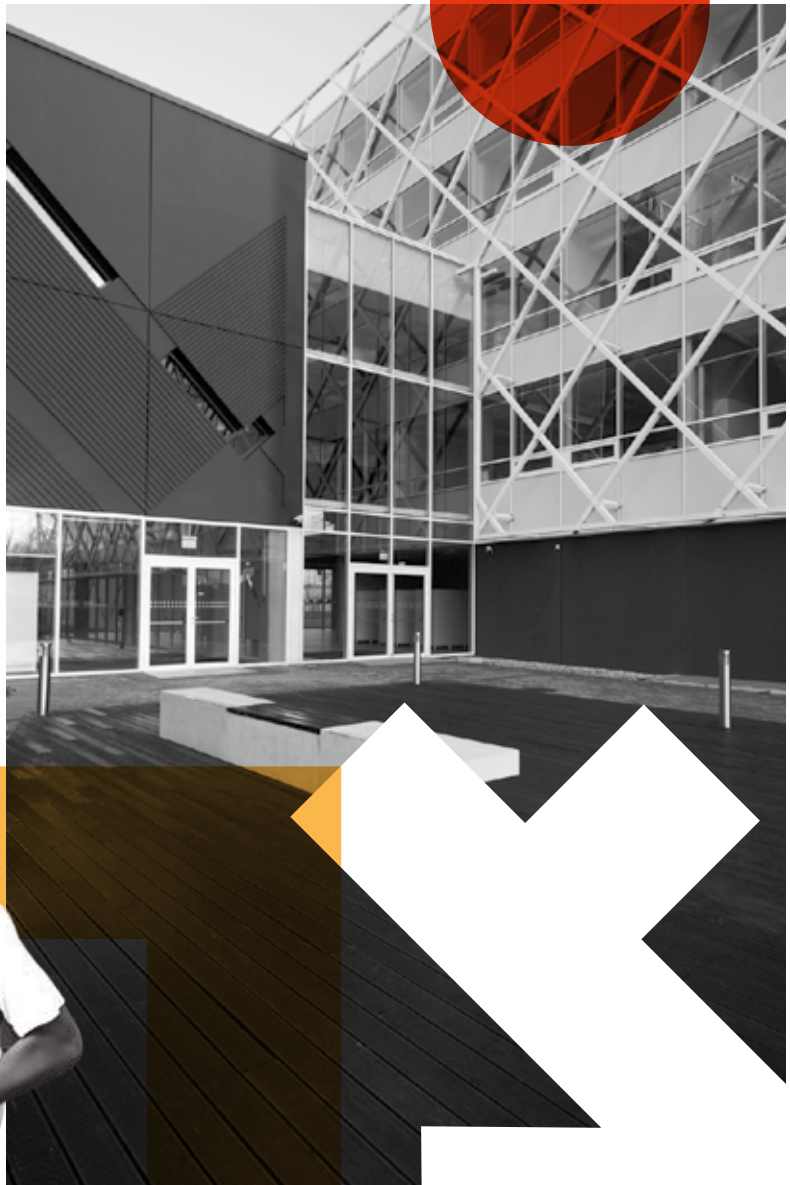
The ECIU universities have made several seats available for each partner. Students

apply at their home institutions, where they follow the rules and procedures of student selection for exchange studies. In the programme, the home university recognizes the credits awarded by the host university. Students do not need to pay tuition to the host university and they will receive help finding accommodations for their stay abroad. There is the possibility to apply for Erasmus+ scholarships. After successfully completing the module, the students will receive an ECIU certificate.

# Outside the

# lecture halls

The ECIU not only offers innovative mobility products to the students. The international consortium is about more than just studying. Take the Student Union (SU) from the University of Twente (UT), for example. They went to partner university Nottingham to take a look at how their colleagues work. Or what about the largest relay race in the world, the Batavierenrace? An ECIU student team participated in 2016.





Text

Jelle Posthuma

### 'We learned from the best'

The SU board from Enschede visited its fellow administrators in the English city of Nottingham. They went there for inspiration. With success, because they returned home with some excellent new ideas.

'In the UK, all universities must have a Union,' explains Jordi Weggemans (UT). 'In the Netherlands, only the University of Twente has a Student Union. The scope of the SU in Nottingham cannot be compared to ours. Their organisation is much bigger and employs 90 full-timers. We learned a lot from them, particularly regarding business operations. The money that students spend, for example in the university bar, flows right back to the Union. The SU then invests this money in facilities for the students.'

They also returned home with some concrete ideas. 'In Nottingham, there are no lectures on Wednesday afternoons. That gives students more time to pursue activism and sports. This year, we will evaluate whether students here in Enschede are interested in a similar system.'

This proposal exemplifies the usefulness of the work visit in the context of the ECIU. In addition to Nottingham, the administrators from Twente also looked at universities in London and Oxford.

'Because the Student Unions in the UK are so large and have been around for so long, we were able to learn from the best.'

### 'I felt responsible to represent my university in the ECIU team'

The Batavierenrace is an annual relay race in the Netherlands with thousands of participants and a 175-kilometre-long route that leads from Nijmegen to Enschede, making it one of the biggest student races in the world. In 2016, an ECIU running team participated in the race for the first time.

One of the ECIU participants was the Lithuanian PhD student Egle Vaičiukynaite from Kaunas University of Technology. 'It was a huge challenge for me,' says Vaičiukynaite. 'I am not an athlete, whereas a large part of the ECIU group were well-trained runners. I had to train hard to finish my stage (7.4 km). It was nice to have this goal and as a PhD student, it is great to run and to refresh your mind.'

'A bachelor's, a master's and a PhD student from our university took part in the race. I felt responsible to represent my university. At the same time, it was really nice to meet other team members and leaders. It was a great experience. Although we were all different, we felt like a team. We all had different skills and

experience that helped us to learn from each other. We wanted to achieve something together. You might view that as a metaphor for the ECIU collaboration.'

'We ended up in 30th place. Many of our runners came first or second on their individual stages. We had the fastest runner to cross the finish line on the final track, outrunning all other competitors with impressive speed of 20.63 km/h. During the event, we slept in a tent on the campus and that was a wonderful experience as well. After the race, there was a big party. When I think back on the event now, I experience the positive emotions all over again.'

The international ECIU team is also participating in this year's Batavierenrace.



**Egle Vaičiukynaite**

# 'NO LECTURES ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS'



# 'Ideally, everyone in Brussels will soon know ECIU'

She is the first ECIU staff member to be based in Brussels.

Olga Wessels, aged 27, is head of the ECIU office in the European capital, which opened in October 2017. Her objective is to guide ECIU member universities through the European jungle. 'It is a hierarchical work field, and you need to know your way around.'

In her bright red pleated dress, black jacket and high heels, Olga strikes an elegant figure in Brussels. She leads the way for her guests in an elegant building at the Tervurenlaan. This also is where the Brussels Office of Aalborg University is located. A stately curving wooden staircase leads to the offices, where Olga has her workplace. At present, she is the only staff member of the ECIU office. At the time of our visit, she had been in her new job for only two months, but she was already full of ideas and plans. 'Ideally, everyone in Brussels will soon know ECIU,' she says enthusiastically. 'As a consortium, we are consulted when the European Commission (EC) prepares new legislation for research, innovation and education.'

## Joint forces

Wessels' role is to represent the interests of ECIU in Brussels. 'There are over 850 universities in Europe. A single university cannot achieve much. That is why twelve universities have joined forces to make their voices heard. For example, entrepreneurship is a high priority for ECIU. Together, we are able to express our wishes in this respect in Europe and make sure we are noticed.'

It is Olga's mission to make sure the message reaches the right persons. She is,

therefore, a frequent visitor of the Directorate General (DG) for Education and Culture and the DG for Research and Innovation. The highly hierarchical structure of the European organization does not daunt her. 'You need to know your way around and know who to turn to. I know many routes and I can provide the ECIU member universities with the right means to do their work properly.'

According to Wessels the time has come for ECIU to send out a joint message. 'Brexit was a wake-up call for Europe. The EU is re-inventing itself. Everything is changing, and this is the perfect time to make your voice heard.' She continues: 'Europe has many old universities. Full of traditions, highly hierarchical, and with a strong focus on fundamental research. Our members are creative universities, unconventional, not afraid of change, and focused on entrepreneurship and innovation. As a consortium we would like to get involved with the policy makers, and express our opinions and points of view. This is a good time, because of the development of the new European programmes for research, innovation and education.'

## The right skills

Wessels has the right skills to make a difference. After her master in European

Law at the University of Amsterdam in 2014, she worked for the Netherlands House for Education and Research in Brussels. An umbrella organization for everyone in the Netherlands involved in education and research. 'As a policy officer, I kept stakeholders in the Netherlands informed of European policy developments in the fields of research, innovation and education. Additionally, I represented the universities of the Netherlands in Brussels.'

She has now been living in the Belgian capital for three years. She and her husband have an apartment just outside the office district of Brussels. She sometimes misses the cultural scene of Amsterdam. 'I love the theatre, the ballet and art house films. Unfortunately the offer in that respect is more limited, here.' Her love of art and culture was what she grew up with. She was born and raised in Arnhem. She studied in Nijmegen and then moved to Amsterdam for her master. 'Each year, three European Law students attend the exchange programme at the Fordham University in New York, USA. Who wouldn't want that?' Wessels passed the selection. This foreign adventure changed her perspective of the world. 'Those six months were very rewarding. We were a mix of many different cultures and it made me very much aware of my Dutch background.'

Her job at ECIU means that she can live her international dream. She has quite a number of business trips lined up to get to know all members. 'This is something I look forward to.'

Time is up for now. It is time for Olga's next appointment. She dons her coat and scarf, and off she is to the town centre on her bicycle. She is Dutch after all!

**Text**

Sandra Pool

**Photo**

Jean-Yves Limet



**Contact details**

Olga Wessels,  
Head of ECIU Office  
Brussels, Avenue de  
Tervueren 35, 1040  
Brussels, Belgium.  
+32 483680182  
[olga.wessels@eciu.org](mailto:olga.wessels@eciu.org)



**‘I know many routes and I can provide the ECIU member universities with the right means to do their work properly’**

Staff exchange:

**‘Don’t be**

**afraid of obstacles’**



Why go on vacation when work is so much more fun? Within ECIU, supporting staff can go on exchange to other universities. There is even a special Staff Mobility Programme, including local coordinators who can help you out. Programme coordinator Lise Thorup-Pedersen (Aalborg University) shares her view on staff mobility: ‘It truly is a rewarding experience for both guests and hosts.’

An enriching new experience in a different environment, but also work that’s similar to what you do at your own university. According to Lise Thorup-Pedersen, staff exchange gives you the best of both worlds. ‘It’s a great way to get to know people and practices outside of your own university bubble. More often than not, staff exchange can lead to revelations for both guests and hosts. When you’re visiting another university, you can learn from their best practices. But they can also learn from you as a guest. In a way, it’s a moment for everyone involved to reflect on what they are doing.’

Usually, a stay for one workweek is a kind of sweet spot, says Thorup-Pedersen. ‘As a guest, you don’t want to overstay your welcome. In my ten years’ experience with the Staff Mobility Programme, I’ve learned that one week

works best for both parties. Hosts don’t get annoyed by you as a guest and they can prepare a program or project for you to work on. And as a guest, it’s quite well manageable to be away from home for one week.’

Thorup-Pedersen believes that a lot more people within the ECIU network can make use of the Staff Mobility Programme. ‘But I’ve noticed that many people see obstacles that are quite easy to overcome, especially on the practical side of things. Think for instance of language barriers. Or leaving your home, family and possibly pet behind. Don’t be afraid of those obstacles, would be my main message. Communication and expectation management is key, it’ll alleviate any concerns people might have. In the end, staff exchange truly is a rewarding experience for both guests and hosts.’



**Corrie Huijs**

**From University of Twente to Dublin City University:**

‘I went to Dublin for five weeks, a good experience to see how other people work. For people who want to participate in the program, I would recommend to have a clear goal to work towards or a project you can work on. My visit was mostly focused on online education and distance learning. It became clear to me that preparation is key: scripts have to be written out and you need to make sure that nothing goes wrong on the technical side. There’s more to it than meets the eye. Of course, I loved the city of Dublin. Everyone was very hospitable and kind to me. Because my stay started out with a two-day seminar, it was a great opportunity to get to know a lot of people. I would definitely recommend the program. Suffice to say, make sure you prepare well for your visit. Especially regarding the small practical stuff that easily gets overlooked. That goes for both guests and hosts.’



**‘It’s a great way to get to know people and practices outside of your own university bubble’**



**Vilma Karoblienė**

**From Kaunas University of Technology to University of Twente:**

‘I had a great opportunity to visit the University of Twente and to find out how colleagues are working on activities related to research and innovation projects. I was certainly impressed by their experience and I am eager to visit another ECIU university. These visits can help to combine all the strengths of ECIU members in order to have as much possibilities in R&I project activities and other common fields. It really helps to have programs for sharing good practices, in order to combine competences and implement future joint innovative and multidisciplinary projects of ECIU members.’

**How to apply?**

Visit the ECIU website: [www.eciu.org/for-staff/staff-mobility-programme](http://www.eciu.org/for-staff/staff-mobility-programme) to download the application form and get in touch with your local coordinator.

**‘We perceive the Researcher Mobility Fund as an excellent tool to accelerate knowledge and experience’**

**How to apply?**

Visit the ECIU website: [www.eciu.org/for-staff/research-mobility-fund](http://www.eciu.org/for-staff/research-mobility-fund)

**What about the academic staff?**

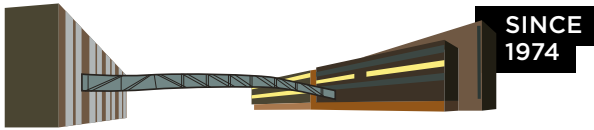
ECIU recently launched a Research Mobility Fund, aiming to increase collaboration amongst its researchers. This mobility fund is an incentive for early career researchers to explore and deepen collaboration within the ECIU network. Prof. Asta Pundziene, Vice Rector for Research and Professor at Kaunas University of Technology, is one of the initiators.

**What is the importance of a special fund for young researchers?**

‘Spreading of diverse knowledge and experience is most of the time a stimulus for innovation. Innovation is within the DNA of ECIU, and as well as in each member university. We perceive the Researcher Mobility Fund as an excellent tool to accelerate knowledge and experience diffusion among the researchers, especially those of early career, resulting with joint research activities that leads to their career advancement as well as breakthrough innovations.’

**What do you expect of the fund?**

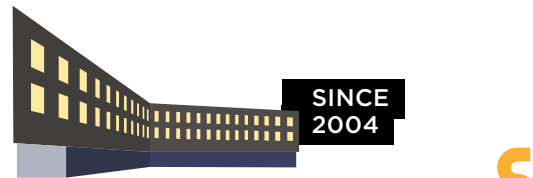
My personal expectations are very high in terms of the number of researchers applying to the fund, number of the scholar visits as well as the number of joint research initiatives springing from the visits. I also see the Research Mobility Fund as a first step in warming up ECIU member universities research and innovation collaboration, building researchers’ liaisons and networks in identified research areas common to all ECIU member universities. A next step? Designing ECIU support framework for joint small scale or “seed” research and innovation projects, that could become a relevant starting point for greater research and innovation ambitions.’



### AALBORG UNIVERSITY

24.000 STUDENTS 5.000 STAFF

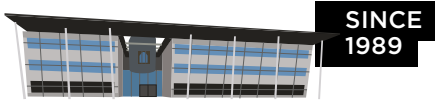
Ranked as the best European university for engineering.



### UNIVERSITY OF STAVANGER

12.000 STUDENTS 1.600 STAFF

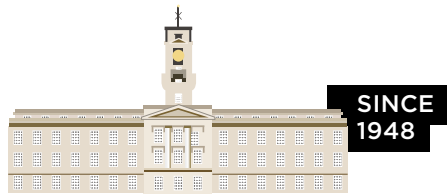
Produces more business ideas per researcher than any other university in Norway.



### DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

17.000 STUDENTS 3.000 STAFF

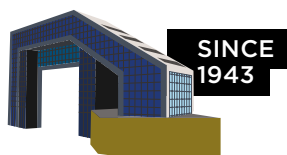
Ireland's University of Enterprise, leading for licensing and innovation partnerships with SMEs and multinational companies.



### UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

44.520 STUDENTS 8.293 STAFF

Has a £1.1bn economic impact on the UK every year.



### TECNOLÓGICO DE MONTERREY

89.641 STUDENTS 10.117 STAFF

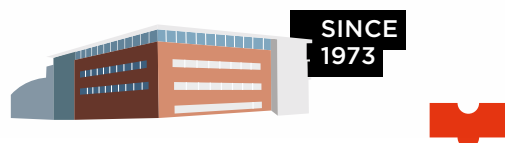
Is in the Top 25 Undergraduate Schools (NO. 14) of the Princeton Review's Top Schools for Entrepreneurship Studies for 2018.

## The 12 universities of ECIU

Infographic made by Marieke Abbink



Mexico, Monterrey



### UNIVERSITY OF AVEIRO

15.000 STUDENTS 1.650 STAFF

Best practice by the National Strategic Reference Framework Observatory, for its close cooperation with the region.





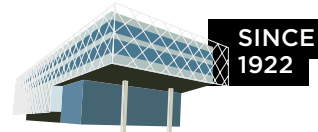
## **TAMPERE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**



8.000 STUDENTS

1.600 STAFF

Ranked on the 11th position in the world, and 4th in Europe for industry collaboration according to THE rankings.



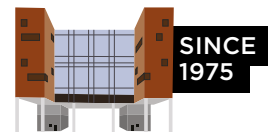
## **KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**



9.818 STUDENTS

2.112 STAFF

Return on Investment of business incubator Startup Space is 600 % - taxes paid by startups in 5 years exceed the investment of the KTU 6 times.



## **LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY**



27.000 STUDENTS

4.000 STAFF

Produced the highest number of innovative spinouts in Sweden during the last decade.



## **HAMBURG UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**



7.620 STUDENTS

708 STAFF

Offers one of the top 5 combined Management and Engineering study degree programs in Germany.



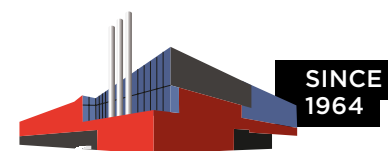
## **UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA**



34.080 STUDENTS

10.314 STAFF

Led the UAB-CIE Sphere, comprising of scientific, technological and business parks, multinational companies, SMEs, foundations and city councils.



## **UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE**



11.000 STUDENTS

2.950 STAFF

Europe's most entrepreneurial university with more than 700 spin-offs.



## The RUNIN Project

### The Role of Universities in Innovation

# Engines of regional transformation

Universities are more than 'just schools'. They are homes to brandnew technologies, clever gadgets, ground-breaking discoveries and tons of knowledge. One of their missions is to contribute all of these resources to the regional industry and innovation. Yet, that isn't an easy task. The RUNIN project is exploring how universities can be the drivers of local development.

The program trains PhD researchers on how universities contribute to innovation and economic growth in their regions. As one of the involved researchers Ridvan Cinar says: 'We have many societal challenges at the European level and those aren't specific to only one region. This large scale project can help us resolve these challenges, because each involved university focuses on a different point of view. There is an enormous amount of knowledge and resources at universities, but they are not tapped into. People in the regions still feel left behind. That is why we need projects like RUNIN.'

#### **RUNIN has a broader approach**

'All the participating universities are interested in contributing to their respective regions, but believe that there isn't enough information on how to do that. Which is how the idea for the project originated,' explains Rune Dahl Fitjar, the project leader and a professor at the University of Stavanger. 'We want to explore many different ways that

universities can use to promote regional development. RUNIN has a broader and more interdisciplinary approach than previous research on this topic.'

#### **'A huge amount of applications'**

The RUNIN project involves regional development agencies and seven universities, six of which are ECIU partner universities and it officially started in August 2016, after being initiated by the University of Stavanger. It involves 14 PhD researchers, distributed across the participating institutes. 'The recruitment of PhD students was very competitive. We received a huge amount of applications,' says Rune Dahl Fitjar. 'The selected researchers are getting a different and more extensive PhD education. They will cover eight courses, go on exchanges to different universities and spend a day a week - or an extended period - working outside of the university. This will provide them with a more comprehensive academic training and, after they graduate, allow them to freely decide where they want to work.'

#### Involved universities

- **Aalborg University**
  - **Linköping University**
  - **Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona**
  - **University of Aveiro**
  - **University of Stavanger**
  - **University of Twente**
  - **Lincoln University**
- (not a member of ECIU)

**'The selected researchers are getting a different and more extensive PhD education'**



Three PhD researchers share why they decided to spend three years of their lives working on the RUNIN project.



Ridvan Cinar

**‘RUNIN requires us to look at things from many different perspectives’**

**Home university**  
University of Aveiro



**Exchange visit at**  
University of Twente

**Topic of PhD research**  
How universities adapt to new forms of innovation and entrepreneurship, with special focus on social innovation and social entrepreneurship

‘I got accepted at several PhD positions, but I chose this one because it comes together with a big network, and there-

fore also many different supervisors. It is important for me that I can visit various universities. So far we’ve had three trainings all over Europe and thanks to these social meetings you really get to know the people. That has been extremely beneficial for me. We are a very diverse group of researchers: with different cultural backgrounds and from different walks of life, including academia and industry. And most importantly we are all from different disciplines, which I consider the main driver of the project. Because this research requires us to look at things from many different perspectives.’



Eloïse Germain

**‘I expect that RUNIN provides useful research for policy makers’**

**Home university**  
Linköping University



**Exchange visit at**  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

**Topic of PhD research**  
Doctoral education for the future labour market

‘While I was looking for a PhD position, two main reasons made me choose the RUNIN project among other possibilities. Firstly, the perspective of a European collaboration in a common project, with

a common purpose: conducting research with a goal of delivery for the European Commission. Secondly, the subject of the thesis and its multi-disciplinary aspect. Until now, my participation in RUNIN has brought me a lot. I appreciate the international and multi-disciplinary collaboration within the project. It also provides me with an image and legitimacy when conducting my research, particularly when asking for interviews. I see the relevance of the RUNIN project. I expect it to provide useful research for policy makers, universities, applicable to specific regional situations.’



Huong Nguyen

**‘The project allows me to grow personally and professionally’**

**Home university**  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona



**Exchange visit at**  
Aalborg University

**Topic of PhD research**  
Development of the Quadruple Helix Model in which four stakeholders of Academia, Governments, Industry and Citizens/Users work together for innovation purposes

‘People say if you wish to travel to a big sea, go with a big ship. I believed that the project would help me realize my goal of becoming a researcher in an international

environment. The project provides the opportunity of mobility, knowledge exchange with different people in the world, and hence allows me to grow personally and professionally. The dynamics of the project give a positive “pressure” of self-development and I especially appreciate the friendship shared with my colleagues. The mobility of the project also helps me to grow and understand the issues in diverse environments. Due to the characteristics of my topic, I have the privilege of discussing with different people working on open and collaborative innovation issues. I also have the chance to meet citizens generally and see how passionate they are about contributing to the innovation of regions.’

## The RUNIN Project

# ‘We strive for bridging academia, industry and other participants’

The RUNIN project is funded through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, a large EU programme providing mobility research grants. To receive one of these grants, you have to fight off some strong competition. Przemyslaw Jankowski, Policy Officer at the European Commission (EC), explains why the RUNIN project succeeded.

### What made the RUNIN project stand out?

‘It is innovative and it replies to certain needs in social sciences. The reasoning behind RUNIN and its outcome is rather unique. On top of that, the quality of the participating institutions is very high. And it’s a diverse group. The project combines many institutes from different countries. The project involves also non-academic partners. This is something we strongly support.

We strive for bridging academia, industry and other participants.’

### Why is it important for the EC to support projects like RUNIN?

‘We support initiatives from all disciplines and don’t have a singular focus on one domain. Every year we receive about 1700 proposals and only around 140 are selected. The RUNIN project was one of them. The projects are selected by independent experts,

who come from all over the world and who evaluate the proposals based on their excellence, implementation and impact of the project. We mainly focus on the general quality of training offered to young researchers. We want to equip young researchers with skills that allow them to be resilient and flexible, so that after receiving their doctorate they are able to work within industry, start their own company or stay in academia.’

## Social innovation through education and research

**ECIU will take part in a European research project on improving community engagement in higher education. The project will receive a € 500,000 funding from the Erasmus+ programme, an EU funding scheme supporting education, training, youth and sport.**

In line with the vision of the ECIU, the project ‘Towards a European framework for community engagement of higher education’ (TEFCE) aims to contribute to social innovation by improving the level of community engagement undertaken by higher educational institutions.

The members of the ECIU are mostly universities that are located in regions

where major industries have declined. They have a wealth of experience in community building, having already been actively involved in the regeneration of their region over the past decades. The project strives to promote social innovation through a knowledge triangle comprised of education, research and innovation. A toolbox will be developed, with innovative means for policymakers

and stakeholders to monitor, measure and promote community engagement by universities that will be transferable at a European policy level.

ECIU will contribute to the TEFCE project with expertise in related projects, as well as their international network of over 330,000 students and 50,000 staff members involved in the dissemination and exploitation of the results in Europe. The consortium for the collaboration consists of 13 partners from across Europe and is coordinated by the Technical University of Dresden.



Text

Sandra Pool

## Educational innovation

# ‘Proud that so many universities look at us’

They do not only find each other in terms of age, key characteristics and ambitions. There is more that binds the twelve ECIU universities. They inspire each other and learn from each other. And that leads to innovations. A good example is the Aalborg teaching model for problem based learning (PBL).

The teaching method was developed at Aalborg University (AAU) at the Centre for Problem Based Learning in Engineering Science and Sustainability. ‘This centre has been founded under the auspices of UNESCO and was formally launched in May 2014,’ says Inger Askehave, prorector of Aalborg University. ‘However, it is an integral part of our history to innovate education. AAU was established in 1974 and already at that time faculties wanted an alternative approach to education.’

### A revolution

The university introduced new formats with Problem and project-based learning at the centre, curricula design with focus on project-organised group work and supervision, and physical alterations with designated areas for project work. Askehave: ‘It was a revolution at the time; but to Aalborg University it has always been natural to work along these rather innovative lines.’

The Danish university believes that the PBL-approach still has a lot to offer. ‘We are constantly trying to further deve-

lop the teaching method. At this stage we are especially concerned about the ways how we may introduce and exploit digital learning methods to further strengthen the academic and collaborative aspects of PBL.’

Many universities – besides ECIU-member-universities – have been inspired by Aalborg’s approach to learning and teaching. ‘I am proud that so many universities look at AAU for educational innovation. A whole team of dedicated and skilled teachers and researchers travels around the world to spread the word about the Aalborg PBL model.’



## ‘Faculties wanted an alternative approach to education’



## Educational innovation

# ‘We had to make a major change’

The University of Twente (UT) was one of the universities that found new inspiration in Aalborg. In 2014, the ‘Twente Educational Model’ (Twents Onderwijs Model or TOM) was introduced there. This form of education consists entirely of project-based learning.

‘We had to make a major change to adopt this new educational method as our central principle,’ says Tom Mulder, advisor strategy and policy at the UT. ‘Aalborg University has grown up with project-based learning, so it is part of their DNA. That is not the case for us. Although we definitely had experience with project-based learning, it was quite a radical move to structure all our education around projects.’

Their Danish colleagues continue to offer regular lectures as well, Mulder knows. ‘They thought we were brave to make this choice.’ The road was not entirely free of obstacles. ‘After the implementation, we had to sort out the usual difficulties with regards to testing and scoring.’

Other universities are interested as well, Mulder notes. He gives a talk about TOM at least once a week. ‘There is a continuous stream of interested parties. They mostly want to know how we handled the transition from regular education to project-based learning and what we encountered along. We can definitely help our colleagues in that regard, just like Aalborg inspired us once upon a time.’

## ‘Being part of ECIU has been of great value to us in exchanging knowledge and best practices in educational innovation’

### ‘Learning from the best’

**Kaunas University of Technology (KTU), Tecnológico de Monterrey (ITESM) and Hamburg University of Technology (TUHH) are also interested in project-based learning.**

Joaquín Guerra Achem, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Educational Innovation of ITESM: ‘We have a history of educational innovation in its teaching-learning process. We have always benchmarked around the world to learn from best practices and inform our innovation process. In the late 1990’s, we went to Aalborg University to learn about their PBL model. Tecnológico de Monterrey incorpo-

rated PBL as one of its pedagogy teaching techniques with the help of Aalborg University and the University of Twente. Being part of ECIU has been of great value to us in exchanging knowledge and best practices in educational innovation.’

Kaunas University of Technology is the flagman in educational innovations in Lithuania. KTU has been learning from the best: acquiring the PBL competences from Aalborg University, transferring the good practices of the Twente Educational Model onto KTU’s product development project and the overall innovative KTU study model.





## Why PBL?

'The new KTU study model has been driven by the exponentially fast changes in society and market needs, by the contemporary expectations of our students, and it certainly meets the needs of the modern teaching and learning paradigm', states Jurgita Siugzdiniene, Rector Ad Interim at Kaunas University of Technology.

'We are yet on our way of implementing the new curriculum grounded on competence development, problem and project based learning. Aalborg University and the University of Twente are the role models for PBL and project based learning for us and we are grate-

ful for all of the received consultations and recommendations. We are certainly learning from the best.'

Hamburg University of Technology started implementing early forms of project oriented learning, later project based learning among other with the help of the Aalborg model: Members of the university's Center for Teaching and Learning (ZLL) went to Aalborg several times. Now – six years later – both forms of PBL alongside other didactical formats support the university's vision of implementing curricula so as to provide a research-based learning experience to students.

Using PBL ensures that students become professionals who are able to acquire and apply knowledge and who can contribute new knowledge to their field of study, through curiosity and a critical attitude. The PBL-model teaches students the ability to find, critically assess, combine and use new information is an important skill in the twenty-first century. They know all the ins and outs of their field of study and can contribute to its development. They are also capable of venturing off the beaten path and applying their knowledge in a broader context, in collaboration with other disciplines and society.

# Preparing **start-ups** for **the real world**

Entrepreneurship is no stranger within the ECIU network. New business ideas and hopeful start-ups pop up at the partner universities every day. To give young entrepreneurs a better fighting chance in today's 'global village', ECIU universities have decided to harvest the expertise of the entire network and create an international 'start-up accelerator' programme.

The core idea behind the programme is to accelerate the development of young companies,' explains Maria Johnston from Dublin City University (DCU), the university that developed the proposal and coordinates now the programme for ECIU. 'It is a completely shared programme, not to be led by only one institute. Its main goal is to use expertise of all the partners, all the different backgrounds and cultures.'

'Each region and university has a different approach to entrepreneurship and commercialization of research,' says Shane Carter, the programme coordinator from the DCU Ryan Academy who co-ordinated the programme. 'Which is why it was important for us to bring people together, give them easy access to local mentors and allow them to form strong collaborations with their colleagues from other ECIU universities.'

**'We want to give start-ups a solid foundation before they enter the real world'**

## **'Short, compact and action packed'**

The pilot of the programme was organized in the fall of 2017 and involved participants from five ECIU universities. It took place in three ECIU member locations - Dublin, Aalborg, Linköping - and consisted of training workshops relevant for starting companies, such as courses on Financial Modeling, Pitching or Sales Strategy. 'We wanted to create a really immersive experience - the programme was short, compact and action packed,' describes Carter. 'We want to give the start-ups a solid foundation before they enter the real world.' The pilot programme was open to any starting companies from the participating universities and eventually involved ten teams, mostly formed by students and PhD researchers. 'We got a very good response from our participants,' says Johnston. 'We believe they really benefited from seeing different ecosystems and from networking among each other. The pilot ended in November 2017 and we are still in the process of evaluation, but there is certainly willingness to run the programme again.'



Linköping University

organized the

final workshop

Linköping University (LiU) is one of the universities participating in the ECIU Startup Discovery Programme. 'The aims of the programme agree well with LiU's ambition to demonstrate in translating ideas and research results into practical applications. The participation from our side is handled by the university innovation office, LiU Innovation,' says Vice-Chancellor Helen Dannetun.

Ten projects were selected to participate in the pilot programme in Dublin, Aalborg and Linköping University during the autumn of 2017. They are all at preliminary stages, and come from several fields. Linköping University's contribution was the 'Worldish' project, with its digital translation tool 'Helen', intended for use within medical care. The service removes language barriers between patients and healthcare personnel. 'Even though the projects cover an enormous diversity of fields, they face many of the same challenges. The various startup projects have benefited greatly by exchanging experiences with each other and establishing international networks,' says Gio Fornell, head of LiU Innovation.

## **LiU Innovation**

The mission of the innovation office at Linköping University, LiU Innovation, is to support students, researchers and employees at LiU as they develop their ideas. LiU Innovation also plays an important role in knowledge transfer between Linköping University and the business world in the region.

[www.liuinnovation.se](http://www.liuinnovation.se)

Text

Michaela Nesvarova

## 'We don't see entrepreneurship the same way throughout Europe'



Andre Bastie and  
Marc Assens from  
Happy Scribe

### What do the participants think?

The end of programme was marked by a pitching contest. An independent panel of entrepreneur 'dragons' selected Happy Scribe as the winner, winning a prize of 2000 euro.

With origins at the DCU in Ireland, Happy Scribe offers an automated transcription tool for journalists and researchers. They claimed the victory thanks to their 'break neck adoption speed and customer validation'.

What did the team think of the programme? 'The most interesting part was to meet other young entrepreneurs, exchange ideas and learn from each other,' says André Bastié, co-founder of Happy Scribe. 'Visiting other countries was also really useful. It showed us that we don't see entrepreneurship the same way throughout Europe and it provided us with different insights into our business.'



# 20 YEARS OF ECIU

Representatives and alumni of all the twelve member universities gathered last November in hotel Leopold, next to the European Parliament, to raise their glasses to twenty years of international university partnerships. The president of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities, Victor van der Chijs,

opened the ceremony celebrating 20 years of ECIU. 'To actually survive twenty years as a network of universities means a lot. To keep it together, that takes commitment, perseverance, prioritization and mutual respect,' says Van der Chijs. 'We are more committed than ever to challenging conventional thinking.'







**Text**  
Michaela Nesvarova  
Sandra Pool  
**Photo**  
Jean-Yves Limet

## UT module wins award for innovative education

The University of Twente (UT) module 'Smart ways to make smart cities smarter' has won the ECIU Team Award for Innovation in Teaching and Learning. The creators received the prize last November during the 20th anniversary ceremony of ECIU in Brussels.

The ECIU Team Award is given out every year in order to recognize teaching and learning innovations of teams from the ECIU member institutions. The UT minor 'Smart ways to make smart cities smarter' was selected as the winner out of seven candidates. The jury especially appreciated the high level of interdisciplinary approach of the module and its connection to external stakeholders.

Smart ways to make smart cities smarter is an HTHT minor, open to all technical students and students EPA and IBA. The module has been developed by the faculties Engineering Technology, Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Mathematics (ET) and the Faculty of Geo-information Science and Earth Observation (ITC).

The minor module introduces students to the field of civil engineering and management and society's transition towards smart cities. The module addresses the challenges of maintaining the urban space and infrastructure, and also provides hand-on experience during an industry-based design project. The chosen approach via interfaculty collaboration has therefore contributed to the success.

Would you like to give it a try with your team? Apply now at the ECIU website!  
Closing date: May 4.



The winning team of 2017, from left to right: Mark van der Meijde, Lissy La Paix Puello, Robin de Graaf, Léon olde Scholtenhuis (all UT) and Mark Brown (Director of the National Institute for Digital Learning (NIDL) at Dublin City University (DCU)).



Rolf Vermeij participated in the Leadership Development Programme

# 'International

# setting and mingling

# are the

# programme's strengths'

ECIU offers university employees a chance to work on pressing issues that their university faces in an international setting. The foundation of the Grants Office, a product of this programme, proves that this so-called Leadership Development Programme (LDP) is about more than talking and brainstorming.

Rolf Vermeij, head of the University of Twente's Grants Office, participated in the Leadership Development Programme in 2007. Working on cases is an important aspect of this training programme. 'These are real issues,' Vermeij says. 'Normally, universities keep their problems to themselves, but each participating ECIU university brings a pressing matter to the table: real problems that the organisation struggles with. That gives the whole process more impact. Board members of the participating universities often cannot believe the findings that the programme produces.'



Text  
Jelle Posthuma  
Photo  
Gijs Ouwkerk

## European Union

When Rolf Vermeij participated in the programme, the European seventh framework programme for research and innovation had just been launched. Brussels was making more means available, such as the ERC Grants. 'The UT was looking for new methods to make better use of the opportunities in Europe,' Vermeij explains. 'The acceptance rate of research proposals in Europe was too low.'

## Strategic plan

Vermeij thought this would be a suitable case to discuss during the Leadership Development Programme. 'The session revealed that the UT did not yet have the right expertise to make optimal use of the opportunities in Europe. To achieve more success in Brussels, a more centralised approach was needed.'

Vermeij returned to the UT armed with these findings. 'We now support researchers with the submission of their research proposals and we established the Grants Office in 2008.' These measures paid off. 'In 2010, thirty percent of the ERC proposals were accepted. The acceptance rate is still high today, at circa twenty-two percent. A lot of money is involved: an acceptance from the ERC ranges from 1.5 to 2.5 million euros.'

## Strength

During the course, Vermeij was part of a mixed group of people. 'I have a scientific background myself, so I was quite used to working on an international level. That is often not the case for supporting and administrative staff, who also participate in the course. This mingling of the various university departments and the international nature of the course are the programme's main strengths. Of course, it can be a bit awkward at first. In the end, though, that is exactly the point: overcoming obstacles.'

## The ECIU's flagship

**Harry de Boer and Jon File of the UT's Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) are the instigators and head lecturers of the Leadership Development Programme.**

'It is like a travelling circus, in the positive sense of the word,' they say. 'Every host university selects a project that it wishes to discuss,' De Boer explains. 'A university is a complex organisation. Our goal is to bring people closer together. During the LDP, the head of finance will meet a professor of electronics, for example. What connects them all is their interest in leadership at the university. These are people with potential and curiosity.'

A simulation game is part of the course. 'We act out role-playing scenarios in a fantasy world,' Jon File says. 'Say, you are the dean of a faculty and your organisation is losing money. What happens next? We act out that scenario here. This is highly interactive and takes place in a multicultural environment. Things that work here are far less effective in Germany, for example. We also bring in leaders from entirely different corporate cultures. The former director of Grolsch once attended a session. We asked him about the differences between managing a beer brewery and a university.'

The fact that the collaboration that takes place during the LDP is both intense and fruitful is evident from the reunions that are regularly held. 'Two or three groups still meet up often,' De Boer says. 'Those people all became close friends. ECIU strives to build a community and bring universities into contact with each other. The Leadership Development Programme contributes to that goal, which makes it one of the ECIU's showpieces.'

## About the programme

The ECIU member universities are facing similar challenges in terms of management, leadership and strategic development. Therefore, since 2004, ECIU offers a comprehensive leadership programme to potential academic and administrative leaders of its member universities. They value this programme highly. Working together in small but highly diverse international teams not only inspires the participants but also provides them with a clear reflection of their own performance in their organization.

Since its launch in 2004, nearly 300 employees participated in the Leadership Development Programme (LDP). Each university can send (at least) two participants to the programme: One from academia, one from support staff. The three seminars are held at two different partner universities and one in Brussels.



**Jon File**



**Harry de Boer**

# Summer schools

## Free tickets or discounts for ECIU students

Are you looking for an inspiring way to spend your summer? The ECIU Summer Schools offer you several high-quality courses to choose from. Go abroad, celebrate the summer and discover Mexico, Sweden, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Finland or Spain!

### **Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico** i Summer Mx



#### **Date**

2 July - 30 July (4 weeks on 4 different campuses in Mexico)

#### **Fee**

3600 USD for independent students  
1600 USD for ECIU students

#### **What to expect?**

Students will learn how to improve their skills as professionals. You can expect company visits, conferences with experts, workshops and trips. Attendees will have the opportunity to take two different courses that will help them develop a deeper understanding of Mexican identity and culture. In addition, they can choose to improve their basic Spanish skills or to advance their intercultural communication competencies.

### **Linköping University, Sweden** LiU Summer Academy



#### **Date**

29 June-28 July 2018  
14 weeks programme

#### **Fee**

No fee, the Summer Academy is only eligible for partner universities

#### **What to expect?**

Students have several high-quality courses to choose from and will gain cultural insights together with other international students from all over the world. All partner universities are welcome to nominate a maximum of five students per course. Students from partner universities with whom we would like to improve the balance for incoming and outgoing student exchange are prioritized.

### **University of Twente, the Netherlands** CuriousU



#### **Date**

12 - 21 August

#### **Fee**

Until 10 April €540, from 11 April to 10 June €600 and after 10 June €700.  
Includes 20% ECIU discount

#### **What to expect?**

The CuriousU experience is a one of a kind combination of a European summer school and a festival. Excellent academic courses, music, sports, theatre and inspirational speakers at one place. The broad range of courses that are given are based on the hottest research fields, which include Blockchain Tech, Water, Robotics and eSports Analytics. To get the discount go to the registration website and use the following discount code: ECIUpaR20

### **Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain** International Summer Term



#### **Date**

25 June to 13 July 2018  
& 16 July to 3 August 2018

#### **Fee**

€720 each course.  
ECIU-students: €576 (20% discount)

#### **What to expect?**

The courses are full-time, intensive programmes over a three-week period that provide students with the opportunity to participate in hands-on seminars, as well as fieldwork and off-campus activities. Courses sessions include special events, such as visits to relevant public and political institutions, museums and monuments.

### **Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania** Summer School in Palanga



#### **Date**

20 - 24 August

#### **Fee**

Early bird €200 | Regular €250

#### **What to expect?**

Doctoral students with strong intellectual curiosity will have an opportunity for exploration, cultural enrichment, experience exchange. The international PhD Summer School aims to: equip participants with essential skills that are necessary in all fields of science; provide participants with a valuable chance to network with attendants from other countries and share a friendly social environment, and an exciting time at the seaside resort Palanga.

### **Tampere University of Technology, Finland** Tampere Summer School



#### **Date**

6 - 17 August

#### **Fee**

€200 for a course of 2 ECTS  
€500 for a course of 5 ECTS

#### **What to expect?**

The Summer School is open to Bachelor's degree, Master's degree and PhD students from all over the world. All courses are taught in English and covers various academic fields and up-to-date topics with a multidisciplinary approach. The courses are organised by the University of Tampere (UTA), Tampere University of Technology (TUT) and Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK).