



# UNDE SUNTEM ȘI ÎNCOTRO NE INDREPTĂM?

## Universitățile fără ziduri și „know-how-ul” alianțelor europene în formarea pedagogică a universitarilor

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Universitatea din București*

# „Towards a Bright Future for the European University Alliances”





# „Towards a Bright Future for the European University Alliances”

## EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ALLIANCES

### Drivers of Change and Innovation in Higher Education

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*29-30 April 2024, Brussels*



# „Towards a Bright Future for the European University Alliances”

*“...The European University Alliances can be catalysts for change and innovation in higher education. By implementing the proposed recommendations on **multilingualism, “cosmobility”, superdiversity, pedagogical innovation, the European Degree, and cooperation with the Global South**, European universities will enhance their global competitiveness, foster inclusivity, and contribute to the development of a more integrated and resilient higher education landscape.”*



# MULTILINGUALISM

Overcome the disconnect between the linguistic profiles of students and dominant languages in higher education.

Invest in resources and initiatives **that support multilingual pedagogies** across all disciplines, integrating both AI and direct human interaction.

**Encourage intra- and inter-alliance experiences**, sharing of best practices and infrastructures to support multilingualism and interculturality, including smaller languages with lower linguistic capital.



# COSMOBILITY

**Diverse Mobility Experiences:** continue using alliances as **experimental grounds for various forms of mobility** (short, long, online, hybrid) with adequate funding to support diverse approaches.

**Simplify Administrative Processes:** remove administrative barriers for organising and participating in mobility programmes. Implement solutions for mismatches in academic calendars and establish paperless, **one-stop mobility services**.

**Global Scale Mobility:** emphasising balanced flows between Europe and Africa to enhance intercultural dialogue.



# SUPERDIVERSITY

**Define Superdiversity:** distinguish from international mobility. Align policies on superdiversity between universities and governments, extending to broader society.

**Inclusive Classrooms:** inclusive academic environments by focusing on equity, **professional development for teachers**, balanced integration of online and offline modalities, cultural and linguistic awareness, and collaboration.

**Harmonise Policies:** align higher education policies on internationalisation and superdiversity to foster global citizenship, intercultural competencies, and diverse perspectives in education and research.



# PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION

## Alliances as Drivers of Pedagogical Innovation

**Experimental Sandboxes:** allow alliances to function as sandboxes for experimenting with pedagogical innovation, **including joint programmes and various mobility forms.**

Ensure high student participation and sharing of best practices.

**Flexible Learning Pathways:** develop open, flexible university alliance ecosystems with learning pathways that address short-term societal needs and long-term perspectives.





# PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION

Alliances offer a variety of models and opportunities to exchange best practices, from micro-credentials to minors to fully joint degrees.

It is expected that the future will see more and more of these joint programmes, characterised by different forms of mobility.

They should be able to function as **sandboxes of experimentation** with pedagogical innovation and innovative pedagogical practices like the COIL (collaborative online international learning) or COCREATION programme.



# PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION

**Equity:** pedagogical frameworks based on fairness, flexibility and choice

**Growth:** teachers need more professional development in this area

**Consideration:** a balanced and thoughtful integration of online and offline educational modalities

**Engagement:** online environments offer opportunities, but physical informal campus interactions remain essential



# PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION

**Sensitivity:** the promotion of cultural and (multi)linguistic awareness

**Collaboration:** inclusive education as a shared responsibility of all parties involved

**Rigour:** high academic standards and boundaries

**Leadership:** the engagement of the institution providing support



# EUROPEAN DEGREE

**Complementary, Not Competitive:** Integrates with national degrees, simplifying transnational organisation without adding complexity.

**Quality Assurance & Recognition:** Ensures high standards across all programmes and supports automatic recognition of qualifications.

**Global Competitiveness:** Fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, enhancing Europe’s attractiveness in education and research.

**Inclusive Mobility:** Positions mobility as a standard opportunity, ensuring accessibility for diverse student groups.

# Academic careers across OECD countries. Preliminary insights in an innovative study



# The state of academic careers in OECD countries (OECD, 2024)

*“There is a need to tackle in a systemic and comprehensive way academic careers, responding to the call of the Council to promote flexible and attractive career structures and improve working conditions.” European Strategy for Universities (European Commission, 2022)*

**1. Contractual status**



**5. Career paths**

**2. Responsibilities and workload**



**6. Diversity and gender balance**

**3. Career assessment**

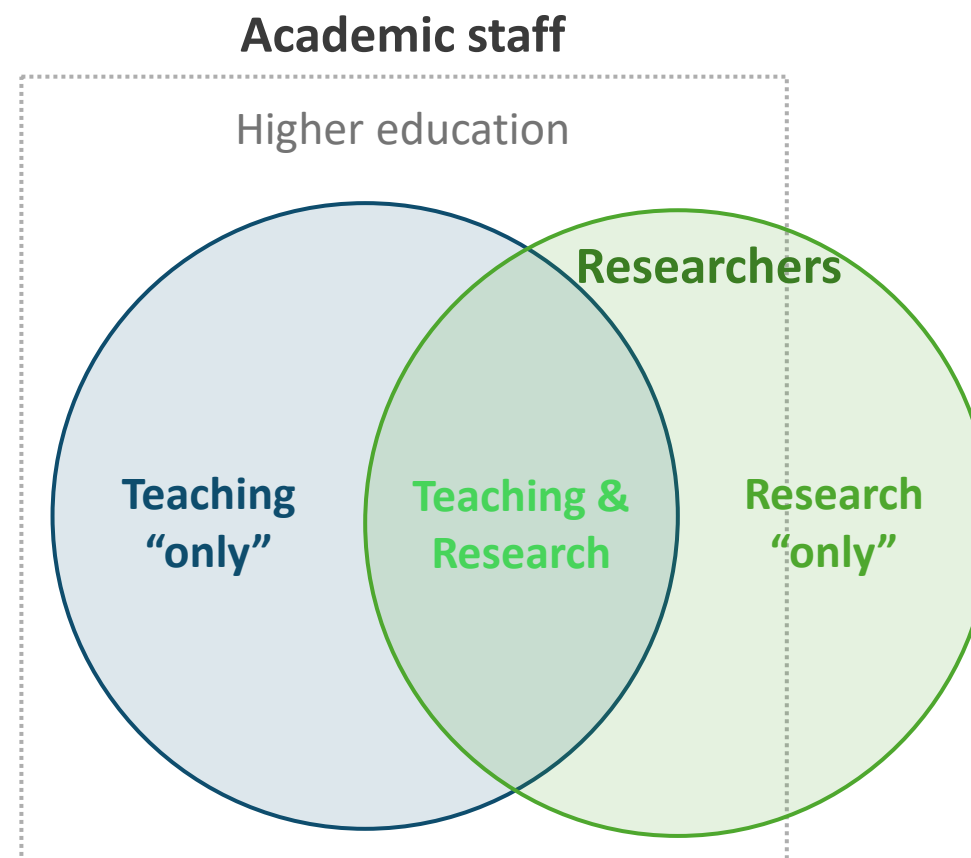


**7. International collaboration**





**4. Professional learning**



**8. Academic freedom**



## What makes for attractive academic careers? (OECD, 2024)

1.  Transparent and sustainable **working conditions** (e.g. contract, workload, career progression, academic freedom, working environment)
2.  Performance recognition across **various academics' roles** (e.g. teaching, research, service, engagement, leadership)
3.  **Mobility and engagement** across responsibilities, sectors, and borders
4.  Support for **professional learning** and **diversity**

## Working conditions of academics (OECD, 2024)

*Poor working conditions threaten the attractiveness of academic careers, impact quality of education and reduce the capacity of academics to innovative and contribute to policy goals.*

Contract precarity more pronounced than in other equivalent sectors (use of zero-hours, casual and successive fixed-term contracts)

Decline of academic freedom in OECD systems (2012-2022 according to the Academic Freedom Index)

Career progression bottlenecks, promises and uncertainty

Unsatisfactory work-life balance (accepted norm of long working hours)

Concerns about wellbeing of academics

Interference and pressure from within and outside HE





# Improving working conditions for academics (OECD, 2024)

## Possible policy implications

### Labour protections

- Interpretation of **existing labour regulations** in academic context and observing the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-education Teaching Personnel
- Collective **inter-institutional commitments** on stable employment

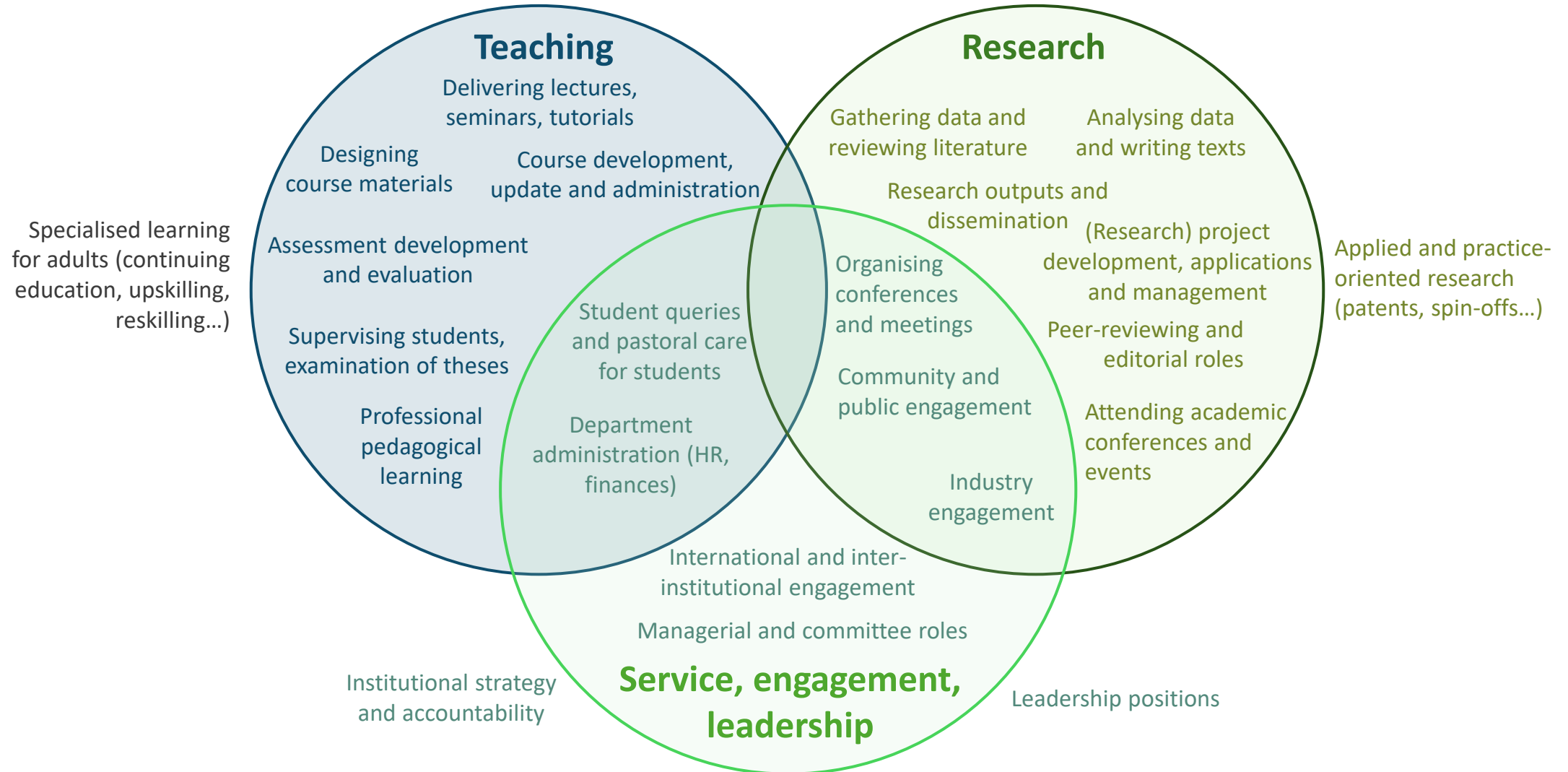
### Predictability

- Individual: **Transparency** in renewal of contracts and in possible **pathways** from casual to permanent contract (career leader)
- Institutional: System-level resourcing (**multi-annual budgeting** and personnel planning, **balance** between core and competitive funding)

### Academic freedom

- Dispersion of HE oversight between public, expert and self-government bodies, promoting **consensual decision-making** and **network governance**
- **Protecting academics against threats** from civil society and SLAPPs, and against pressure from public, private and foreign partners

# Academic staff = a diverse profession encompassing multiple roles (OECD, 2024)



# A new European vision around academic careers. Outline of the Council's Recommendations



Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education (24 Nov. 2024)

# 1. Building Capacity for Innovative and Effective Teaching

## Recognition and Rewards

Ensure teaching excellence is valued equally to research in staff evaluations and promotions.

## Innovative Training

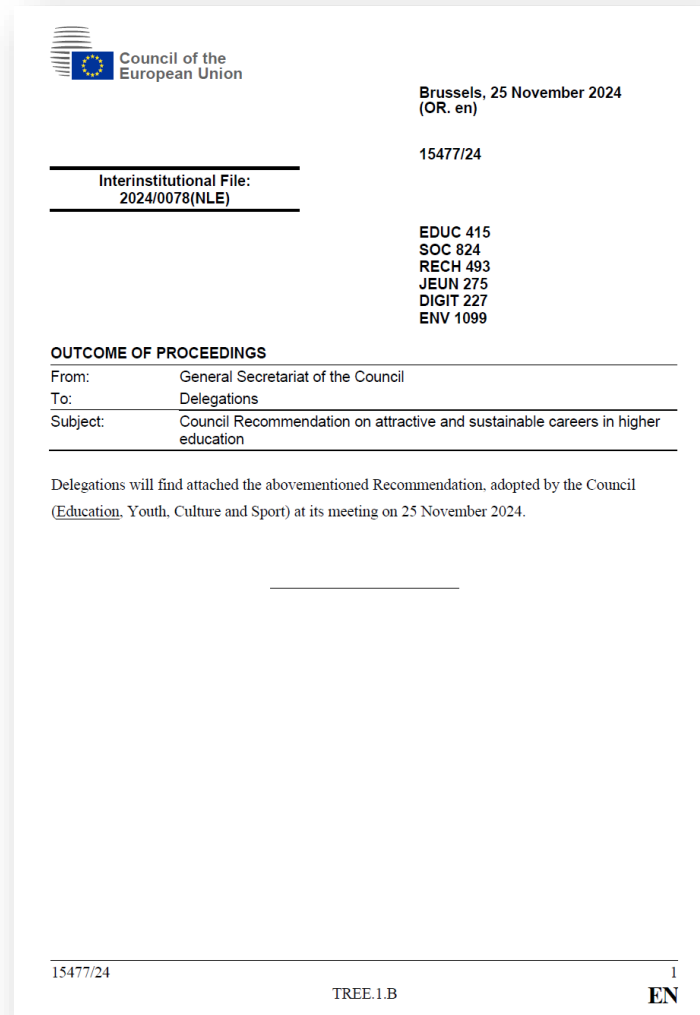
Provide teachers with access to cutting-edge, student-centred teaching methodologies to enhance engagement and learning outcomes.

## Micro-Credentials for Development

Enable teachers to gain certified expertise in critical areas such as digital pedagogy, green skills, and sustainable development.

## Centres for Innovation

Establish dedicated teaching and learning centres to drive collaboration, innovation, and the adoption of new practices across institutions.



*Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education (24 Nov. 2024)*

## 2. Empowering Teachers to Adapt to Modern Challenges

### Meeting Diverse Needs

Train teachers to effectively address the needs of diverse and vulnerable learners, fostering equity in education.

### Ethical Use of Technology

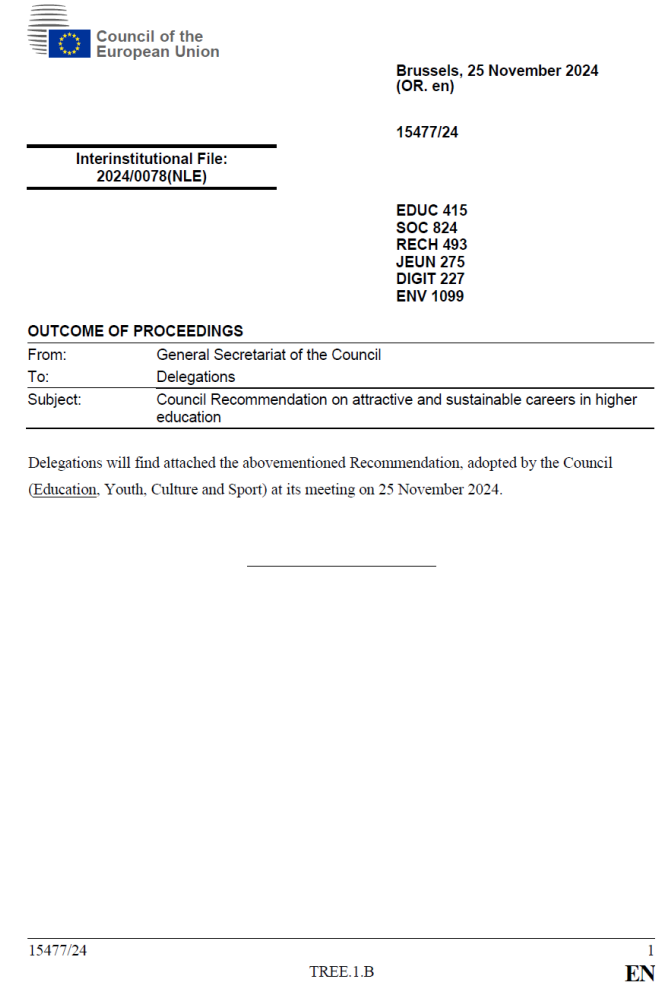
Incorporate AI and digital tools into teaching practices, ensuring ethical and impactful implementation.


### Work-Life Balance

Promote flexibility in work arrangements to support teachers' personal and professional well-being.

### Leadership for Inclusion

Develop targeted programmes to support underrepresented groups in achieving leadership roles and fostering inclusive educational environments.



 Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 25 November 2024  
(OR. en)

15477/24

Interinstitutional File:  
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EDUC 415  
SOC 824  
RECH 493  
JEUN 275  
DIGIT 227  
ENV 1099

**OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education

Delegations will find attached the abovementioned Recommendation, adopted by the Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) at its meeting on 25 November 2024.

15477/24 TREE.1.B 1 EN

Council Recommendation on attractive and sustainable careers in higher education (24 Nov. 2024)

## 3. Unlocking the Potential of Transnational Cooperation

### Transnational Programmes

Recognise and reward teachers' participation in transnational training initiatives, including joint degrees and innovative teaching methods.

### Mobility Opportunities

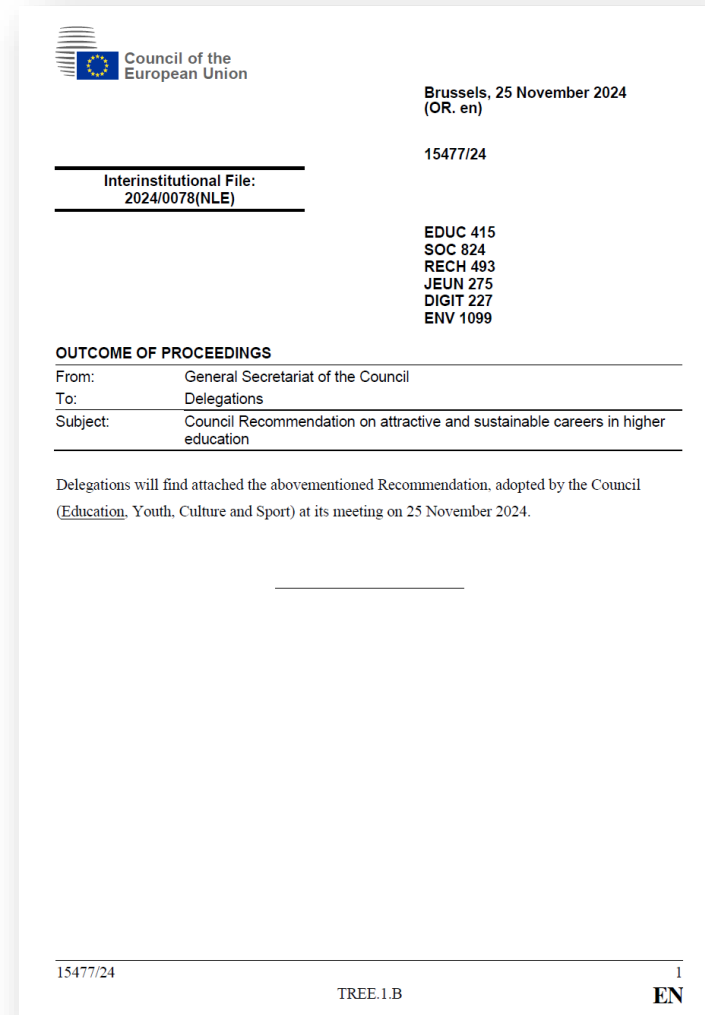
Facilitate professional development through physical and virtual mobility, using tools like Europass to enhance career growth.

### Lifelong Learning

Encourage teachers to pursue sabbaticals or other learning opportunities to advance their skills and remain adaptable.

### Sustainability and Innovation

Integrate green and digital transition skills into teacher training curricula, aligning with global and EU priorities.

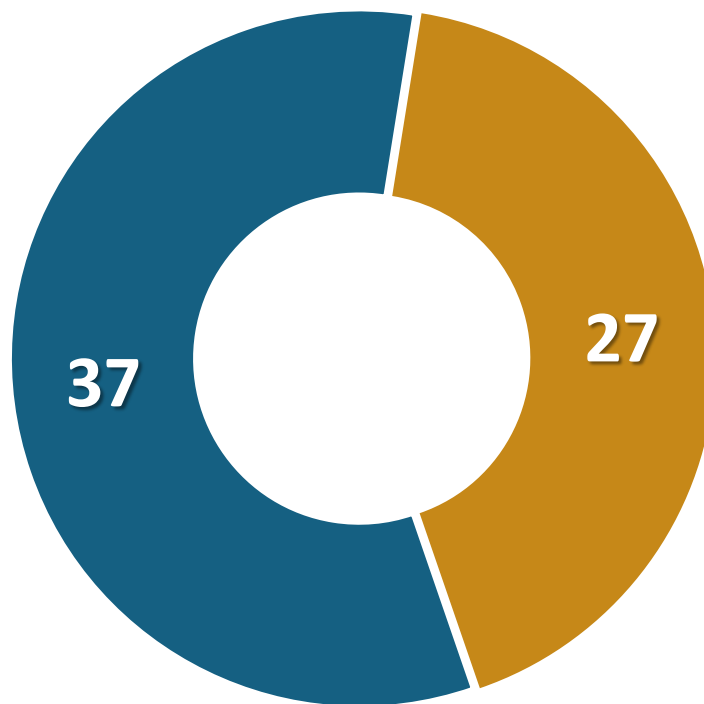


# Teacher training in higher education. Initiatives of European Universities Alliances



## Alliances with teacher training initiatives (N = 64)

*Mapping on publicly available documents and resources (Nov. 2024)*



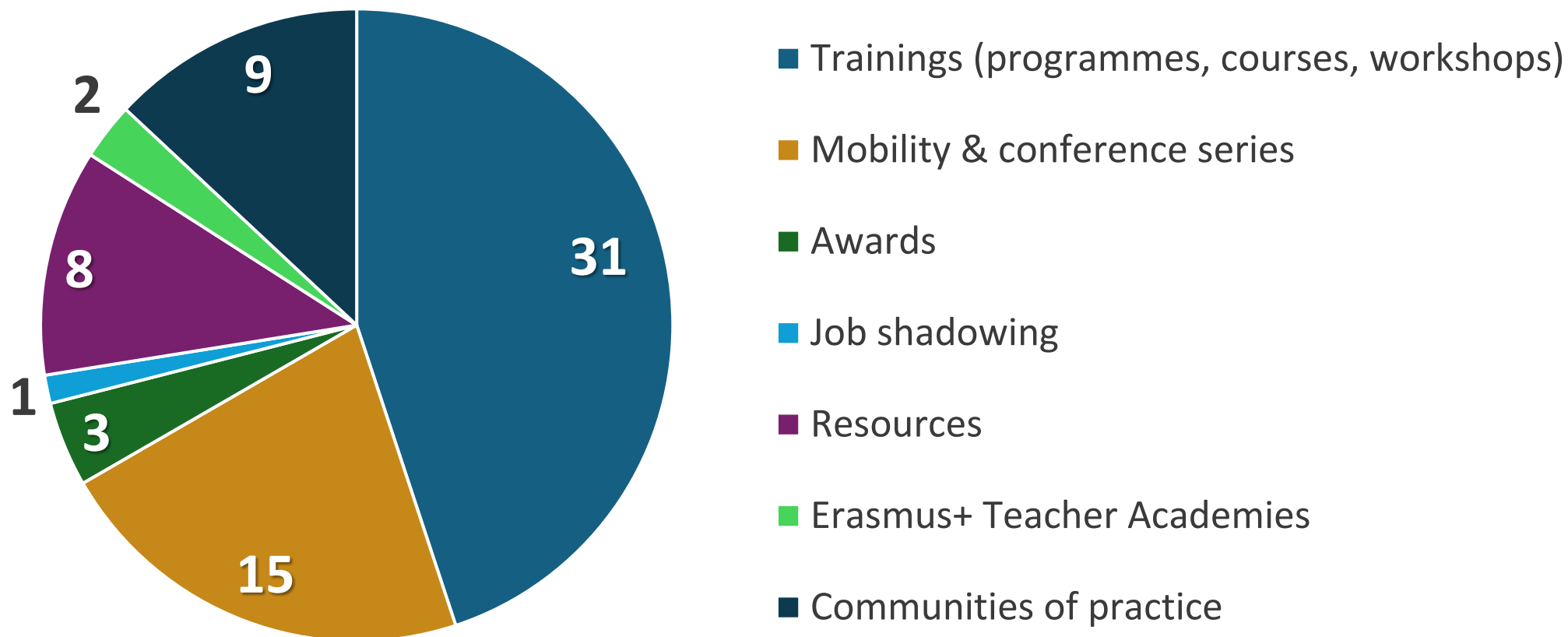
■ Alliances with teacher training initiatives

■ Alliances with no teacher training initiatives



# Teacher training initiatives among European Universities Alliances\*

Mapping on publicly available documents and resources (Nov. 2024)



*\*Number of Alliances where the type of initiative is present*

# Trainings under a variety of formats across Alliances

*Mapping on publicly available documents and resources (Nov. 2024)*

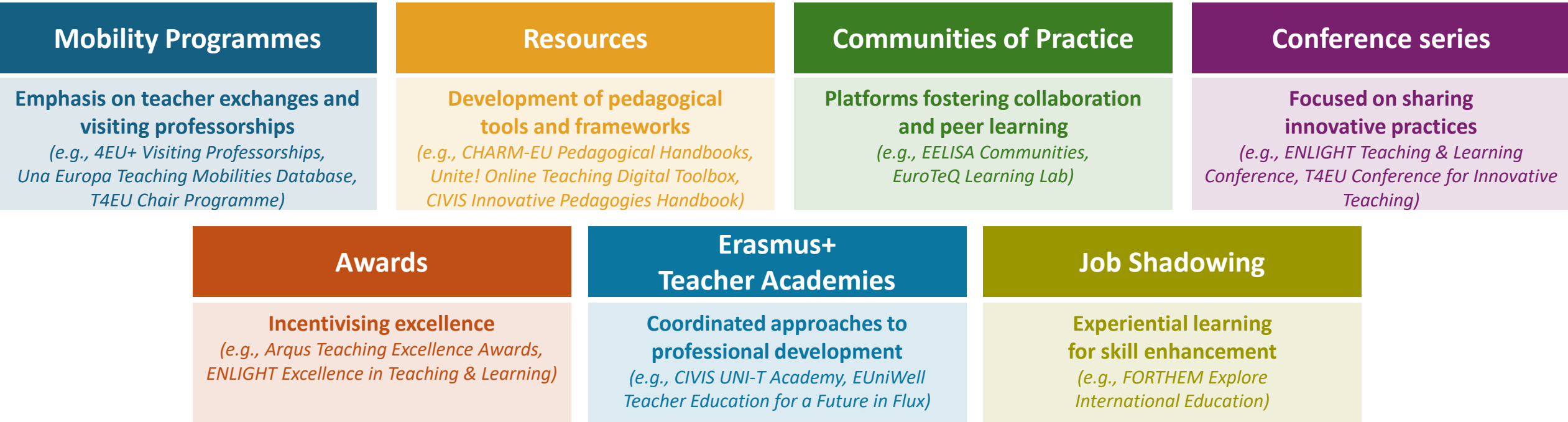
Courses	Workshops	Programmes	Trainings*
<p><b>Practical skill-building</b>  <i>(e.g., ENHANCE's online learning workshop, CIVIS's Innovative Pedagogies Workshops)</i></p>	<p><b>Comprehensive programmes</b>  <i>(e.g., EULiST's Courses for Academic Staff, ULYSSEUS's Digital Soft Skills)</i></p>	<p><b>Targeted staff development</b>  <i>(e.g., Circle U.'s CU.til Week, EPICUR's Centre for International Teaching &amp; Learning)</i></p>	<p><b>Framework-level initiatives</b>  <i>(e.g., CIVICA Teacher Development Programme, T4EU's Professional Development Programme)</i></p>

*\*In this context, by "trainings" we understand training actions framework, not as cohesive as a programme (structure, content, etc.)*

<b>Identified patterns</b>	<p><b>Emphasis on Pedagogical Innovation</b>          Initiatives like Arqus's and CIVIS's Workshops highlight pedagogical innovation as a recurring theme</p>
	<p><b>Focus on Digital Transformation</b>          Multiple Alliances integrate digital skills and virtual mobility (e.g., FORTHEM Digital Academy, Unite!'s catalogue)</p>

# It is not only about training when it comes to teachers in Alliances

Mapping on publicly available documents and resources (Nov. 2024)



## Identified patterns

- Collaborative Frameworks**  
Communities of practice (e.g., INGENIUM Education Lab) support inter-institutional cooperation and innovation
- Resource Integration**  
Bespoke teaching materials aligns with digital and interdisciplinary goals (e.g., INVEST Supportive Materials)

# ENLIGHT – Comprehensive Approach to Teacher Development

*Mapping on publicly available documents and resources (Nov. 2024)*

**Communities:** the ENLIGHT Teaching & Learning Hub serves as a collaborative platform for educators to share practices and develop pedagogical competencies.

**Resources:** offers tools such as the ENLIGHT Competence Framework and an introduction to Challenge-based Education, aligning with contemporary teaching needs.

**Awards:** recognises excellence through its Teaching and Learning Awards, incentivising educators to innovate.

**Conference Series:** the annual Teaching and Learning Conference creates a space for sharing advancements and best practices.



ENLIGHT

# T4EU (Transform4Europe) – Targeted Excellence in Teaching

*Mapping on publicly available documents and resources (Nov. 2024)*

**Mobility:** the T4EU Chair Programme enables academic exchanges, encouraging cross-institutional collaboration and cultural exchange.

**Awards:** the T4EU Teaching Award incentivises excellence in pedagogical practices.

**Conference Series:** the Conference for Innovative Teaching provides a platform for dialogue on emerging trends and pedagogical challenges.



## Una Europa – Mobilising Resources and Excellence

*Mapping on publicly available documents and resources (Nov. 2024)*

**Mobility:** the Teaching Mobilities Database facilitates cross-institutional teaching opportunities, strengthening collaboration and cultural exchange.

**Resources:** offers curated materials for academics through its Knowledge Hub, aligning with innovative pedagogical needs.

**Communities:** facilitates collaboration through structured support for educators to enhance teaching practices and strategies.



# Câteva concluzii...



# RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTEGRATION

**Enhancing research-based teaching:** Teaching staff are encouraged **to integrate the latest research into their courses, making learning more current and dynamic.** Training programs are provided to help educators link their research expertise with their teaching practices.

**Research on teaching and learning:** Academic staff may also be trained in **the methods of educational research,** fostering an evidence-based approach to improving teaching practices.



# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Training in innovative pedagogies:** The development of new teaching methods, such as **digital learning, blended learning, and collaborative learning, is encouraged.** These methods are supported by training programs and workshops across the alliances.

**Recognition of teaching excellence:** Some alliances emphasize the creation of **frameworks to recognize and reward excellent teaching practices,** which may include professional certification programs for teaching staff.

# DIGITAL COMPETENCIES AND TEACHING TRANSFORMATION

**Digital skills training:** There is a focus on enhancing the digital competencies of teachers, including **training in online teaching platforms, data management, and digital pedagogy.** This is especially relevant in the context of growing online and hybrid learning environments.

**Innovative tools and methodologies:** Staff training in emerging technologies (such as **AI, VR/AR in education, and digital assessment tools**) is a common policy to equip educators with the skills **to integrate these tools effectively into their teaching.**

## NEW WAYS OF MOBILITY

**Mobility programs for staff:** The European University Alliances encourage mobility not only for students but also for teaching and academic staff. This allows educators to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and gain **international teaching experience.**

**Collaborative teaching models:** Alliances often promote joint curricula and **cross-border teaching**, where staff from different universities **work together on courses or modules**, providing diverse teaching perspectives and expertise.

# INCLUSIVITY AND RESILIENCE

**Inclusive teaching practices:** There is an emphasis on **creating inclusive learning environments** that cater to students of diverse backgrounds, including students with disabilities, **international students**, and those from **underrepresented groups**.

**Cultural competence:** As European University Alliances are transnational, policies often include training for academic staff **to develop cultural awareness** and the **ability to teach in multicultural classrooms**.

# EVALUATION, FEEDBACK AND QUALIFICATIONS

**Standardized frameworks for teaching qualifications:** Policies in the alliances often advocate for **developing European-wide frameworks** that define what constitutes quality teaching qualifications. This could include **the establishment of teaching portfolios, certification schemes, or accreditation programs** that are recognized across the EU.

**Peer review and feedback mechanisms:** Alliances often encourage **peer review processes**, where **educators assess each other's teaching practices**, providing constructive feedback for continuous improvement.

Ce experiențe  
**CIVIS** și **UNITA**  
putem oferi  
celor prezenți?





***The European Universities Initiative –  
From moonshot to game-changer of higher  
education in Europe and abroad (Mavericks, 2024)***

**Vă mulțumesc pentru atenție!**

**Prof. Romiță IUCU, Ph.D.**

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