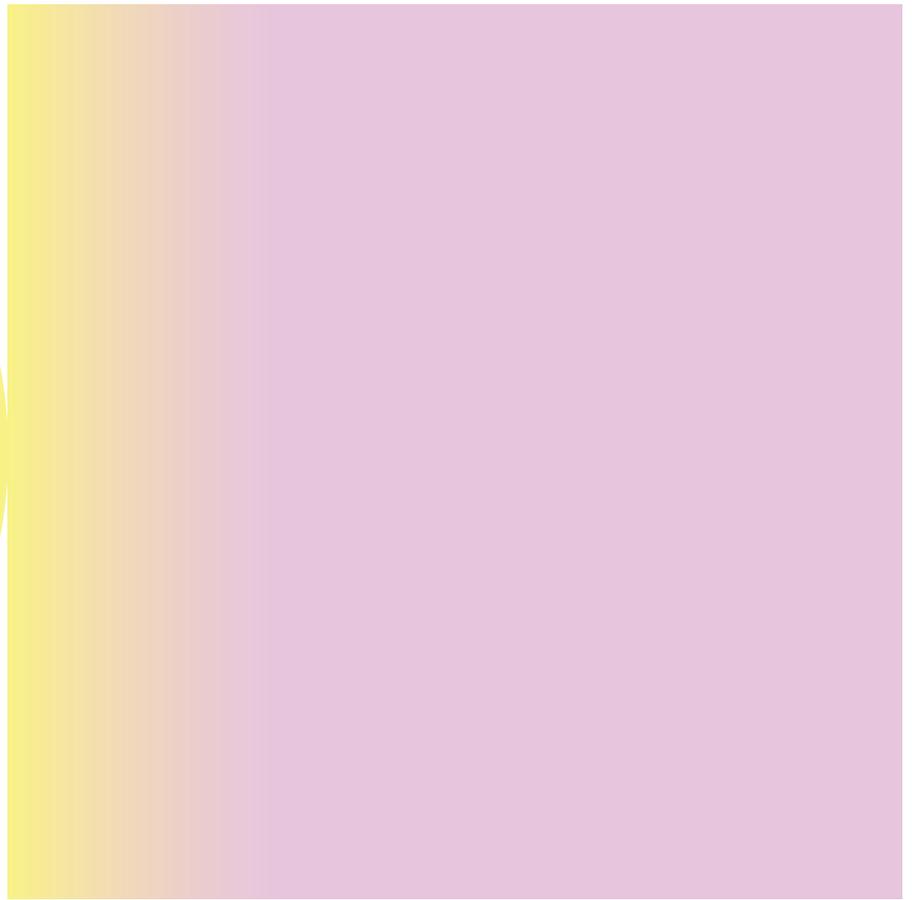
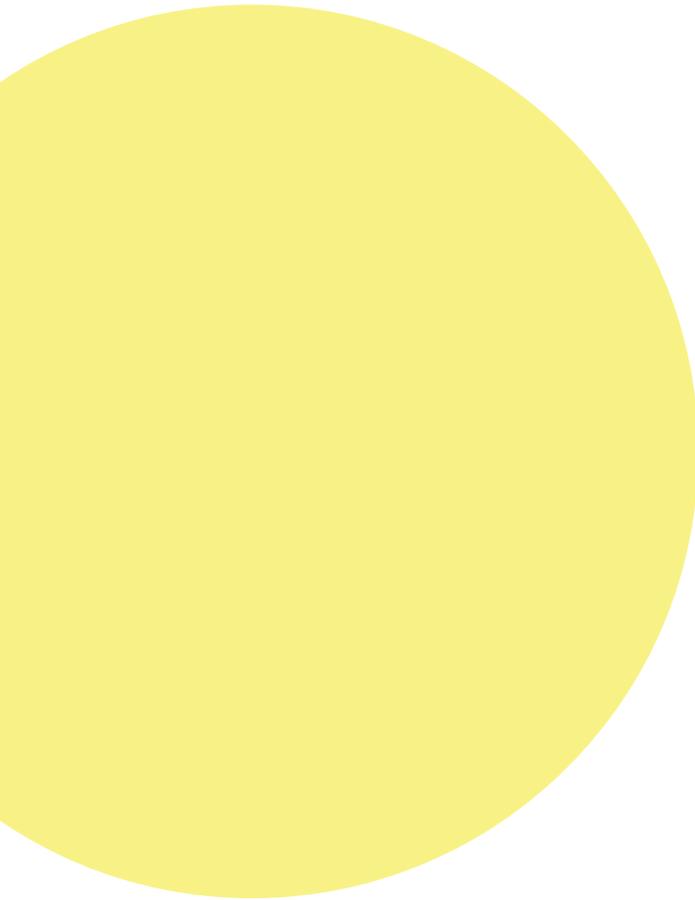
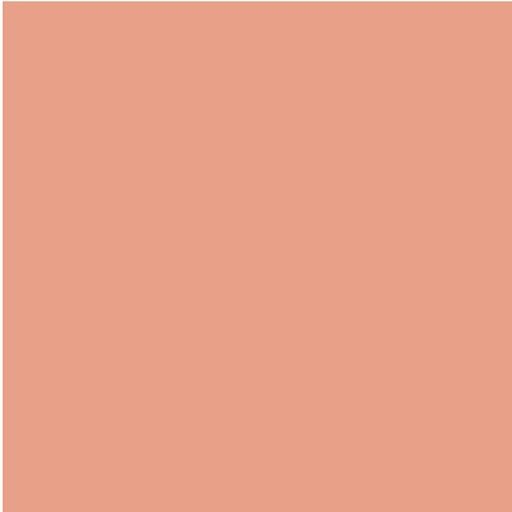


The transformative power of the European Degree as a quality label



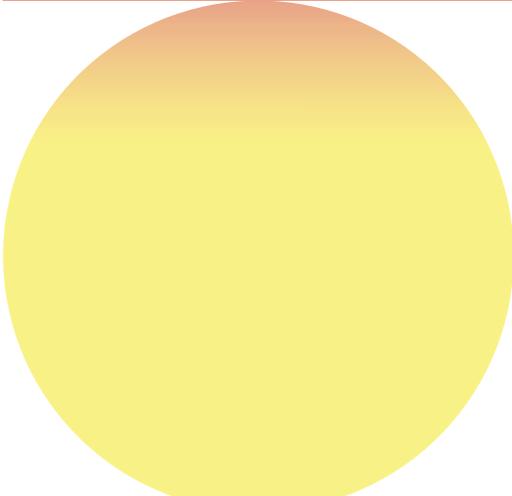
Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



More than 20 years ago, the Bologna Process brought together 48 countries in the **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**, committed to implementing comparable and compatible systems and tools of higher education in order to facilitate mobility, increase employability, allow equitable access and strengthen Europe's global attractiveness and competitiveness. Since its inception, the EHEA has steadily advanced, however, the full implementation of Bologna tools in all countries is yet to become reality. New impetus is needed!

European University Alliances are tasked with developing European inter-university campuses, where young Europeans are equipped with high-quality transnational education. They are committed to developing innovative joint educational offers with the aim of strengthening the European identity of all learners and empowering future graduates with the knowledge, skills and competences needed to succeed on the international labour market and tackle global challenges. Therefore, European Universities are ideally placed to act as **accelerators for the transformation of Europe's higher education**, as well as the further implementation of the key Bologna commitments.

Una Europa is committed to contributing with our experience and working closely with the European Commission and higher education stakeholders to co-develop the future framework for the European Degree, including the development of a definition and associated quality criteria.



Why a European Degree label?

A joint European Degree, as a **cornerstone of the European Education Area** and a **flagship initiative of the European Strategy for Universities**, has a huge potential to advance innovative joint education of the future for the benefit of all learners. It can furthermore act as a **catalyst for the full implementation of Bologna tools** across the EHEA, driving excellence and competitiveness, and inspiring the higher education sector in Europe and beyond. The European Degree as a quality label, open to all types of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), all levels of higher education (Bachelor, Master and Doctorate levels), and promoting Europe's core values, can be truly transformational.

Specifically, the European Degree quality label can drive forward the **full implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes**, promote more **flexible national legislation** for joint degree programmes and **mutual recognition and trust** based on accreditation in one country. In addition, the European Degree label should be supported by **competitive financing as a quality enabler and incentive**, which will empower Europe's HEIs to develop the next generation of programmes fit for the Graduates of the Future.

The Una Europa universities have come together to harness complementary strengths and to create a future-looking European virtual campus that turns the EHEA into reality. The **Una Europa Joint Bachelor in European Studies** and the **Una Europa Doctoral Programme in Cultural Heritage** are the first concrete steps in the alliance's ambitious plans to develop and implement joint innovative courses and programmes at all levels of higher education.

The **Una Europa guiding pedagogical principles** of high-quality international, multilingual, multidisciplinary and research-based education can provide important input for the criteria associated to the European Degree label.

Based on our experiences, we believe that the **European Degree quality label** can have a direct positive impact on how joint degrees are set up and implemented across Europe today:

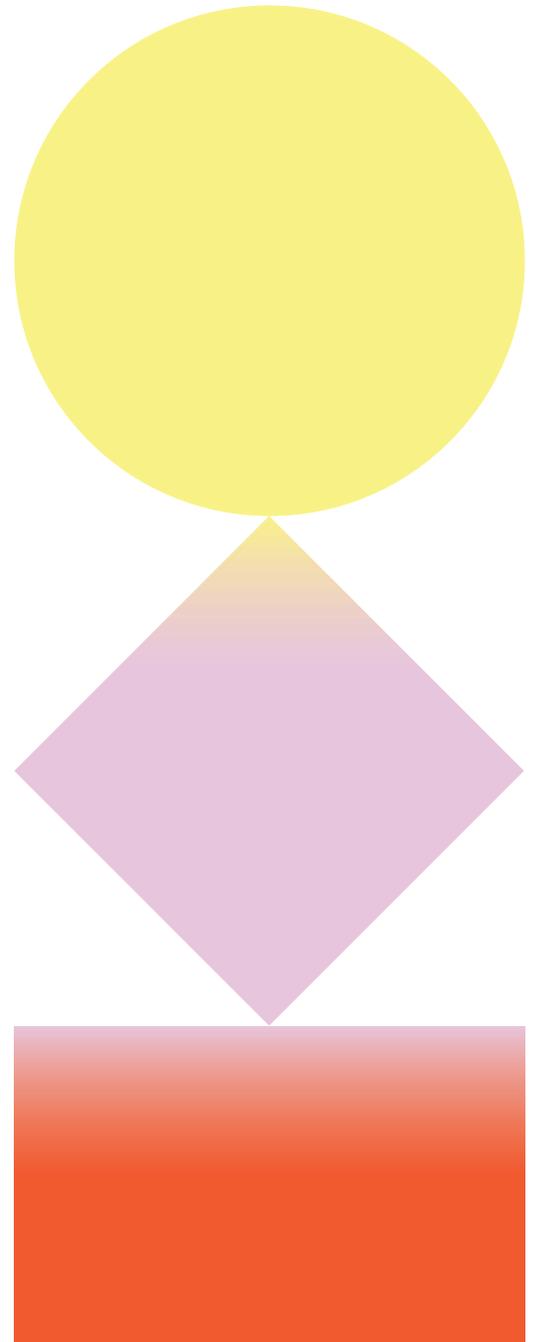
- **Enhanced quality:** In addition to the inherent quality-enhancing nature of joint degree programmes, the European Degree will increase the offer of multilingual, multicultural, multidisciplinary, research-based and flexible learning paths, further boosting the employability of all types of learners in the broadest sense. This quality label will act as proof of learning outcomes and recognize the skills students have acquired throughout their studies.
- **Increased visibility and recognition:** A clear and attractive European Degree quality label delivered jointly as a complementary certificate by all HEIs offering the joint programme and recognized by national authorities, HEIs and employers alike will have a significant impact on the visibility of Europe's joint degree programmes and ultimately its higher education offer at large. It will also be highly attractive to students across Europe and the world, creating a truly European student experience.

- **Promotion of European values:** The European Degree label, based on broadly defined quality-enhancing criteria, will not only boost the competitiveness of the European Higher Education offer and attract global talent, but also create a unique opportunity for the promotion of core European values on the global stage.
- **Improved simplification & accessibility:** The vast majority of HEIs across Europe do not have the resources to invest in today's highly resource-intensive and complex processes required to face legislative hurdles and implement joint degrees. A European Degree quality label can change that by acting as an enabler to break down existing bottlenecks at national level and creating a more inclusive and accessible framework for consortia of all types of HEIs to establish and run more joint degree programmes in the future.

Impetus for the full implementation of the European Approach

The European Degree's inherent quality-enhancing approach as well as its potential capacity to contribute to a more united EHEA and to attract global talent should be highly attractive to national authorities. The European Degree should thus provide a new impetus for the full implementation of the European Approach in all Bologna countries without further national requirements and based on accreditation via a single agency registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), built on inherent trust. Beyond the issue of single accreditation, there are a number of additional bottlenecks at national levels that make the realization of joint degree programmes highly challenging today (tuition fees, selection of students, language requirements, room for interdisciplinarity, ...). The European Degree label should therefore also be harnessed as an enabler to break down these bottlenecks and to promote more flexibility in respective national legislation. We believe that maximum flexibility – or at least the possibility to experiment in the short term – should be offered by all national legislators in the EHEA for the development of joint degrees.

The European Higher Education sector needs support to make the development of joint courses and programmes less complex and resource-intensive as soon as possible. We therefore believe that, at this stage, a focus on the full implementation of existing Bologna tools and flexibility in national legislation is a more realistic approach, rather than attempting to reach harmonisation of national law across the EHEA or developing a completely new framework to award a European Degree qualification.



A dedicated open and competitive EU funding instrument

We would advocate that a dedicated funding instrument be developed at EU level in support of the European Degree label. This would cover the higher cost resulting from the enhanced student offer of joint programmes in relation to study paths and mobility opportunities. The funding instrument should therefore cover both the administrative set-up and running costs for HEIs as well as include provisions for **fully funded scholarships**, covering tuition fees as well as mobility opportunities, in order to ensure equitable access for all types of learners.

The EU funding instrument should be **competitive in nature and open to all consortia of HEIs**, but not be mandatory for the award of a European Degree label. We believe this funding instrument can provide an important incentive for HEIs setting up joint programmes and reward the substantial investment required both for their development and long-term sustainability. It should be awarded based on a peer review process for evaluating bottom-up bids for competitive funding, thereby implemented along the lines of Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degrees (EMJMDs) and Marie-Sklodowska Curie Joint Doctorates (EJDs).

The Una Europa experience

Una Europa joint courses and programmes are ideally placed to inform the pathway towards a joint European Degree. The Una Europa Joint Bachelor in European Studies (BAES) and the Una Europa Joint Doctoral Programme in Cultural Heritage (Una-Her-Doc) are two of the most advanced examples and exemplify the Una Europa way of co-developing an educational environment fit for the Graduates of the Future.



Una Europa Joint Bachelor in European Studies at a glance

The Una Europa Bachelor in European Studies is a unique programme co-developed by eight Una Europa partner universities. Across the European Higher Education Area, joint European Bachelor's degrees are still few and far between. With this Joint Bachelor in European Studies, Una Europa aims to help make the European Higher Education Area a reality and contribute to the European Commission's objective of Achieving the European Education Area by 2025.

- **Multilingual:** Courses are developed in both English and local languages and language courses are part of the study programme
- **Innovative:** Jointly developed programme, jointly taught courses and co-supervised bachelor thesis
- **Multidisciplinary:** Multidisciplinary approach to European Studies, introductions to different disciplines, methods course, including a research track and possibilities for internships
- **International:** Three mobility semesters
- **Structure:** Three years, six semesters and 180 ECTS

The process

The Una Europa Joint Bachelor in European Studies was successfully accredited via the European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes via the **Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO)** in 2021. Due to conflicting national legislation and obstacles at national level, the BAES currently has **four full degree-awarding partners**: Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna (Italy), KU Leuven (Belgium), Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Spain) and Uniwersytet Jagiellónski w Krakowie (Poland). In addition, there are **four mobility partners**: Freie Universität Berlin (Germany), Helsingin Yliopisto/ Helsingfors universitet (Finland), University of Edinburgh (UK) and Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne (France). Students enrolled at one of the mobility partners can receive an Una Europa certificate issued jointly by the parties, stating the credits obtained and the parties where these credits were obtained. The roles and responsibilities of the different partners as well as the modalities of the programme are formalised in a **Consortium Agreement** signed by all eight partners.



The programme – a closer look

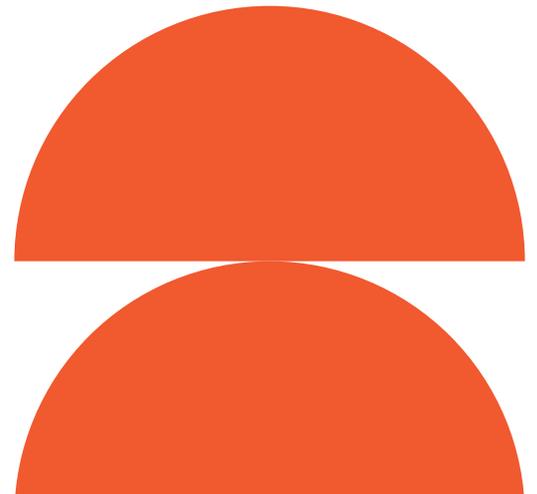
The Una Europa Bachelor in European Studies is a highly innovative programme, built on the values of **multidisciplinarity and multilingualism**. It consists of a '**truncus communis**', a common core of multidisciplinary courses that each student has to follow at the start of their studies, complemented by major and minor modules across seven disciplines, which allow students to personalise curricula and follow their individual study paths.

Una Europa's flexible and student-centred approach is further reflected in the opportunities for traineeships and embedded mobility at the core of the programme. The Joint Bachelor in European Studies incorporates an ambitious mobility programme with a total of 18 months spent abroad at one or two additional Una Europa partner institutions. A compulsory winter school with the option of attending either physically or virtually allows for additional short-term blended mobility opportunities.

In the Joint Bachelor in European Studies, students will study the fundamental aspects and values of the European Union as well as European states and societies in a multilingual environment. Adopting a multidisciplinary approach, students will learn how to understand and analyse Europe and its role in the world. Through the extensive mobility programme, students will not only learn about Europe, but also experience, live and grow in an international setting. Allowing students to immerse themselves into different European cultures will contribute the development of transversal skills that are high in demand both in domestic and international work environments. In addition, students are encouraged to take up an internship in order to enrich their professional experience.

At the end of the programme, graduates will have mastered a second European language in addition to English, gaining a clear advantage on the European labour market. They will, moreover, have gained in-depth knowledge on core European values, while also acquiring intercultural awareness, problem-solving and critical thinking skills, as well as entrepreneurial, social, civic and global skills.

Graduates of the Una Europa Joint Bachelor in European Studies will be truly European graduates of the future.



Una Europa Doctoral Programme in Cultural Heritage at a glance

The Una Europa Doctoral Programme in Cultural Heritage, aims to go beyond previously tested models for European Doctoral programmes. Starting in 2021/2022 from Una-Her-Doc, a double/joint PhD degree between two universities with a joint certificate on cultural heritage co-signed by Una Europa universities, the alliance is currently in the process of implementing a truly integrated Una Europa Joint PhD on Cultural Heritage.

- **Multilingual:** Courses and PhD thesis in English and local languages; language courses included in the programme
- **Innovative:** Double/Joint PhD; 4 Una Europa universities on the Expert Committee; all Una Europa universities issuing the Joint Una Europa certificate
- **Multidisciplinary:** Four Transnational Research Teams:
 - 1) Heritage, Global migration and Mobility;
 - 2) Heritage and Digitization of Society;
 - 3) Social Capital, Mutuality and Volunteering;
 - 4) Safeguarding Cultural Heritage
- **International:** Minimum 12 mobility months in the host university; Research stays, internships, PhD workshops, and seminars at different institutions
- **Structure:** 3-4 years, 30 ECTS of Una Europa contents co-created by the eight partners, in addition to the offer of home and host universities

The process

There are various legal and administrative hurdles that exist today for creating a truly Joint European PhD, including national particularities and differences in doctoral studies and their traditional disciplinary focus. In addition, our experience has highlighted that the European Approach for Quality Assurance has not been tested to the same extent for Joint PhD Programmes as for Joint Master programmes. The ambition of Una Europa is to develop a truly European Joint PhD on Cultural Heritage between its partner universities. Una Europa is committed to acting as a testbed for applying the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes at PhD level, for the benefit of the European Higher Education Area as a whole. In the meantime, Una Europa partner universities have co-developed a disciplinary PhD programme based on a co-supervision between existing PhD schools/programmes of two Una Europa universities. The programme, which started in the academic year 2021-22, will offer a **Joint Una-Her-Doc Certificate co-signed by the Una Europa universities** to students who fulfil the programme's requirements and successfully complete a **Double/Joint degree** from two co-supervising universities.



The programme – a closer look

Una-Her-Doc is an **innovative multilingual, multidisciplinary and international programme**, co-created by cultural heritage experts across the Una Europa universities with different disciplinary backgrounds, languages, scientific traditions and methodological approaches. Una-Her-Doc kicked-off in February 2022, with a first cohort of Una Europa students that represent rich international and trans-sectoral profiles and highly transdisciplinary research interests related to the field of Cultural Heritage.

The Una-Her-Doc programme aims to contribute to the internationalisation of learning, international networking and the co-creation of a **transnational research ecosystem in Cultural Heritage**. Una-Her-Doc offers innovative educational formats, alternative forms of transnational mobility, including virtual and blended formats – and high-quality interdisciplinary educational materials co-developed by the Una Europa universities.

The programme sets out to drive forward the education of European experts in different fields of Cultural Heritage and prepare graduates for different career paths on the European labour market. It also aims to facilitate contacts with Cultural Heritage professionals across Europe, while creating increased opportunities for young professionals who aspire to work in a European and international environment related to Cultural Heritage.

The Una-Her-Doc programme offers flexible and adjustable contents targeting both academic and transversal skills, allowing the Doctoral candidates to build their own Doctoral career in close collaboration with their supervisors and co-supervisors. Furthermore, doctoral candidates are part of an international cohort that regularly interacts with each other through PhD workshops, transnational research teams or joint courses and seminars.

The framework of the Una-Her-Doc study programme contains:

- Co-supervision by two co-supervisors in two Una Europa universities;
- Annual presentation of the progress to the Cultural Heritage Expert Committee;
- 12-months (cumulative) mobility to the host university;
- Possibility of additional mobility within the Consortium or outside, including internship opportunities;
- Possibility of teaching experience;
- Active participation in one of the Una Europa research teams;
- 30 ECTS for Una-Her-Doc co-created courses: mandatory (founding theories, methodology and research teams' seminars, PhD workshops, language classes, pre-defense in front of Cultural Heritage Expert Committee) & elective (master classes, summer camps, blended interdisciplinary "project workshops", professional certificates). The electives could also be taken from the existing offer of Una Europa universities. The remaining 150 ECTS are dedicated to the work on the PhD thesis.

Una-Her-Doc is administered by joint Una Europa structures for admission, selection, supervision and assessment.



Related podcasts and videos

Introducing the Una Europa Joint Bachelor in European Studies

<https://bit.ly/34iNruS> ↗



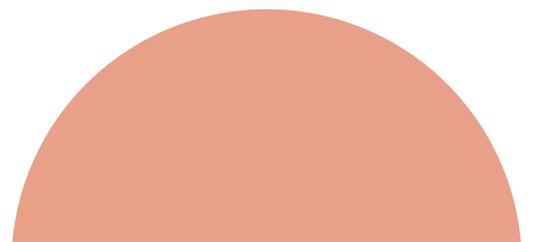
Una Europa Cultural Heritage – Podcast on a Vibrant Community

<https://bit.ly/3Mu80Ww> ↗



Transformative Power – Una Europa Podcast on the European Degree

<https://bit.ly/3MwvKco> ↗



About Una Europa

Una Europa brings together nine leading research universities with global reputation and reach. Our mission is to create a truly European inter-university environment, where outstanding research is continuously linked to transnational learning and innovative, critical thinking.

The Una Europa partners are Freie Universität Berlin, Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna, University of Edinburgh, Helsingin Yliopisto, Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie, Universiteit Leiden, KU Leuven, Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne.

Una Europa was selected among the first prestigious 'European Universities' pilots funded by the Erasmus+ programme. The 1Europe pilot project was launched in December 2019 and aims to create a single education eco-system through the development of more than 20 Joint Innovative Formats for education and mobility, covering Bachelor, Master, Doctorate and Continuous Education. Through top-up funding from the Horizon 2020 programme, Una Europa has launched Una.Resin in February 2021, a pilot to take the first steps towards creating a single research and innovation eco-system.

Contact

Sophia Karner, Policy Officer
sophia.karner@una-europa.eu

Una Europa vzw
KU Leuven Campus Brussels
Warmoesberg 26
1000 Brussels

www.una-europa.eu ↗

The European Commission support for the production of Una Europa content does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors. The European Commission is not liable for any consequences stemming from the reuse of any and all publications of Una Europa.



