

# Applied, Connected, Entrepreneurial and Engaged – European University (ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU)

“Addressing Future Challenges – Delivering Sustainable Societal  
Transformation Today.”

## Joint Mission, Vision, and Long-term Strategy

ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-1  
DEVELOPMENT OF DEEP INSTITUTIONAL TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

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## 1.0 Our Common Mission

“Addressing Future Challenges – Delivering Sustainable Societal Transformation Today.”

The mission of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU is to **equip our students, staff, researchers, and external stakeholders**; through the establishment of our Inter-University European University Campus; with the **knowledge, skills, and competencies to collectively address future challenges**; including the twin digital and green transitions and current socio-economic issues; thereby **delivering sustainable societal transformation today** for the benefit of all our stakeholders and society overall both within our alliance regions and across the EU.

To achieve this mission the members of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU will take an **Applied, Connected, Entrepreneurial and Engaged** approach with stakeholders in the creation of joint initiatives and activities. The members of the alliance will **mobilise all mission areas of their universities** and **will jointly develop and deliver** education, research, innovation, and service to society **learning opportunities** and activities **in partnership with external stakeholders from business, industry, regional government, and society**. Our joint learning opportunities and activities will focus on tackling current and future challenges, such as: technological disruption and innovation in education and research; social and education inequality and inclusivity; economic transformation and job market dynamics; demographic shifts and ageing population; political, cultural, and religious polarization; geopolitical challenges within Europe, in addition to the previously mentioned twin digital and green transitions.

ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU will deliver on its mission by applying, **active, challenging & real-world, work-based learning, and entrepreneurial approaches** in the development of its **joint education, research, innovation, and service to society** activities through collaboration with external stakeholders. By applying an active learning approach at the core of our joint activities' students will automatically be involved in the co-creation of knowledge thereby improving their professional and personal development capacity.

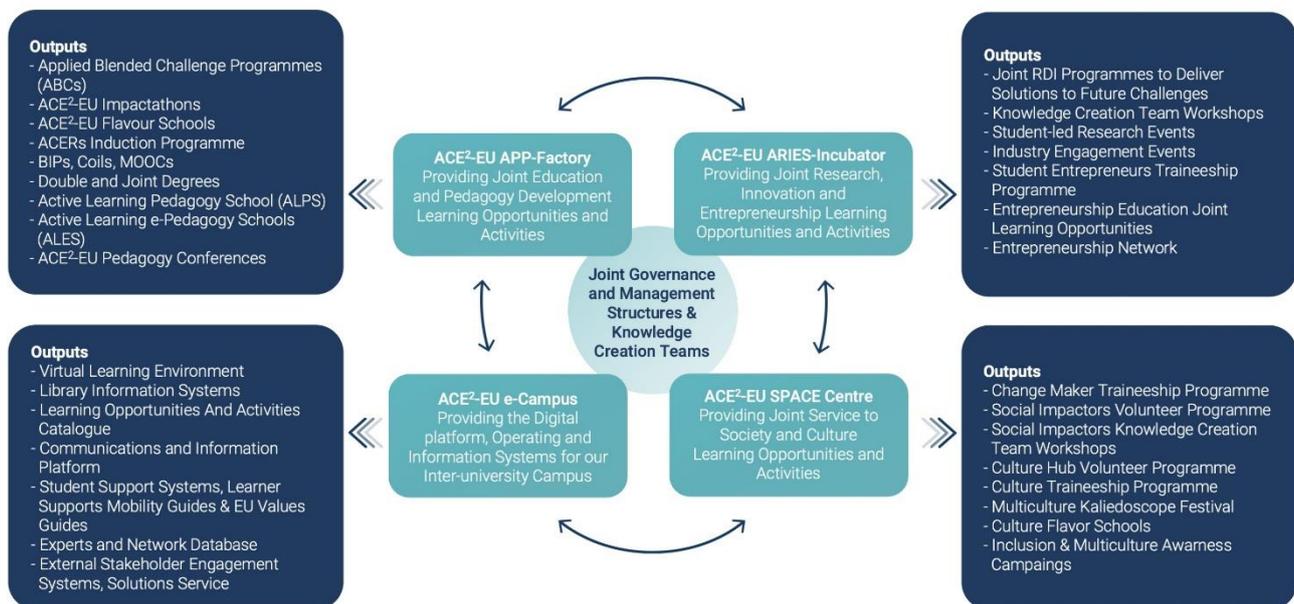
The learning opportunities and activities to be created will be **flexible and innovative** in nature, will use the **most up-to-date pedagogical approaches**; and take advantage of the **most modern processes, policies, theories, and technologies** available in the working world. The activities and learning opportunities will be created by **multi-disciplinary knowledge-creating teams using a challenge-based approach** made up of students, academic staff, researchers, and external stakeholders.

This mission to be delivered by our European University will have at its core a **common vision and shared values, an inclusive student-centred joint governance and management structure, a shared pool of resources; including shared staff and joint operational units and support systems;** and will ultimately seek to achieve legal status.

In implementing its mission ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU will foster at its core existing **European Union principles, values and objectives** including multiculturalism and multilingualism thereby strengthening European identity across our European University.

The diagram below provides a visual representation of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU including its joint operational units and their associated learning opportunities and initiatives designed to mobilise the collective strengths of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU members in the four University mission areas of education, research, innovation, and service to society. The initiatives to be delivered by the alliance will not only address future challenges and deliver sustainable societal transformation but will also promote mobility opportunities, multiculturalism, multilingualism, EU values and EU identity across our European University. Finally, we will actively seek to embed the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals into our programmes and activities thereby contributing to the global efforts to achieve a more sustainable and equitable future.

### ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU JOINT STRUCTURES, OPERATING UNITS AND OUTPUTS



## 2.0 Our Member Universities

The nine-member Universities of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU are drawn from a **broad range of different types of higher education institutions** across Europe (including the West Balkans) and include Research Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences, Polytechnic Universities, Medical Universities and Universities of Culture and Arts. We deliberately decided to combine a broad range of university types from different national and cultural contexts in Europe as it allows us to:

- Expose our students, staff, and other stakeholders to the broadest possible spectrum of university, cultural, and linguistic environments while participating in our joint learning opportunities, thereby allowing them to take advantage of the benefits of our diverse higher education settings and pedagogical approaches;
- Establish unique multi-university-type and multidisciplinary, European Knowledge Creation Teams to develop and deliver transdisciplinary solutions to address future challenges;
- Share an extensive range of best practice approaches applied by the different university types of Europe, to the development and delivery of education, research, innovation, and service to society programmes and activities.

Although the evolutionary pathway of our member universities differs, their individual and collective primary mission focus aligns. All have extensive and impressive track records in the creation of innovative solutions in partnership with different stakeholders from industry, business, society, and government; focussed on addressing future challenges thereby delivering sustainable societal transformation for the benefit of their stakeholders and society overall. It is this common mission focus that binds, motivates, and drives our alliance members' collaborative strategy, work plan, and collective efforts.

The members of the alliance through their work together and use of collaborative challenge-based and applied approaches in the design and delivery of their joint education, research, innovation, and service to society learning opportunities and activities seek to not only deliver sustainable societal transformation for the benefit of all; they will also drive the continued enhancement of the European Education Area and its associated objectives, principles, and values and in particular the development of European Universities in terms of their quality, international competitiveness, attractiveness, and capacity to act as models of good practice.

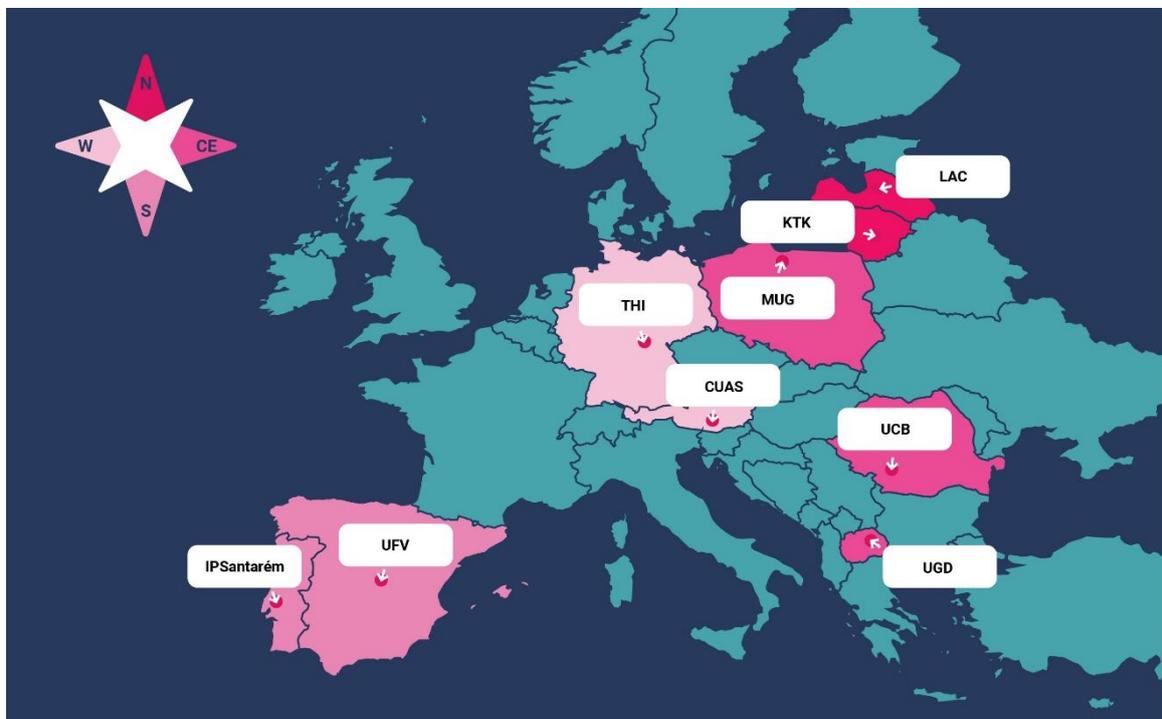
Before the initiation of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU in 2022, our member Universities collaborated with each other on an individual basis and forged strong ties in teaching, research, innovation, service to society, and

mobility activities. Since the establishment of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU our members have intensified their collective collaborative efforts through:

- The formal establishment of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU in 2023;
- The signing of an [Erasmus Multilateral Agreement by our member universities](#);  
The delivery of our first pilot challenge-based programme focussed on improving respect, tolerance and diversity.

Achieving all of the above has required significant collaborative engagement, which has led to the establishment of several working groups and joint teams since the establishment of the alliance, including our Mission, Vision, and Long-Term Strategy Group, and our Presidents/Rectors and Vice-Presidents Steering Group. Our working groups and joint teams have held numerous meetings both online and face-to-face. On top of this, we have initiated the first element of our e-Campus with the establishment of our website.

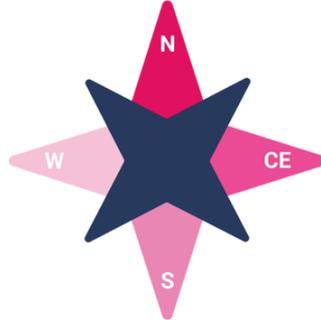
The member Universities of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU are drawn from, and evenly distributed across, all the regions of the EU (including having a member from the Balkan countries) to optimise the level of integration, inclusion, multiculturalism, and multilingualism which our European University can provide. The members of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU and their countries of origin along with a visual representation of the spread of our European University members across the EU regions is provided in the diagram below.



North  
South  
Central East  
West

- Kauno Techikos Kolegija, Lithuania
- Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia

- Carinthia University Of Applied Sciences, Austria
- Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt, Germany



- Universitatea Constantin Brâncuși Târgu-Jiu, Romania
- Goce Delcev University, North Macedonia
- Medical University Of Gdańsk, Poland

- Santarém Polytechnic University, Portugal (Leader)
- Universidad Francisco de Vitoria UFV, Spain

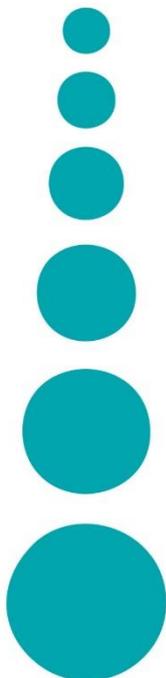
A visual representation of the size and scale of our European University; including the number of students, staff, faculties, research groups and associated partners which make up ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU is provided below.



### 3.0 Our Shared Values and Principles

ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU is dedicated to advancing an ambitious and visionary university alliance emphasizing excellence, innovation, and inclusion in higher education through active and applied learning approaches. Our strategic alliance partnership is deeply committed to fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and societal engagement, enhancing collaboration and co-creation across our partner institutions and stakeholders. The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU mission, vision and long-term joint strategy is to establish a European higher education inter-university campus, which has the potential to elevate the combined capacity of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU member institutions to provide high-quality, innovative, and impactful joint education, research, innovation, and service to society activities focused on addressing future challenges. Our mission and vision are underpinned by shared strategic objectives aligned with the core European values of democracy, freedom, rule of law, equality, human rights and human dignity, solidarity and the pursuit of peace and justice in Europe and the world. All the members of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU are committed to the core European values. These guiding values and objectives embody the common vision of the nine partners of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Alliance, creating a responsive and sustainable educational ecosystem that addresses current and future challenges and contributes to sustainable societal transformation. Aside from adopting the existing core European Values to guide our collaborative efforts, we have also prioritised the following as a set of common values and principles to underpin our collaborative endeavours.

#### ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU VALUES AND PRINCIPLES



**Transnational Cooperation**

We forge connections across Europe and beyond, creating a network of collaboration that transcends borders.

**Creativity, Co-creation & Innovation**

We collaborate to co-create impactful, practical solutions for a sustainable future.

**Inclusiveness & Equality**

We embrace diversity and promote working, learning and research cultures that are inclusive, safe, and welcoming.

**Human Rights & Dignity**

We are dedicated to developing new pathways for humanity to flourish.

**Solidarity & Social Commitment**

We strengthen bonds with our communities.

**Sustainability and environmental stewardship**

We embrace the holistic interconnection of ecological, social, and economic systems.

**Responsibility & Transparency**

We recognise that our actions have a profound impact on the lives of individuals and the environment around us.

## **I. Transnational Cooperation**

We forge connections across Europe and beyond, creating a network of collaboration that transcends borders. At ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU, we are committed to strengthening cooperation across Europe and beyond, through a robust European university alliance that champions cultural, scientific, training, and research advancements. Transnational cooperation is particularly important to us because we are aware that global issues cannot be solved at the national level, and that the free movement of knowledge, ideas and competencies is crucial to innovation, technological and medical advances, for instance. Furthermore, transnational cooperation encourages open-mindedness and facilitates comprehensive approaches and ideas, thanks to the variety of perspectives given by distinct national and cultural backgrounds and experiences.

We operate on an open-access basis, ensuring that our diverse body of students, faculty staff, researchers, society, business, and industry stakeholders freely share knowledge and expertise. Our commitment to openness and adaptability is the driving force behind our continuous efforts to innovate and create impact while forging a durable alliance.

We embody these values and principles by adopting a challenge-based, interdisciplinary approach to our education, research, innovation, and service to society programmes. The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU inter-university campus will act as a central hub for advancing both inter-institutional mobility and interdisciplinary collaboration, facilitating common operational units such as the APP-Factory, the ARIES-Incubator, and our SPACE-Centre.

## **II. Creativity, Co-creation & Innovation**

We collaborate to co-create impactful, practical solutions for a sustainable future.

We are committed to the advancement of innovative educational and instructional strategies through leveraging the collective strengths, diverse perspectives, and combined expertise of our partners and stakeholders. Our interdisciplinary European Knowledge Creation Teams bring together the expertise of educators, researchers, students, and external stakeholders to collaboratively develop future-oriented education, research, innovation, and service-to-society initiatives. These efforts are essential in addressing future challenges and in fostering collaborative learning opportunities within our expansive knowledge network. We will collectively and proactively address and mitigate emerging challenges experienced by our joint operational units to ensure the long-term durability and sustainability of the alliance.

## **III. Inclusiveness & equality**

We embrace diversity and promote working, learning and research cultures that are inclusive, safe, and welcoming.

ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU is committed to ensuring equitable access to the highest possible quality of education and research for all individuals, transcending traditional barriers associated with gender, age, disability,

or cultural, social, geographical, and economic backgrounds. We promote gender equity, actively seeking to understand and address the distinct needs and potential dynamics of power among genders, striving to mitigate disparities and foster an environment of equality. ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU is furthermore committed to reducing the potential adverse impacts of the digital gap and digital exclusion. By promoting new digital applications, new educational technology and pedagogy, and fostering the necessary skills to adopt these applications and technologies through the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU inter-university campus, the alliance will contribute to the digital transformation of learning spaces and lifelong learning.

#### **IV. Human Rights & Dignity**

We are dedicated to developing new pathways for humanity to flourish.

ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU endeavours to create an environment where everyone's dignity and human rights are protected. We are committed to the holistic development of all those engaged in administrative, educational and research endeavours within our alliance and support their well-being. We acknowledge and embrace diverse identities and provide robust support to ensure each member of our community feels valued, achieves their full potential, and engages consciously and constructively with the wider community.

This approach is manifested in the creation of diverse academic opportunities that facilitate students' acquisition of new competencies, nurture empathy and self-assurance, and encourage proactive engagement in their educational and professional trajectories. This enriches the educational landscape of the alliance, enhancing the diversity of our pedagogical practices, and serving as a cornerstone for excellence within our partner institutions.

#### **V. Solidarity & Social Commitment**

We strengthen bonds with our communities.

ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU is committed to helping solve the complex problems of modern society. This commitment is evident in the alliance's dedication to the principles of equality, democratic ethos, inclusivity, and efforts to foster a culture of dialogue. This includes a commitment to education, research, innovation, and service to society that has a real impact and generates tangible benefits in our regions, our countries, in Europe and across the world.

In alignment with these principles, ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU is dedicated to building enduring, long-term, sustainable, and mutually beneficial relationships within the broader society, as exemplified by initiatives such as the Applied Research and Innovation Centres (ARCs), Social Incubators, and the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU SPACE Centre which provides creative service to society activities and cultural awareness initiatives.

#### **VI. Sustainability and environmental stewardship**

We embrace the holistic interconnection of ecological, social, and economic systems.

Across our collaborative inter-university campus and extended regions of our ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU alliance, we actively contribute to creating a balance that supports human well-being alongside planetary health. This commitment is in alignment with our overarching mission to address future challenges and catalyze sustainable societal transformation.

In our pursuit of this mission, ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU integrates these principles into the core of our institutional framework, our policies, practices, and pedagogical approach. Our joint strategies reflect a series of targeted initiatives

- i) We champion and promote Green Campus Practices, such as energy-efficient infrastructures, fostering waste minimisation and recycling, advocating for sustainable transportation and mobility solutions, and nurturing the development of green spaces;
- ii) Sustainability thinking is woven into the fabric of our academic curricula, ensuring each partner institution and joint programmes delivered by ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU reflects this commitment;
- iii) We actively promote research activities aimed at exploring solutions for environmental issues, including but not limited to climate change mitigation and responsible and sustainable resource management;
- iv) Our engagement with local communities and the broader community is designed to advance sustainable practices, support environmental conservation efforts, and raise public awareness about the imperative of environmental stewardship;
- v) Furthermore, ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU serves as a nexus for international collaboration and sharing of best practices in environmental sustainability.

ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU aims to become a leader, not only in education, research, innovation and service to society but also as a change agent for positive environmental and societal transformation.

## **VII. Responsibility & Transparency**

We recognise that our actions have a profound impact on the lives of individuals and the environment around us.

ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU operates with full transparency and assumes accountability for our decisions, strategies and actions. This dual commitment to openness and responsibility informs our actions and ensures our accountability to all participating member universities, their dedicated staff and students, our external stakeholders, and the broader European Union.

We embody these core values in our operational initiatives and all processes, guaranteeing that they are fair, accessible, and transparent, particularly concerning student and staff recruitment and overall alliance management. The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU alliance epitomises the integrity of scientific inquiry, adhering to the highest academic and professional standards and ethical guidelines in all its academic and research-related activities. Through these practices, ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU promotes the principles of open science, advancing scientific knowledge for the greater societal good.

## 4.0 Our Shared Vision and Ambition

The principal aim of our common vision, ambition, and associated long-term joint strategy in the context of the European Universities Initiative and the European Universities strategy is **to establish a European higher education inter-university campus** which has the potential to **transform the capacity and quality of institutional cooperation between ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU member institutions** and bring it to the next level, fostering deeper integration, enhancing collaboration, and increasing our overall impact and influence within the European higher education landscape. Our inter-university campus will become **a legally recognised European University** with European and global reach, reputation, and impact focussed on **“Addressing Future Challenges and Delivering Sustainable Societal Transformation Today”**.

Therefore, in ten years, we envisage ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU becoming a true European University with a common legal status and having an inter-university campus structure spread all over Europe which allows students, researchers, teaching, and administrative staff seamless mobility and learning opportunities, either through physical mobility or blended and virtual mobility via our fully integrated e-campus. Our students will be able to customise their education thanks to flexible curricula, further education opportunities, micro-credentials, and other unique learning opportunities and activities such as the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU: ABC programmes, Flavour Schools, Impactathons, Student Entrepreneurs Traineeship Programme, Change Maker Ambassador Programme, Social Impactor and Culture Hub Volunteer Programmes. Multi-disciplinarity and inter-disciplinarity will have become the norm for our students, teachers, researchers, and stakeholders. Moreover, our members and the communities of all our regions will be reaping the benefits from our APP-Factory, ARIES-Incubator and SPACE-Centre, devoted to tackling issues that directly impact society, thanks to their applied challenge-based approach and focus on innovative solutions, transfer of knowledge and open science. In embracing the values, languages, and cultural nuances represented within our alliance, we empower our members to become true ambassadors of European citizenship, actively contributing to the interconnected and vibrant European Higher Education Area.

To realise our vision and ambition to ensure our inter-university campus is not merely an academic space, but also acts as a lever for transformative institutional cooperation, elevating the member institutions' combined capacity to provide high-quality, innovative, and impactful solutions to future challenges our unique and differentiated vision centres on taking an:

**Applied, Connected, Entrepreneurial and Engaged (ACE<sup>2</sup>)** approach in its implementation.

The elements of our unique ACE<sup>2</sup> approach are described below:

**Applied:** We create joint education, research, innovation, and service to society learning opportunities and activities which have a practical, applied focus, deal with real-world issues, and utilise active challenge-based learning approaches.

**Connected:** We connect the collective expertise and strengths of alliance members through our joint operational units and knowledge creation teams, thereby fostering a collaborative approach to the creation of joint learning opportunities and activities focused on finding solutions to future challenges.

**Entrepreneurial:** We promote, use, and generate novel and innovative approaches in the development and implementation of our joint learning opportunities and activities to address and tackle future challenges thereby nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset, across our alliance and among our stakeholders and surrounding ecosystems.

**Engaged:** We engage our external stakeholders and partners in industry, business, society, and government in the development and delivery of all our collaborative learning opportunities, activities and initiatives focussed on future challenges to ensure effective civic engagement and the promotion of knowledge transfer within our surrounding ecosystems.

To achieve our vision and ambition, we will implement our shared integrated long-term joint strategy for education which will engage the expertise of all the mission areas of our universities including education, research, innovation, and service to society and which will be responsive to the digital and green transition and key socio-economic challenges. Our vision, ambition, and joint long-term strategy, in line with the themes and priorities of the European Universities initiative, are underpinned by:

- Shared values, principles, and objectives;
- Collaborative joint governance and management structures;
- A common pool of resources;
- Agreement to achieve legal recognition of our alliance;
- Co-created seamless mobility opportunities;
- Innovative and flexible curricula, empowering students to customise and craft their own educational journey;
- Diverse learning opportunities and alternative learning pathways for learners at all stages of life;

- Practical and work-based experience and traineeships, fostering entrepreneurial and civic mindsets and knowledge transfer;
- European Knowledge Creation teams utilise challenge-based approaches to create innovative solutions.

Central to our vision, ambition, and long-term strategy is the creation of our European higher education inter-university campus; ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU; to act as a central hub for advancing inter-institutional mobility and interdisciplinary collaboration. By achieving our vision and ambition; through the application of our unique ACE<sup>2</sup> approach in the implementation of our long-term strategy; our alliance will:

- **Enhance exchange across our alliance and facilitate seamless mobility opportunities** for students, researchers and staff to study, train, teach, and participate freely in education, research innovation, and service to society activities through our collaborative, connected and engaged approach;
- Encourage and propel **student engagement in new joint, flexible, and innovative curricula, learning opportunities, and learning pathways** created by our joint operational units such as the APP-Factory, the ARIES-Incubator and SPACE Centre, **thereby empowering students to customise their own flexible curricula** and nurturing personalised and flexible educational experiences;
- Mobilise and integrate **all four mission areas of our universities** - education, research and innovation and service to society - in developing our collaborative learning environment to achieve **our ambition through the establishment of our joint operational units** and systems;
- Develop **innovative curricula** and joint learning opportunities designed to meet **future challenges**, committed to delivering sustainable societal transformation;
- Offer joint learning opportunities across all areas of university engagement, directly aligned with the imminent challenges of our stakeholder community which are based on **our applied practice-orientated focus** and utilise a **challenge-based active learning approach** in their delivery;
- Provide joint learning opportunities that **span a diverse range of disciplines, leveraging the multi-disciplinary profile of our alliance members**, offering both targeted micro-credentials and extensive degrees, with a **focus on the digital and green transition agendas and key socio-economic challenges facing the EU**;
- Prioritise **work-based learning and traineeship opportunities** within our comprehensive joint learning framework, designed and delivered in partnership with our **key stakeholders in industry, business, society, and government**, to enhance practical learning and foster professional growth;

- As a result of our practical challenge-based approach, cultivate an eco-system that nurtures **entrepreneurial mindsets, civic engagement and responsibility, an open science approach and knowledge transfer with surrounding ecosystems** through, for example, our Applied Research and Innovation Centres (ARCs), Social Incubators, and Entrepreneurship Academy;
- **Create multi-disciplinary European Knowledge Creation Teams** combining the expertise of educators, researchers and external stakeholders drawn from **diverse career paths** of all members of the alliance to co-create our joint learning opportunities and activities focussed on future challenges within and between our operational units;
- Advance **innovative learning and teaching** and the use of **innovative solutions** in addressing future challenges by bringing our collective strengths together in the creation of joint learning opportunities and activities across our joint operational units and within our European knowledge creation teams;
- **Embed EU values and promote EU Identity** in all learning opportunities and activities, enriching educational experiences with a deepened awareness of our shared European values and identity, through our values awareness initiatives and activities;
- Develop models of good practice to elevate the **quality, international competitiveness, and attractiveness of the European higher education landscape**.

ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU is committed to co-creating and delivering its joint vision by offering high-quality learner-centred joint learning opportunities and development programmes. These initiatives, designed to benefit students, staff, and stakeholders alike, are forged in collaboration with external partners, embodying a shared commitment to excellence and innovation within our alliance, and include:

- High-quality **challenge-based joint education opportunities** focussed on future challenges developed by the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Programmes and Pedagogy Factory (APP- Factory);
- Innovative **applied research, innovation and entrepreneurship support services and associated learning opportunities** developed by the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support Incubator (ARIES-Incubator);
- Creative **service to society and cultural awareness initiatives** developed by the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Social Partnerships And Cultural Engagement Centre (SPACE Centre);
- Advanced **digital operation and information systems** developed and operated by the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus.

## 5.0 Our Long-Term Strategy to Realise Our Mission and Vision

To realise our mission and vision ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU has developed a long-term strategy outlining the evolution of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU over a ten-year period to achieve our **ambition to establish a legally recognised inter-university campus European University** with European and global reach, reputation, and impact focussed on “**Addressing Future Challenges and Delivering Sustainable Societal Transformation Today**”.

Our 10-year evolutionary strategy describes how we propose to step-by-step transform and enhance our institutional cooperation and bring it to the next level, it has three key phases namely:

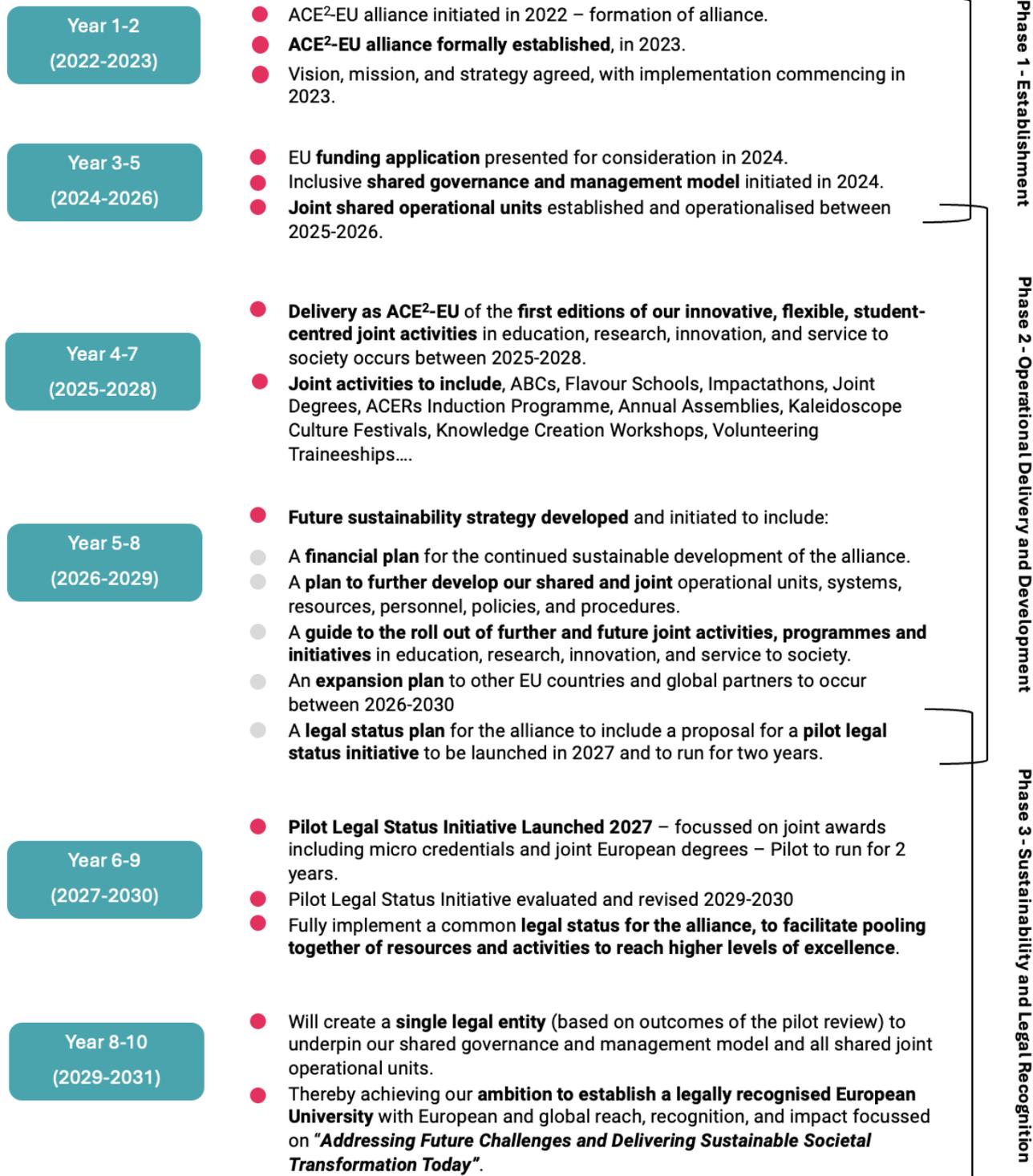
**Phase 1 – The Establishment Phase** which facilitates the establishment of the alliance, the development of our joint mission, vision and long-term strategy, the presentation of our first joint funding application, the initiation of our shared governance and management model and the establishment of our joint operational units. This phase will run from 2022-2026.

**Phase 2 - The Operational Delivery and Development Phase** which will see (i) the delivery as ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU of the first editions of our innovative, flexible, student-centred joint learning opportunities and activities in education, research, innovation, and service to society (ii) the development and initiation of the implementation of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Sustainability Strategy and Associated Implementation Plan. This phase will run from 2025-2029

**Phase 3 – The Sustainability and Legal Recognition Phase** which will involve (i) The continued and complete implementation of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Sustainability Strategy and Associated Implementation Plan (ii) the development and initiation of a legal status plan for ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU to include a proposal for a pilot legal status initiative to be launched in 2027 and to run for two years (ii) the full implementation of a common legal status for the alliance, to facilitate pooling together of resources and activities to reach higher levels of excellence and act with a legal personality. This phase will run from 2027-2031.

The evolutionary strategy phases are designed to have a level of overlap over the 10-year timeframe. A diagrammatic representation of the evolutionary strategy, key milestones and timelines is provided below.

## 10 Year Evolutionary Strategy



Key to the overall success of our strategy will be the development and establishment of our joint governance and management structures, operational units, systems, and European knowledge creation teams which are described in greater detail in the following sections of this document.

## 6.0 Our Joint Governance and Management Structures

Ultimately the members of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU are seeking to fully implement a common legal status for the alliance, to facilitate pooling together of resources and activities to reach higher levels of excellence while acting with a legal personality. This ultimate ambition will take time to deliver and in the interim, the governance, management and overall quality of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU will be delivered through and supported by our interim Joint Governance and Management Structures. The main elements of our Joint Governance and Management Structures reflect structures and arrangements which exist and operate across the European Higher Education landscape and are organised in such a way as to ensure students, staff, and external stakeholders are facilitated and empowered to take an active role in the governance and management structures of our European University described below. The main elements of our interim Joint Governance and Management Structures include the following:

**1. The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Governing Authority (GA)**, which is the main governing body of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU, who acts as the principal review and approval body and whose membership consists of the Presidents/Rectors of each member of the alliance, the General Manager, the Strategy Advisor/Coordinator, and representatives from key stakeholder groups including the student, staff, and associate partner advisory boards.

**2. The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Rectors and Presidents Steering Group (RPSG)**, which formulates the approach to the strategic development of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU. The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU RPSG will meet regularly to:

- Evaluate and decide on the high-level strategic direction of the alliance;
- Identify and agree on solutions to potential risks, difficulties and issues that could arise within the alliance and with the roll-out of its work plan;
- Develop and approve guidelines for the sustainability of the alliance and support the roll-out of the long-term vision and strategy.

**3. The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Management Board (MB)**, who manages the implementation of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU strategy and work plan and who develops future strategic options for consideration and implementation. The Management Board will:

- Oversee and monitor the implementation of the work plan of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU and in particular the activities and deliverables at a work package level;

- Detect any potential deviation in the implementation of the tasks and output delivery, deciding on corrective actions;
- Monitor the progress of the execution against key performance indicators;
- Ensure the overall quality of the activities and outputs of the project;
- Oversee and monitor the implementation of the long-term vision and strategy of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU;
- Identify future development opportunities for ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU.

The members of the MB will consist of the General Manager, the shared joint operational unit coordinators, the strategy advisor/coordinator, ACE institutional coordinators and the nominated Vice Presidents/Vice-Rectors of the alliance members, and student representatives.

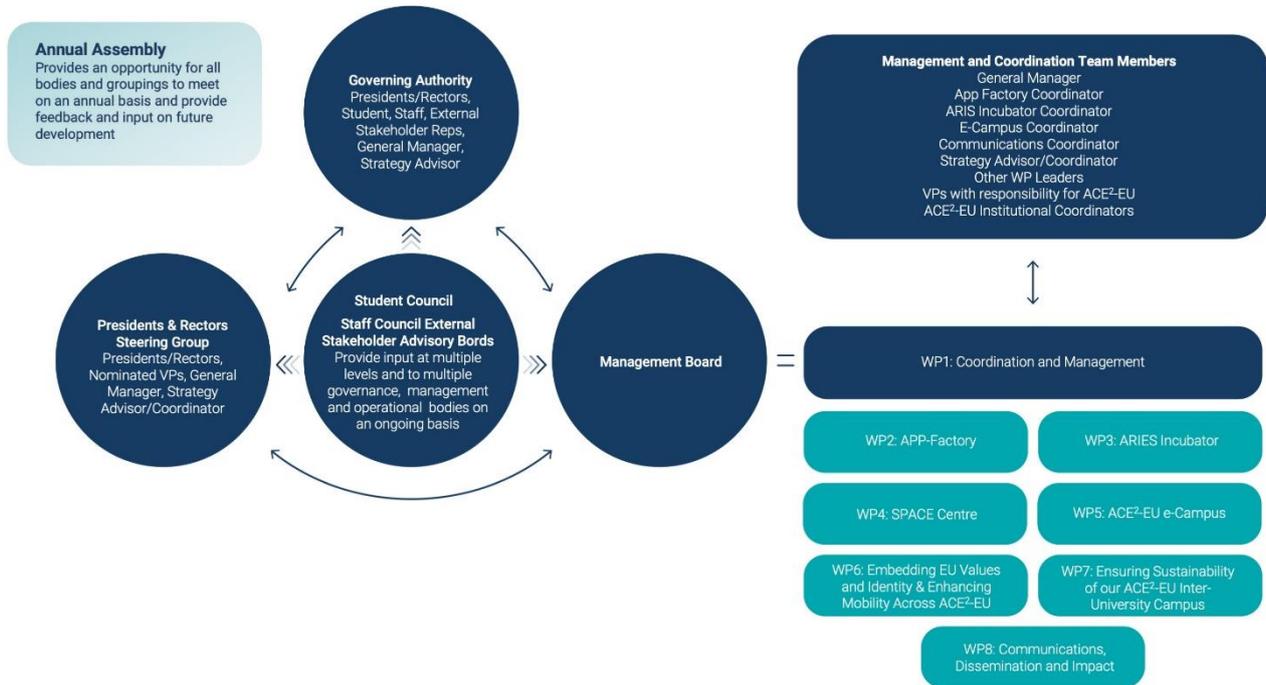
**4. ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Advisory Boards** which include a **Student Advisory Board (SAB)**, a **Staff Advisory Board (SFAB)**, and an **External Stakeholder Advisory Board (ESAB)**.

It should be noted that student-centred learning is at the core of our mission **members of the student advisory board will participate in and connect with all the governance and management structures of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU.**

**5. The Annual Assembly** which will facilitate, on an annual basis, the gathering of all governance and management structures of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU to provide an opportunity for all bodies to review and further input into our collective long-term strategy.

Further details on the operation of the interim Joint Governance and Management Structures of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU are provided in our work package descriptions. A diagrammatic representation of our interim Joint Governance and Management Structures, which ensures the appropriate coordination and management of the implementation of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU work plan, is provided below.

## ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES



To support the implementation of our mission, vision, and long-term strategy and operation of our Joint Governance and Management Structures we will have a shared pool of resources including, shared staff and operational units and systems which are described in section 7 below and in extensive detail in our Work Package descriptions.

## 7.0 Our Shared Pool of Resources

### 7.1 Our Shared Staff

In order to ensure the smooth operation of our Governance and Management Structures, Joint Operational Units, and the implementation of our mission, vision, and long-term strategy, ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU will appoint a **shared professional management team**.

Leading this management team will be the **General Manager (GM)** who will have the overall responsibility for the development and delivery of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU mission, vision, long-term strategy, and associated work plan.

The main activities and responsibilities of the GM will include:

- Leading the development and roll-out of the mission, vision, strategy, and work plan of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU in partnership with all relevant stakeholders;
- Monitoring, with the assistance of the shared joint operational unit coordinators and the strategy advisor/coordinator, the delivery of outputs at a Work Package (WP) level, to identify potential delays or risks to the execution of the project;
- Ensuring the proper financial management and reporting, including the distribution of the financial resources to all the partners in line with agreed budgets;
- Preparing the official interim and final reports;
- The operation and management of the Management Board;
- The organisation, operation, and provision of administrative and strategic support to the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Governing Authority, Rectors and Presidents Steering Group, and the External Stakeholder Advisory Board;
- Representing ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU in engagements with key internal stakeholders, such as the student and staff advisory boards, and the external stakeholder advisory board;
- Representing ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU in engagements with key external bodies, such as the EU Commission and other European Universities.

To assist the GM in the successful implementation of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU long-term strategy and work plan the alliance will appoint several **joint operational unit coordinators and a strategy advisor/coordinator** who will also lead the WP teams.

Their responsibilities will include:

- Ensuring the activities of each WP are implemented according to schedule and budget, properly delivering project tasks and deliverables with the expected quality;
- Monitoring the WP implementation, guaranteeing that all partners are contributing as planned to the implementation, and assuring proper communication;
- Informing the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU MB and the GM of the progress of implementation of the work plan, identifying any constraints and potential deviations and proposing corrective actions;
- Implementing actions and corrective actions identified by the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU GA, RPSG and MB.

The operational unit coordinators of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU are to be the:

**APP-Factory Coordinator** who will lead and oversee the development and delivery of the educational activities of the alliance including joint programmes and joint pedagogical approaches to be developed in WP2, and as a result will be the leader of WP2.

**ARIES Incubator Coordinator** who will lead and oversee the development and delivery of the research, innovation, and entrepreneurship support activities and programmes of the alliance to be developed in WP3, and as a result will be the leader of WP3.

**SPACE Centre Coordinator** who will lead and oversee the development and delivery of the alliances service to society and cultural awareness activities and programmes to be developed in WP4, and as a result will be the leader of WP4.

**e-Campus Coordinator** who will lead and oversee the development of our shared digital platform to support the operation of our inter-university campus European University to be developed in WP5, and as a result will be the leader of WP5.

**Communications Coordinator** who will lead and oversee the development and delivery of the alliances' communications, and dissemination strategies and activities described in WP8, and as a result will be the leader of WP8.

The alliance will also appoint a **Strategy Advisor/Coordinator** who will assist the General Manager in the delivery and development of the overall vision, mission, and strategy of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU and who will also advise on the future strategic direction of the alliance. They will therefore contribute significantly to the delivery of the overall objectives of WP1 Project Coordination and Management and WP7 Sustainability of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU.

The General Manager and the Coordinators of the joint operational units will act as the core full-time shared staff resource of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU and the core of its Management Board dedicated to delivering on the mission, vision, strategy, and work plan of the alliance on an ongoing and continuous basis. The appointment of the General Manager and the Coordinators will be the responsibility of the alliance member who leads the relevant work package.

Aside from the shared management team, we will also create on an ongoing basis a range of joint **European Knowledge Creation Teams** to develop our joint learning opportunities in education, research, innovation, and service to society. These will be created and operate within and across our APP-Factory, Applied Research and Innovation Centres, Social Incubators, Entrepreneurship Academy, and Culture Hub and will bring together expertise drawn from across all alliance members to develop joint learning opportunities, activities and initiatives focussed on addressing future challenges.

## 7.2. Joint Operational Units and Systems

ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU is to have four main joint operational units and systems including the:

- Applied Programmes and Pedagogy Factory (APP-Factory);
- Applied Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support Incubator (ARIES-Incubator);
- Social Partnerships And Cultural Engagement Centre (SPACE Centre);
- ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus.

The following provides a more detailed description of the operation and activities of the key joint operational units and systems of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU.

### 7.2.1 Applied Programmes and Pedagogy Factory (APP Factory)

**The delivery of the educational mission of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU will be achieved through the establishment of the joint operational unit known as the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Programmes and Pedagogy Factory (APP Factory). The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU APP Factory will be responsible for the:**

I. Development and delivery of joint programmes in partnership with external stakeholders focussed on solving real-world challenges utilising blended, **active learning methods** such as **challenge and work-based pedagogical approaches**.

II. Development and delivery of **pedagogical training programmes** focused on **embedding the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU active learning educational mission** and strategy among staff engaged in the development and delivery of our joint programmes in partnership with external stakeholders.

As the APP Factory will be one of the joint operational units of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU alliance, it will have an overall coordinator and a management team whose members will be drawn from all of the institutions of the alliance. The APP Factory will have two overlapping work strands and associated operational teams and units known as the **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Programmes Unit** and the **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Pedagogy Unit**. They will work together on delivering the overall objectives of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU educational mission, as well as the work plan, activities, and deliverables of the APP Factory.

The activities and opportunities to be created by the APP Factory will be **flexible in nature**, will use the **most up-to-date pedagogical approaches** and take advantage of the **most modern processes, policies, theories and technologies** available in the working world thus providing learners (students, staff or external stakeholders) with immersive and flexible learning experiences containing the most up-to-date knowledge and skills in cutting-edge areas relevant to modern day challenges identified by both our external stakeholders, EU and national policies but also by the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Research Development and Innovation Centres (ARCs).

The APP Factory will bring together the combined teaching and learning expertise of all the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU alliance members to establish trans alliance European knowledge creation teams focused on:

**I. Identifying, promoting, and developing new joint programmes** for our European University focused on providing students, staff and other stakeholders with immersive challenge and work-based learning experiences containing the most up-to-date knowledge and skills in cutting-edge areas including EU priority areas associated with the digital and green transitions and current and future socio-economic challenges.

**II. Supporting the pedagogical design process** of the new educational offer developed by the APP Factory through the provision of pedagogical training, and development activities for our teaching staff, as well as the assessment of the quality, and impact of the programmes developed by the APP Factory.

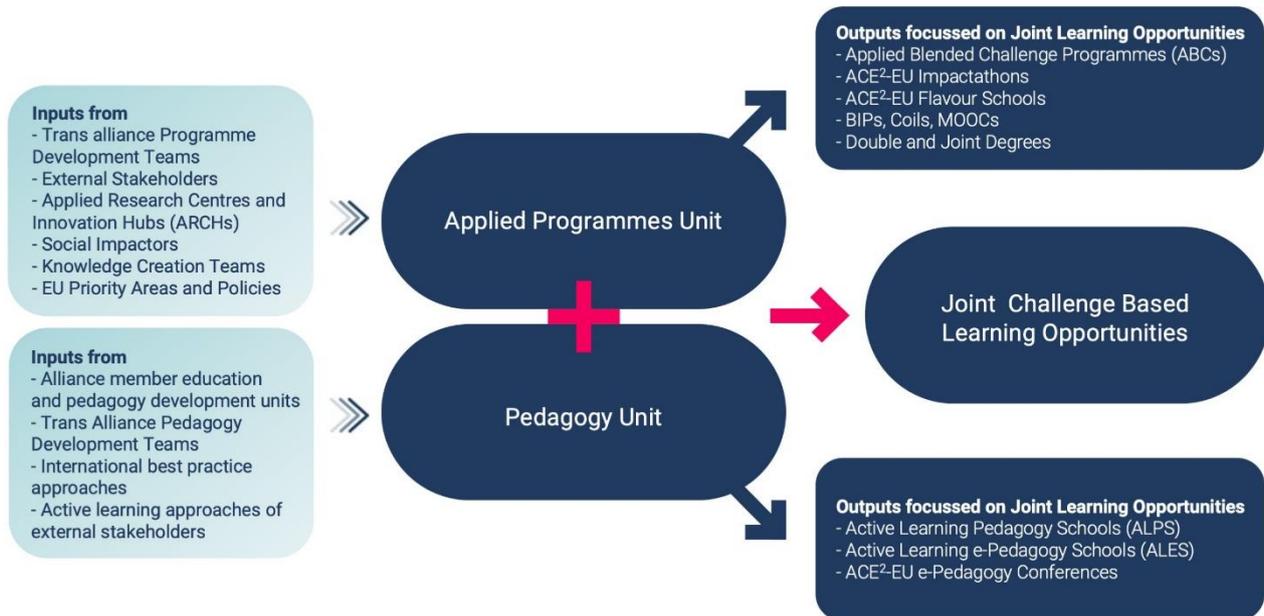
It is anticipated approximately 120 **joint learning opportunities will be created by the APP Factory** over the four years of this funding cycle for both students and staff. Programmes to be developed for our student cohort will include short education opportunities including unique ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU programme types such as Applied Blended Challenge Programmes (ABCs), ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Impactathons, ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Flavour schools, ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Student Onboarding programme: ACE-Rookies (ACERs), and other short programme types such as BIPs, COILs and MOOCs, which could attract micro-credentials. The APP factory will also develop full education programmes for our students such as double degrees and Joint European Degree programmes based on the European criteria for the award of a European Degree label in EU priority areas associated with the twin digital and green transitions and other current and future socio-economic challenges. The APP factory will also create joint learning opportunities for our staff to facilitate the implementation of our unique educational mission and pedagogical approach focussed on active challenge-based learning. Learning opportunities for our staff will include Active Learning Pedagogy Schools (ALPS), Active Learning e-Pedagogy Schools (ALES), and ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Pedagogy Conferences.

Within our joint long-term strategy, the APP Factory will develop and promote new and open flexible programmes utilising current and new pedagogical approaches, in particular active blended learning and challenge-based curricula. These approaches, coupled with a transdisciplinary development process, will promote an entrepreneurial mindset and an interest in civic engagement among the student population. The APP Factory will also act as the main platform to promote student-centred open programmes by facilitating students in the design and selection of their own curricula.

The diagram below provides a visual representation of the inputs and outputs of the APP Factory and its operational units.



## ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU APP FACTORY



The work plan of the **applied programmes unit** will focus on the processes, procedures and calls associated with the development, operation, and delivery of our joint challenge-based programmes. The work plan of the pedagogy unit will focus on the processes, procedures and policies associated with the development and delivery of **pedagogical training programmes** focused on **embedding the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU educational mission** and strategy among staff across the alliance engaged in the development and delivery of our joint programmes in partnership with external stakeholders. The pedagogical approach to be used by ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU will focus on active learning approaches such as challenge and work-based learning delivery methodologies. The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Pedagogy Unit will provide in-person, blended, and online training and development programmes for staff of the member institutions. The two units will work closely together and with WP6 to create a joint approach to the development of processes and surveys to monitor the quality, relevance, and impact of the programmes to be developed across both units of the APP Factory. Further details on the learning opportunities to be delivered by the APP-Factory and its operational units are provided in the work package descriptions.

To support the development of joint learning opportunities and pedagogical approaches, the APP Factory will work in partnership with other ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU operational units and work packages on the delivery of nine discovery missions, known as **ACEplorations**, one to each alliance member which aim to identify unique collaborative development opportunities in education, research, innovation,

and service to society which could form the basis of joint activities to be created across and by the members universities of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU.

### 7.2.2 ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support Incubator (ARIES-Incubator)

The main objective of this joint operational unit is to develop and deliver the joint research, innovation, and entrepreneurship support programmes, activities, and associated learning opportunities of the alliance in collaboration with external stakeholders and partners through the establishment of the **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Research, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship Support Incubator (ARIES-Incubator)**. The ARIES Incubator's work plan will focus on:

- The development and delivery of **joint research and innovation learning opportunities and activities in partnership with external stakeholders**. This objective will be achieved through the establishment of **the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Research, Development, and Innovation Centres (ARCs)** and their associated initiatives and support programmes;
- The development of the **entrepreneurship education and innovation capacity** of members of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU through the establishment of the **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Entrepreneurship Academy**;
- The establishment of knowledge creation teams, networks, and databases of research, innovation, and entrepreneurship support services and expertise from across our alliance and in partnership with our external stakeholders.

The ARIES Incubator will appoint an overall coordinator and a management team whose members will be drawn from all of the institutions of the alliance. It will have several operational units including its:

- ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Research, Development, and Innovation Centres (ARCs);
- ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Entrepreneurship Academy;
- ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU ARIES Incubator Central Support Office (CCSO).

The functions and activities of each type of operational unit are described below.

**Applied Research, Development, and Innovation Centres (ARCs):** will bring together research and innovation expertise from across the alliance and from their external stakeholders and partners into **multidisciplinary knowledge creation teams to work collaboratively on the development of innovative joint RDI activities** which will deliver innovative solutions to challenges presented by government, industry, business, and societal stakeholders. The ARCs will connect and train students and researchers throughout the inter-university campus of the alliance. In the first instance, it is proposed the ARIES Incubator will **establish three ARCs in the areas of Sustainable Technologies, Digital Transformation, and Health & Well-Being**. The ARCs will seek national and EU funding for

their joint RDI activities, and their future development. The ARCs will be responsible for the implementation of a series of activities for research students and researchers across ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU including the:

- **ARC Knowledge Creation Team Workshops** to facilitate the development of joint RDI applications and projects by experts of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU ARCs. The knowledge creation team workshops will bring together research students, researchers, and key external stakeholders and partners of the alliance;
- **Student-Led Research Events** including colloquia, conferences, and competitions to facilitate the sharing of new research and innovation knowledge across the alliance relevant to the development of new learning opportunities and the future activities of the ARCs;
- **ARC Engagement Events with Industry** involving students, researchers, and external stakeholders to promote the outputs of the ARCs and which facilitate further exploration of joint RDI development opportunities with external stakeholders and partners.

The RDI programmes to be developed and delivered by the ARCs will involve the participation of students, researchers, and external stakeholders drawn from all members of the alliance.

**The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Entrepreneurship Academy:** which will bring together expertise from across the alliance in the area of entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship and business support who will develop entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship support programmes targeting the nurturing the development of emerging and young entrepreneurs and businesses across the alliance members and their associated regions. The Entrepreneurship Academy will place a particular focus on the support of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU student entrepreneurs and will also make its services available to staff and external stakeholders.

The Entrepreneurship Academy will develop alliance-wide joint initiatives, including:

- **The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Student Entrepreneurs Traineeship Programme**, which will aim to support a minimum of 90 ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU student entrepreneurs (10 per institution) and their business ideas in a blended support programme and include an internship in an ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU partner institution;
- **Entrepreneurship Education Joint Learning Opportunities**, which could be in the form of ABCs, BIPs, COILs, and MOOCs, to be made available to students, staff, and external entrepreneurs, SMEs, and businesses seeking to spread spreading and embed concepts and best practices in entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, and business development across the alliance and among its stakeholders;

- The creation of an **Entrepreneurship Network** tasked with improving entre- and intrapreneurship knowledge and activities across the alliance. The Entrepreneurship Network will organise regular online and blended networking events and workshops with the help of its associated partners (in particular, industry and business associations) for the benefit of its members.

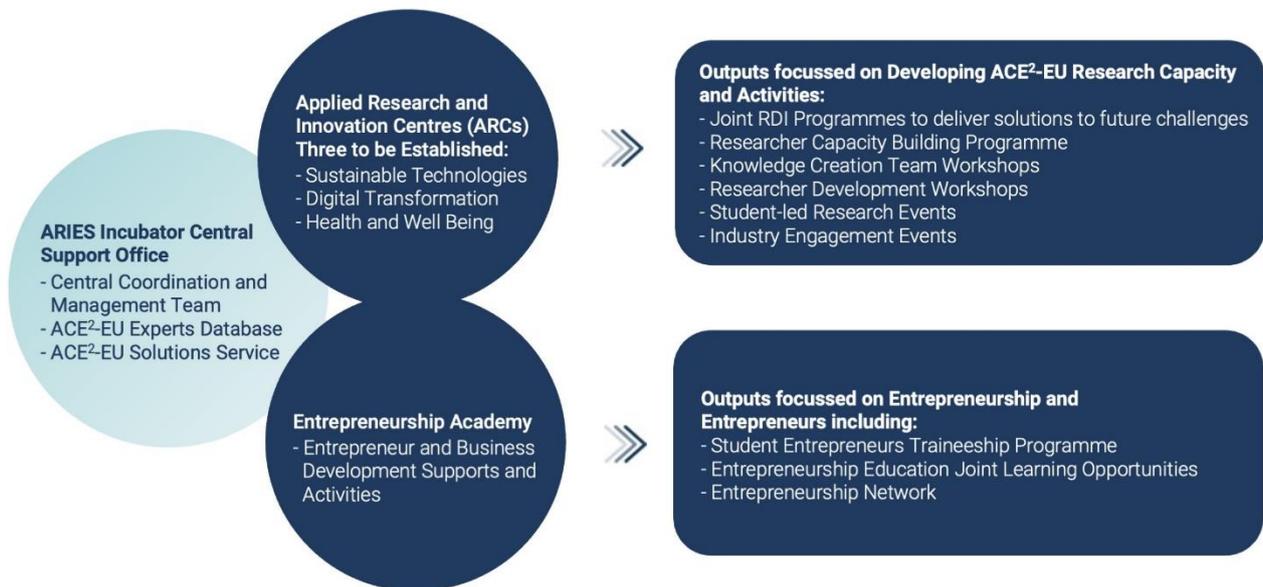
### The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU ARIES Incubator Central Support Office (CSO)

The ARIES Incubator Central Support Office, led by the ARIES incubator coordinator, will be responsible for the development and implementation of the incubator's overall operational framework and operational plan. The operational framework and associated plan will be developed in partnership with the ARCs and the Entrepreneurship Academy. The ARIES Incubator and its CSO will have a management board comprised of the incubator coordinator and representatives of each of the ARCs and the Entrepreneurship Academy. The CSO will support the establishment and the work plans of the ARCs and the Entrepreneurship Academy, monitor their progress, communicate and work with other ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU operational units and work packages, as well as disseminate the incubator 's activities and outputs across the alliance and the wider European Higher Education Area.

The ARIES central office will:

- Coordinate the development and delivery in partnership with the ARCs of a structured **Researcher Capacity Training Programme** for research students and researchers to support their professional development and the development of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU RDI network. The programme to be developed will be based on the **European Competence Framework for Researchers** and will enable our research students and researchers to better navigate and compete in an increasingly competitive academic sector and equip them with the knowledge and skills to facilitate their future career development;
- Engage with the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus in the development of the:
- **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Solutions Service**, to be provided on the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus platform, which will allow external stakeholders to lodge detailed requests seeking their advice and assistance in solving specific challenges and real-world problems. A response and follow-up action will be provided by connecting them with relevant experts within ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU to find the most appropriate solution;
- **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Expert Database**, which will be an online database available on the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus platform, provides details on the collective expertise available across disciplines and activities within the alliance, thereby assisting in the connectivity of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU with external stakeholders and the wider world.

## ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU ARIES INCUBATOR



The diagram below provides an illustrative overview of the ARIES Incubator operational units, services, and corresponding outputs and activities.

### 7.2.3 ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Societal Partnerships and Cultural Engagement Centre (SPACE-Centre)

The delivery of the service to society mission of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU will be achieved through the establishment of the joint operational unit known as the **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Societal Partnerships And Cultural Engagement Centre (SPACE Centre)**. The SPACE Centre will develop the student-centred service to society and cultural awareness learning opportunities, programmes, and activities of the alliance in collaboration with relevant external stakeholders. The main elements of the SPACE Centre work plan will include:

**I. The creation of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Social Impactors** which will bring together expertise in current socio-economic issues from across the alliance to develop service-to-society activities, including, for example, awareness campaigns, volunteering programmes, and challenge-based workshops focussed on tackling social challenges in a collective way and partnership with government and societal stakeholder groups. Social impactors will be established in **areas such as health & well-being, inclusion & multiculturalism, dignity, respect, and gender equality**.

**II. The creation of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Culture Hub** which brings together cultural expertise drawn from alliance members and their relevant external partners to expand the collective knowledge of the different cultures of alliance members to enhance integration, inclusion, mutual respect, and multiculturalism across our alliance.

**III. The establishment of Knowledge Creation Teams, networks, and databases** of service to society and cultural expertise from across our alliance and in partnership with our external stakeholders.

As the SPACE centre will be a joint operational unit of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU it will have a dedicated coordinator and an associated management team drawn from all the members of the alliance. The SPACE Centre will have several operational units including its Social Impactors and Culture Hub whose work will be supported by the SPACE centre coordinator.

The following provides an overview of the activities of the operational units of the SPACE Centre:

**The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Social Impactors:** will bring together **expertise in socio-economic issues** such as inclusion, diversity, gender equality, dignity etc. from across the alliance in **partnership with societal and government stakeholders** to develop service-to-society activities to address and positively impact current and future societal challenges. Outputs from activities to be developed will include for example **awareness campaigns, volunteering programmes and challenge-based workshops focussed on collectively tackling social challenges**, social impactors may also wish to develop joint learning opportunities such as ABCs, BIPs, and MOOCs relevant to the socio-economic issues they are dealing with for the benefit of students and external stakeholders. Social Impactors will be established in areas such as inclusion & multiculturalism, dignity, respect, and gender equality. It is anticipated up to four social impactors will be established over the duration of the project period. The programmes to be developed by the social impactors will involve the participation of students, staff, researchers, and social partners drawn from across the alliance.

The main initiatives of the social impactors tackling societal challenges will include:

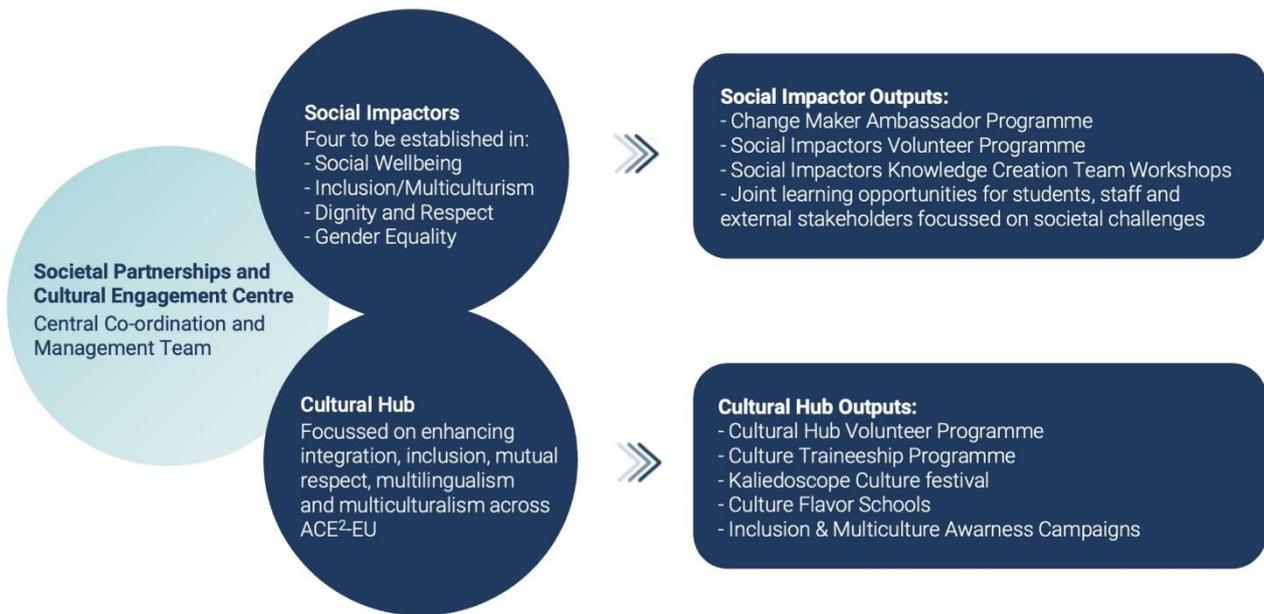
- **The Change Maker Ambassador Programme** which will provide a training framework for students and staff from the alliance to become social change agents and will focus on providing participants with a knowledge of existing best practices and innovative ways to address societal issues;
- **The Social Impactors Volunteer Programme** which will provide financial and other supports for students to engage in service to society work with and in external stakeholder environments in partnership with our social impactors on a volunteer basis, which will involve a minimum 90 day mobility opportunity;
- **Social Impactor Knowledge Creation Team Workshops** to facilitate the development of joint Service to Society initiatives by experts of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU with external societal and government partners. Outputs of these workshops will focus on providing practical solutions to socio-economic challenges which could be collectively developed and implemented by students, staff, and external partners. Solutions to be implemented could include activities such as public awareness campaigns and joint learning opportunities in partnership with the APP Factory;

- **Development of joint learning opportunities** such as ABCs, BIPs, and MOOCs relevant to current & further socio-economic for the benefit of students and external stakeholders.

**The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Culture Hub:** will bring together cultural expertise drawn from alliance members and their relevant external partners to expand the collective knowledge of the different cultures of alliance members to enhance integration, inclusion, mutual respect, and multiculturalism across our alliance. The main initiatives and activities of the Culture Hub will include:

- **The Culture Hub Volunteer Programme** which will provide financial and other support for students to engage in cultural activities with and in external stakeholder environments voluntarily and will involve a minimum 8-day mobility opportunity;
- **Culture Traineeship Programme** for Staff focussed on providing key staff within each member of the alliance with a training opportunity to better understand alliance partner cultures and to identify effective strategies for the successful induction and inclusion of international students within university environments across the alliance, particularly those who are at risk of cultural exclusion;
- **The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Kaleidoscope Culture Festival** which will allow student members of the alliance to showcase their respective cultures to others at a festival setting and on an annual basis coinciding with the Annual Assembly of the alliance to promote multiculturalism, multilingualism, and inclusion across the alliance. Student teams from each member University of the alliance will be expected to create a different and novel cultural programme each year to reflect their national and regional identity and heritage. The cultural and linguistic programmes to be presented can be composed of individual or multiple elements including, for example, national and regional forms of art, literature, language, music, dance, sport, or cuisine;
- **The creation of inclusion and multicultural awareness campaigns** in partnership with the communications coordinator, the APP factory coordinator and WP6 to include promotional materials (including digital materials), to promote and inform all stakeholders of the alliance including students, staff, and external stakeholders of the importance of multiculturalism as well as the variety, diversity and range of cultures participating in ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU;
- **The development of joint learning opportunities and, in particular, Culture Flavour Schools** for students, focussed on fostering an environment of inclusivity and multiculturalism across ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU.

## ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU SPACE CENTRE



Like the ARIES Incubator, the SPACE Centre will engage with the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus in the development of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Solutions Service and ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Expert Database. The diagram below provides an overview of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU SPACE Centre, its operational units, and corresponding outputs and activities.

### 7.2.4 ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus

One of the most important joint operational units of our European university will be the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus. It will be pivotal to the operation and support of all the activities, systems, and services of our inter-university campus and to be delivered in partnership by alliance members from all the regions of Europe. The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus will act as the **digital platform for all our shared digital and IT systems** including our:

- Virtual Learning Environment;
- Library Information Systems;
- Experts and Networks Databases;
- Activities and Programmes Catalogue and Databases;
- Admissions and Registration System;
- Student Support System;
- Staff Support System;
- External Stakeholder Engagement and Support Systems;

- ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Communications, Programme Management, and Dissemination Systems;
- Website and Public Information Systems.

The establishment of our inter-university e-campus digital platform will require the development and delivery of a separate work plan and the creation of a dedicated project team which will include a dedicated and shared e-Campus coordinator and dedicated technical support staff.

The establishment and development stages of our inter-university ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus will include the:

- Appointment of the e-Campus development steering group to include the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU coordinators, WP leaders, and the IT systems managers of each member of the alliance;
- Appointment of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus project team, including the e-Campus coordinator and the technical support staff;
- Review of IT Systems and Digital platforms currently in use across alliance member institutions and a sample of other European universities to identify existing best practice models and systems;
- Roll out of pilot shared systems and platforms in key areas such as our virtual learning environment, library information systems, student supports, and services;
- Review, and evaluation of 1<sup>st</sup> edition pilots of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus;
- Launch of first multi-element ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus.

Given the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus is to be a shared IT platform and as such will not be owned or developed by only one alliance member, it will most likely require the establishment of a not-for-profit organisation/company to guide its development and operation. The process to establish this legal entity will be considered early in the overall work plan of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU by the member institutions of the alliance.

Given the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus will support all activities and operations of our alliance it will connect with all other WPs by the participation of its coordinators in their management groups and the participation of WP coordinators and leaders in its steering group.

The development of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus will not only facilitate the development and operation of all the activities, systems and user support for our alliance; it will also deliver on Erasmus+ programme objectives to expand online and blended learning activities and mobility opportunities as well as deliver on the overall digital transformation ambitions of the EU.

Some of the novel components of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus will include the:

- **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Solutions Service**, to be provided on the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus platform and in partnership with WP3 and WP4, which will allow external stakeholders to seek advice and assistance in solving their specific challenges and real-world problems;
- **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Expert Database**, which will be an online database available on the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus platform and developed in partnership with WP3 and WP4, which will provide details on the collective expertise available across disciplines and activities within the alliance, thereby assisting in the connectivity of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU with external stakeholders and the wider world;
- **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Learners Portal**, which will allow learners from all alliance members to access joint programme registration and information and learner support systems, including the Virtual Learning Environment, and Library systems.

The diagram below outlines the core elements, of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus.



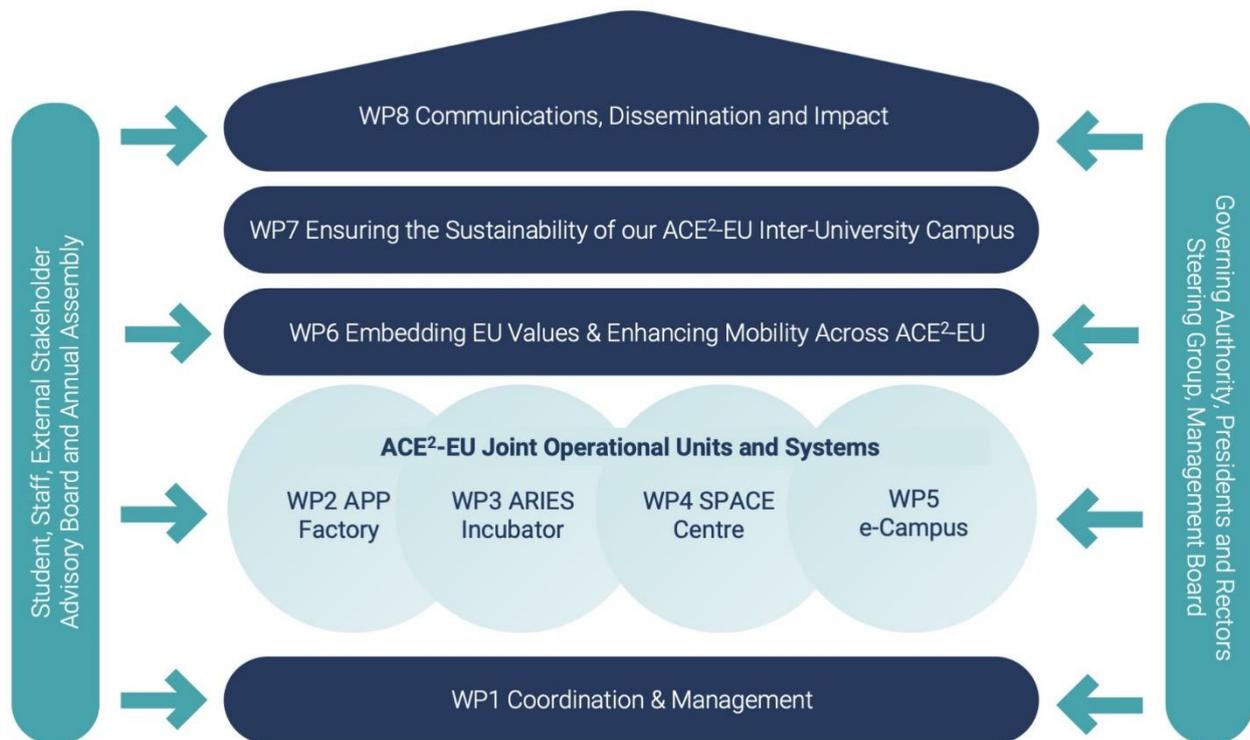
## 8.0 Our Shared Workplan

### 8.1 Our Work Plan Structure

A diagrammatic presentation of the overall work plan structure of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU for the next 4 years and a brief description of the main objectives of each of the WPs is provided below.

## WORK PLAN STRUCTURE

“Addressing Future Challenges – Delivering Sustainable Societal Transformation Today.”



### WP1 Coordination and Management

This WP provides the foundations for our collaborative work, including the management of the partners and their work as well as the quality assurance of the overall work plan. This work package will provide a set of tools for internal guidance (Project Management and Quality Handbook, Risk Assessment Table, Quality Control and Evaluation plan), a platform for carrying out regular (online and face-to-face) transnational meetings to ensure proper partner communication and engagement, as well as guaranteeing appropriate project monitoring including quality control, evaluation of the results and delivery of official reports.

**WP2 ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Programmes and Pedagogy Factory (APP-Factory); Creating Joint Learning Opportunities**

The main objective of this work package is to deliver on the educational mission of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU through the establishment of a shared operational entity to be known as the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Programmes and **Pedagogy Factory (APP Factory)** The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU APP Factory will be responsible for the:

- I. Development and delivery of joint programmes in partnership with external stakeholders focussed on solving real-world challenges utilising blended, **active learning methods** such as **challenge and work-based pedagogical approaches**.
- II. Development and delivery of **pedagogical training programmes** focused on **embedding the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU active learning educational mission** and strategy among staff engaged in the development and delivery of our joint programmes in partnership with external stakeholders.

**WP3: ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support Incubator (ARIES-Incubator); Creating Joint Research and Innovation Opportunities**

The main objective of this joint operational unit is to develop and deliver the joint research, innovation and entrepreneurship support programmes, activities, and associated learning opportunities of the alliance in collaboration with external stakeholders and partners through the establishment of the **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support Incubator (ARIES-Incubator)**. The ARIES Incubator's work plan will focus on:

- I. The development and delivery of **joint research & innovation learning opportunities and activities in partnership with external stakeholders** relevant to current and future challenges including the twin digital and green transitions and current socio-economic issues. This objective will be achieved through the establishment of the **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Applied Research, Development, and Innovation Centres (ARCs)** and their associated initiatives and support programmes.
- II. The development of the **entrepreneurship innovation capacity** of members of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU through the establishment of the **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Entrepreneurship Academy**. The Entrepreneurship Academy will bring together experts from across the alliance in the area of entrepreneurship and business support who will develop entrepreneurship education and **entrepreneurship support programmes** focussed on nurturing the development of emerging and young entrepreneurs and businesses across the alliance members.
- III. The establishment of **knowledge creation teams, networks and databases** of research, innovation, and entrepreneurship support services and expertise from across our alliance and in partnership with our external stakeholders.

**WP4: ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Societal Partnerships And Cultural Engagement Centre (SPACE Centre); Creating Joint Service to Society and Cultural Awareness Opportunities**

The main objective of this work package is to develop and deliver the student-centred joint service to society and cultural awareness learning opportunities, programmes and activities of the alliance in collaboration with relevant external stakeholders through the establishment of the **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Societal Partnerships And Cultural Engagement Centre (SPACE Centre)**. The main elements of the SPACE Centre work plan will include:

- I. The creation of **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Social Impactors** which will bring together expertise in current socio-economic issues from across the alliance to develop service-to-society activities; including for example awareness campaigns, volunteering programmes, and challenge-based workshops focussed on tackling social challenges **in a collective way** and in partnership with government and societal stakeholder groups. Social impactors will be established in areas such as health & wellbeing, inclusion & multiculturalism, dignity, respect, and gender equality.
- II. The creation of the **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Culture Hub** which brings together cultural expertise drawn from alliance members and their relevant external partners to expand the collective knowledge of the different cultures of alliance members to enhance integration, inclusion, mutual respect, and multiculturalism across our alliance.
- III. The establishment of **knowledge creation teams, networks, and databases** of service to society and cultural expertise from across our alliance and in partnership with our external stakeholders.

**WP5: ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus. Facilitating the Operation of our Inter-University Campus**

The main objective of this work package is to establish one of the most important shared systems of our European university namely the **ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus** which will be **pivotal to the operation** and support of all the activities, systems, and services of our **inter-university campus** to be delivered in partnership by alliance members drawn from all the regions of Europe. The ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU e-Campus will act as the **digital platform for all our shared digital and IT systems** including our: Virtual Learning Environment, Library information Systems, Experts and Networks Databases, Activities and Programmes Catalogue and Databases, Admissions and Registration System, Student Support System, Staff Support System, External Stakeholder Engagement and Support Systems, ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Communications, Programme Management and Dissemination Systems, and our Website and Public Information Systems.

**WP6: Embedding EU Values & Enhancing Mobility Across ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU**

The main objectives of this work package are to:

- I. Further deepen transnational cooperation within ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU through the **expansion and enhancement of mobility opportunities** and activities across our alliance.
- II. **Embed the core values and principles of the European Union** in our joint activities and among the stakeholders of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU, thus **strengthening European Identity** in a new generation of Europeans who will be able to cooperate and work within different European cultures in different languages, and across borders, sectors, and academic disciplines.

**ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU VALUES AND MOBILITY ACTION GROUP**



**WP7: Ensuring the Sustainability of our ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Inter-University Campus**

The key focus and outcome of this work package will be the development of an agreed, shared, and robust sustainability strategy and associated implementation plan, concentrating on:

- I. Delivering a sustainable financial future for the alliance through the development of a **financial plan** for the **continued sustainable development of the alliance** which will consider the application of funding options, sources, and financial partnerships beyond existing EU and institutional financial sources.
- II. Further embedding our common vision, shared values, and the achievement of our collective ambition across our alliance through the creation of an **action plan to further develop our shared governance and management arrangements, operational units, systems, resources, personnel, policies, and procedures**.
- III. Expanding and evolving our range of joint education, research, innovation, and service to society opportunities available to our stakeholders, through the development of a **roadmap for the rollout of further and future joint activities, programmes, and initiatives**.
- IV. Broadening the reach, influence, impact and application of the vision and mission of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU through the creation and implementation of an **expansion plan for the alliance** to incorporate new members from other EU countries and other global partners, thereby **building our capacity to act as a model of good practice and further increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area**.
- V. Achieving a common **legal status for the alliance to facilitate the pooling of resources and activities to reach higher levels of excellence** through the development of a process and plan to create a single legal entity for the alliance which will include launching a **pilot legal status initiative** during this project cycle.



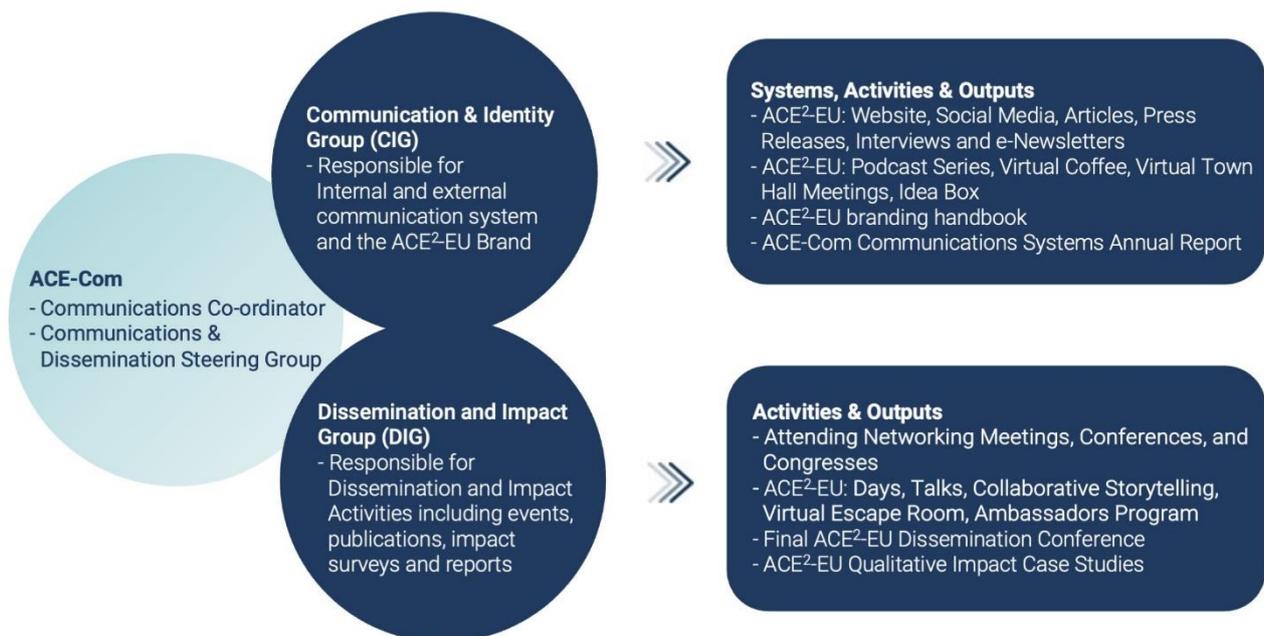
**WP8: Communications, Dissemination and Impact**

The main objective of this work package is to maximize the recognition, reach, and impact of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU through the development of effective internal and external communication and dissemination systems and associated procedures, processes, activities, and events.

The main objective will be achieved through:

- I. The development of the **internal and external communication systems of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU focussed on promoting and embedding the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU mission, values, objective, brand and activities** throughout the alliance stakeholder community and within the broader European Higher Education Area.
- II. The development of the **dissemination plan and associated activities of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU focussed on promoting and sharing the outcomes, good practices and impact** of our alliance with diverse target groups within our own jurisdictions and across the EU.

**ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE (ACE-COM)**



## 8.2 Our Workplan Goals, Targets, and Transformative Impact

The principal objective of our work plan is to implement our long-term strategy **to establish a European higher education inter-university campus** which has the potential to **transform the capacity and quality of institutional cooperation between ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU member institutions** and bring it to the next level. Our inter-university campus will become a legally **recognised European University** with European and global reach, reputation, and impact focussed on **“Addressing Future Challenges and Delivering Sustainable Societal Transformation Today”**. To achieve our principal objective, we have set ambitious goals and targets which will form the basis of the indicators we will use to monitor the implementation of our work plan and the delivery of our associated long-term strategy.

The overall ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU work plan goals and associated targets to transform our alliance are described below and include our:

**Joint Governance and Management Structures**, including the establishment of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU:

- Governing Authority;
- Rectors and Presidents Steering Group;
- Management Board;
- Student, staff, and associated partner advisory boards;
- Annual Assemblies.

**Joint Operational Units and Systems**, including the establishment of the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU:

- APP-factory and its Applied Programmes and Pedagogy units;
- ARIES Incubator and its Applied Research and Innovation Centres (ARCs) and Entrepreneurship Academy;
- SPACE Centre and its Social Incubators and Culture Hub;
- Central Communication Office;
- e-Campus and its core operational elements.

**Shared Pool of Staff Resources**, including the:

- Appointment of a general manager;
- Appointment of coordinators for our joint operational units and systems;
- Appointment of a strategy coordinator/advisor;
- Establishment of numerous joint European knowledge creation teams operating within and across our joint operational units.

**Joint Learning Opportunities**, with a minimum target set at 120 to include:

- Short learning opportunities including 50+ ABCs; circa. 40 Flavour Schools & Impactathons as well as 30+ BIPs, COILs and MOOCs;
- ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Student Onboarding Programme: ACE-Rookies (ACERs);
- Full joint programmes to include a minimum of three ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU joint degrees.

**Joint Student and Staff Personal and Professional Development Programmes**, which include our:

- Staff development and learning opportunities, including Active Learning Pedagogy Schools (ALPS), Active Learning e-Pedagogy Schools (ALES), ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU Pedagogy Conferences, and Culture Traineeship Programmes;
- Social Change Maker Ambassador programme for students and staff;
- Researcher and research student Researcher Capacity Training Programme.

**Joint Traineeship and Volunteer Programmes** for students, which include the:

- Entrepreneurs Traineeship Programme;
- Social Incubators Volunteer Programme;
- Culture Hub Volunteer Programme.

**Mobility Opportunities**; with an overall target set at circa 9000 to include:

- 5200 physical and blended student mobility opportunities and circa 1500 virtual student mobility opportunities;
- 1800 physical and blended staff mobility opportunities and circa 500 virtual staff mobility opportunities;
- 100 physical and blended associate partner mobility opportunities and circa 100 virtual associate partner mobility opportunities.

**Joint Events and Dissemination activities** to include our:

- Annual Assemblies;
- Annual Multicultural Kaleidoscope Festivals;
- Student-led research colloquia, conferences, and competitions;
- ARC Engagement Events with Industry;
- Entrepreneurship Academy networking events;
- Final Dissemination Conference.

**Other outputs** including our:

- Inclusion & Multicultural Awareness Campaigns;

- Internal and external communication systems of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU which promote and embed the ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU mission, values, objective, brand and activities;
- Dissemination plan and associated activities of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU focussed on promoting and sharing the outcomes, good practices and impact;
- Sustainability strategy and associated implementation plan to include a:
  - Financial plan for the continued sustainable development of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU
  - Action plan to further develop our shared governance and management arrangements, operational units, systems, resources, personnel, policies, and procedures;
  - Roadmap for the roll-out of further and future joint activities, programmes, and initiatives;
  - Expansion plan for the alliance to incorporate new members from other EU countries and other global partners;
  - Development of a process and plan to create a single legal entity for the alliance which will include launching a pilot legal status initiative during this project cycle.

We believe the long-term strategy of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU and its associated work plan goals and targets will build upon the institutional cooperation achieved by alliance members to date as it will **intensify, expand, and transform institutional cooperation across our alliance and take it to the next level** as it will:

- Mobilise the collective expertise and strengths of alliance members in the development of joint learning opportunities and activities across all four mission areas of education, research, innovation, and service to society for the benefit of our stakeholders and society overall;
- Facilitate the implementation of new university-level joint governance and management structures to support the implementation of our collective vision, mission, and strategy;
- Create a shared pool of staff resources by introducing a shared management team and structure to drive the management and future development of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU;
- Create new joint operational units including our APP-Factory, ARIES-Incubator, and SPACE Centre to drive the implementation of our vision and the development of our joint learning opportunities and activities in all four mission areas;
- Facilitate the linking of education to research, innovation, and service to society activities through the collaborative and interconnected work plans of our joint operational units and our European Knowledge Creation teams;
- Create shared systems and services including our e-Campus digital platform, policies, and procedures to support the development and delivery of our joint learning opportunities and activities;

- Seek to attain a sustainable future for ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU through the development of a sustainability strategy and associated implementation plan focussed on financial sustainability and the achievement of legal status for our European university.

In conclusion, the mission of our European University will be delivered through a common vision, shared values and principles, joint long-term strategy, inclusive joint governance, and management structures, shared joint operational units, joint European knowledge creation teams and shared staff to create a sustainable inter-university European University campus which will obtain legal status. ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU will utilise and evolve all four mission areas of its European University including education, research, innovation, and service to society to ensure it can address future challenges and be responsive to the digital and green transition agendas and key socio-economic challenges of the EU, thereby delivering sustainable societal transformation today for the benefit of all its stakeholders and society overall.

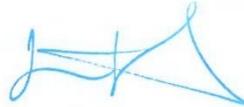
We the undersigned approve the mission, vision, and long-term strategy of ACE<sup>2</sup>-EU on behalf of our universities.

## Signatures of Presidents and Rectors



The following authorised legal representative endorses the ACE2-EU Joint Mission, Vision and Long-Term Strategy for the ACE2-EU ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-1 project submission.

On behalf of  
**Santarém Polytechnic University**  
Portugal  
Mr. João Miguel Peres Moutão, President



Signature  
25<sup>th</sup> of January 2024



The following authorised legal representative endorses the ACE2-EU Joint Mission, Vision and Long-Term Strategy for the ACE2-EU ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-1 project submission.

On behalf of  
**Carinthia University of Applied Sciences**  
Austria  
Mr. Granig Peter, Rector



Signature  
25<sup>th</sup> of January 2024

 **KÄRNTEN**  
University of  
Applied Sciences  
FH Kärnten  
gemeinnützige Gesellschaft mbH  
9524 Villach, Europastraße 4  
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 **KÄRNTEN**  
CARINTHIA  
UNIVERSITY  
OF APPLIED  
SCIENCES

The following authorised legal representative endorses the ACE2-EU Joint Mission, Vision and Long-Term Strategy for the ACE2-EU ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-1 project submission.

On behalf of  
**University „Constantin Brâncuși” of Târgu Jiu**  
Romania  
Mr. Vasile-Sorin Purec, Rector

**VASILE-  
SORIN PUREC** Digitally signed by  
VASILE-SORIN PUREC  
Date: 2024.01.25  
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Signature  
25<sup>th</sup> of January 2024

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The following authorised legal representative endorses the ACE2-EU Joint Mission, Vision and Long-Term Strategy for the ACE2-EU ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-1 project submission.

On behalf of  
**Goce Delcev University**  
North Macedonia  
Mr. Dejan Mirakovski, Rector



Signature  
25<sup>th</sup> of January 2024



The following authorised legal representative endorses the ACE2-EU Joint Mission, Vision and Long-Term Strategy for the ACE2-EU ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-1 project submission.

On behalf of  
**Kauno Technikos Kolegija**  
Lithuania  
Mrs. Lina Girdauskienė, Director



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Signature  
25<sup>th</sup> of January 2024



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The following authorised legal representative endorses the ACE2-EU Joint Mission, Vision and Long-Term Strategy for the ACE2-EU ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-1 project submission.

On behalf of  
**Francisco de Vitoria University**  
Spain  
Mr. Daniel Sada Castaño, Rector  
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DANIEL SADA SADA (R: G80480197)  
(R: G80480197) Fecha: 2024.01.25  
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Signature  
25<sup>th</sup> of January 2024

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The following authorised legal representative endorses the ACE2-EU Joint Mission, Vision and Long-Term Strategy for the ACE2-EU ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-1 project submission.

On behalf of  
**Medical University of Gdansk**  
Poland  
Prof. Marcin Gruchala, Rector

  
**REKTOR**  
*Prof. Marcin Gruchala, MD, PhD*

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Signature  
25<sup>th</sup> of January 2024

**MEDICAL UNIVERSITY of GDAŃSK**  
3 a M. Skłodowskiej-Curie Str.  
80-210 GDAŃSK, Poland  
phone: +(48 58) 3491000, fax: +(48 58) 5204038

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The following authorised legal representative endorses the ACE2-EU Joint Mission, Vision and Long-Term Strategy for the ACE2-EU ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-1 project submission.

On behalf of  
**Latvian Academy of Culture**  
Latvia  
Mrs. Ruta Muktupāvela, Rector



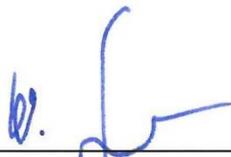
Signature  
25<sup>th</sup> of January 2024



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The following authorised legal representative endorses the ACE2-EU Joint Mission, Vision and Long-Term Strategy for the ACE2-EU ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV-1 project submission.

On behalf of  
**Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt**  
Germany  
Prof. Dr. Walter Schober, President



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Signature  
25<sup>th</sup> of January 2024



Technische Hochschule  
Ingolstadt

Esplanade 10, D-85049 Ingolstadt

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