

EMERGE Staff Week Paves the Way for Enriched Collaborative Projects (<https://international.univ-rennes2.fr/article/emerge-staff-week-paves-way-enriched-collaborative-projects>)



On the morning of Monday, April 24th, over 50 participants of the EMERGE universities consortium (<https://euemerge.eu/>) arrived in Cyprus from the different corners of Europe to participate in a Staff Week which was hosted for the first time by Neapolis University, Pafos (NUP). Pantelis Sklias, Rector of Neapolis, opened the first plenary session of the week by extending a warm welcome to all attendees and holding a brief discussion of the aim of the event: to provide participants with the chance to have face-to-face discussions on how to enhance the common work undertaken in the bid to become a European University under the European Commission's EUI program (<https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/european-universities>).



Pantelis Sklias, Rector of Neapolis University Pafos during the opening session

In line with one of the many objectives of the week, much of the rest of the day was dedicated to providing partners with a chance to better get to know each other and identify the operational team members from each university who would be working together to advance the thematic working sessions. The different sessions covered a wide range of topics: from research collaboration and joint programmes, to student mobility and exchange programs, to how to best communicate and disseminate information regarding EMERGE's activities and achievements. Students of the EMERGE Student Forum (ESF) also had the opportunity to exchange views and ideas on questions of student governance and how to best encourage others from their home institutions to get actively involved in EMERGE activities.

Initiatives in Education

Several key topics were discussed in the education working group, but one standout theme that will be important for the group moving forward will be the development of new joint and double-degree programs. Representatives from each institution were able to identify a number of specific programs which might be enhanced through a combined approach with a partner university, providing new opportunities for students of all levels. Reinforced cooperation in Life-Long Learning Programs (LLL) will also be a focal point between members. The working group participants discussed ways of mapping all existing courses and activities within the consortium that could provide our collective students, teachers, researchers and adult learners the opportunity to continue to study, research and advance their careers, while also encouraging physical and blended mobilities and virtual learning to do so. Another concrete initiative which will be developed is the creation of combined EMERGE summer/winter schools. Two examples of such programs in which consortium doctoral students and academic staff may participate include the **CAPS** (<https://creativepublicspace.univ-rennes2.fr>) **Summer School: Interdisciplinary Methodologies for Creative Research on Public Space** (June 2023), and (in the spring of 2024), the **CIREFE** (<https://sites-formations.univ-rennes2.fr/cirefe/>) **French language program** exclusively designed for university staff in which EMERGE partners will be given priority.

Research Collaboration

In terms of research collaboration, members of the Staff Week had fruitful discussion around a number of topics, ranging from research innovation and transfer, entrepreneurship and business, challenge-based learning, environmental issues and the sport sciences domain. Exchanges on best practices and knowledge transfer of collaborative research policies and strategies were also a large part of the discussions that will prove helpful in developing new programs to be implemented between member institutions. One presentation on machine translation technology OPTIMICE was focused on plurilingualism, and more specifically on the forthcoming Horizon Europe call "Strategies to strengthen the European linguistic capital in a globalised world". The consortium is already planning to hold a research seminar at the Universidad of Coruna within the next academic year.

Towards a Common Communication Strategy

Building a common communication strategy was also a key topic of the week. Participants from this session were invited first to present an overview of the communications strategy and resources of their universities, after which, the group worked to better identify the key messages and potential actions to work on in the coming months. The members will be holding monthly video meetings to advance in their work, which will include making structural changes to the EMERGE website to better highlight important content and a strengthened coordinated social media campaign. During the Staff Week, the Neapolis University team also took advantage of the presence of attendees to film a new EMERGE video (available to view here (<https://euemerge.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/A-Successful-and-Inspiring-EMERGE-Staff-Week.mp4>) or below).

Students Helping to Construct a Truly European Campus

Members of the EMERGE Student Forum (ESF) (<https://euemerge.eu/emerge-student-forum/>) progressed on topics like how to promote EMERGE activities throughout their home universities and developing the group's student governance structure. Members of ESF, who already meet for regular video meetings, have proposed a constitutional text and proposed a structure for an advisory committee. Rules for elections and rules of procedure are already under discussion and will be made available shortly, with elections possibly being held within the month of May. The students are also developing an Annual Student Assembly Meeting.



ESF member

The Universities of EMERGE

Rennes 2 University

University of Limerick / Ollscoil Luimnigh /Ireland (<https://www.ul.ie/>) (Coordinator)

Université de Bretagne Sud (UBS) /France (<https://www.univ-ubs.fr/fr/index.html>)

Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences /Norway (<https://eng.inn.no/>)

Univerzita Majeta Bela / Banskej Bystrici /Slovakia (<https://www.umb.sk/>)

Europa-Universität Flensburg /Germany (<https://www.uni-flensburg.de/>)

Neapolis University Pafos /Cyprus (<https://www.nup.ac.cy/>)

Universidade da Coruña (<https://www.udc.es/>), Spain

Democritus University of Thrace (<https://duth.gr/>) (DUTH), Greece

Together, our institutions will be seeking to tackle the particular challenges of engaging with Europe and hope to create a European University.



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