



The European University of Post-Industrial Cities

MISSION STATEMENT

We are UNIC, an established European alliance of eight universities based in post-industrial cities with a clear mission to boost mobility and inclusion for societal impact:

✓	Universidad de Deusto	University of Deusto	Bilbao	Spain
✓	Ruhr-Universität Bochum	Ruhr University Bochum	Bochum	Germany
✓	Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh	University College Cork	Cork	Ireland
✓	Koç Üniversitesi	Koç University	Istanbul	Turkey
✓	Université de Liège	University of Liège	Liège	Belgium
✓	Oulun yliopisto	University of Oulu	Oulu	Finland
✓	Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam	Erasmus University Rotterdam	Rotterdam	The Netherlands
✓	Sveučilište u Zagrebu	University of Zagreb	Zagreb	Croatia

Connected by our participation in IMISCOE, Europe's largest network of excellence on migration, integration and social cohesion, UNIC fosters transformative modes of teaching, research and learning that respond to the specific challenges and characteristics of post-industrial cities and their increasingly **superdiverse** populations. Superdiversity demands that we develop ever more innovative, accessible and inclusive modes of research, teaching and learning which articulate and respond to the needs of diverse populations. Drawing on UNIC members' diverse and complementary

knowledge and expertise, we aim to build an educational experience which recognizes and responds critically to issues of superdiversity by: (i) placing inclusion and mobility at the core of a new European University and developing models of best practice for teaching and learning in superdiverse settings; (ii) equipping the next generation of citizens with the 21st century skills and knowledge to address the challenges of superdiverse societies; (iii) fostering learning-in-practice by engaging students with the real-world urban challenges facing Europe's cities.

UNIC's joint long-term vision

Ten years from now, our students and university staff, including teachers/researchers and administrative staff, shall enjoy a truly **European learning, teaching and working experience**. Being united as eight universities and members of IMISCOE, we have a unique basis from which to achieve this ambition together, addressing our shared challenges and opportunities. We will take inclusion to the next level by using the superdiverse settings of our post-industrial cities to unlock new European opportunities for all our students. In particular, UNIC will broaden educational opportunities for many non-traditional students, including members of new migrant communities and people living in socio-economically disadvantaged areas.

Our students and staff will study, teach and work throughout Europe to learn from, and become **change agents** who will play a role in the transformation of our post-industrial urban regions of the future. By engaging students in real-world urban challenges with our city partners through initiatives such as CityLabs, we aim to bring 'science to the city' and contribute to the resilience and renaissance of Europe's post-industrial urban centres. In so doing, we will foster a new generation of students with the knowledge, skills and societal consciousness to act as change-leaders, active citizens and builders of our common European future, shaping the European Education Area.

UNIC's identity

The uniqueness of our UNIC alliance resides in our locations, our histories and traditions, our experience and the superdiverse nature of our student bodies. Each partner is a member of IMISCOE, and six out of the eight partners have already been forging research collaborations on issues of migration, diversity and inclusion for many years. The differentiated vision of our alliance is that the cities are vital partners and our universities will work hand-in-hand with city institutions to ensure that urban issues feed into teaching and research in a manner that will be accessible and inclusive for all learners.

Within UNIC we identify with and are united by:

- **Common values** inspired by our founders' aims of empowering and bringing higher learning to industrial areas that are having to deal with the effects of industrial transitions from heavy industry and manual labour to a post-industrialist service and knowledge economy. This can be exemplified by the closing of the Opel factory in Bochum and the mining industry in Liege, the end of the Ford car plant in Cork, the cutbacks in the Nokia industry in Oulu, the rapid digitalization of the harbour in the world port city of Rotterdam, the economic and cultural revival of Bilbao, the post-transition development of Zagreb and the rapid economic transitions of Istanbul, which have all led to a broad range of social, economic, cultural and demographic transformations. Our post-industrial cities are hotspots of wide-ranging transformations in Europe's social landscape, related to employment, in particular youth employment, migration-related diversities, the impact of new technologies and new health-related and environmental challenges. From this shared ambition we aim to shape post-industrial transformations in our labour markets and supply the forward-looking skills and entrepreneurial competences

- **Shared experience and expertise** in working with university populations that are 'superdiverse' in terms of their socio-economic and socio-cultural composition. We have experience with and teach a high number of non-traditional students from different backgrounds (culture, class, ethnicity, religion, age, etc.). Many are first-generation students, descended from families of industrial, manual or agricultural workers. Many belong to migrant communities, reflecting the migratory past and present of our post-industrial cities. The superdiverse composition of our student populations offers a unique opportunity to explore and create the most sustainable pathways to boost European student mobility - pathways which are educational and efficient, which ensure equality and inclusion and which serve as models for inclusive universities that are well-prepared for the superdiverse future of our European Education Area.
- **Joint urban responsibility and vision:** UNIC is building an alliance with the eight post-industrial cities in which our universities are situated, which are valuable associated partners in this project. Never before has the destiny of our universities been so closely entwined with that of our cities and their ecosystems. Our academic educational ambition to boost mobility and inclusion for our students is closely linked to our shared ambition to create societal impact with and within our city, while also learning from it. Our students are the change agents of our cities' futures and our teaching and research contributes towards urban resilience. As European Universities and cities, together we will strengthen our mutual roles in the urban renaissance by learning from each other, working together and creating innovative models of practice for the European Universities of the future.

UNIC's fundamental purpose

Our fundamental aim is to empower students to shape Europe's future. We believe that universities in post-industrial cities are uniquely positioned to deal with the complex challenges and opportunities Europe is facing. Highly-skilled graduates and new scientific disciplines that respond to the needs of the changing economy are in great demand, while deep technological and structural changes are affecting both how we teach and how we learn. We believe that universities in post-industrial cities are ideally placed to rethink and redesign the universities of the European Education Area of the future. The UNIC alliance aims to take learning and teaching to the next level by establishing deep institutional cooperation in order to raise effectiveness and excellence and to stimulate innovation and inclusion. We believe that working together on the basis of our shared UNIC identity provides a unique opportunity not only to learn from each other but also to shape new structures and models of practice that are tailored to the needs of our students, research, staff, cities, civil society and urban companies. The UNIC consortium is

paving the way and welcomes the future participation of universities from other post-industrial cities.

UNIC's aim is to unlock a truly European experience for a new generation of students who will advance the post-industrial transformations of our cities. UNIC is strategically positioned for jointly contributing to achieving key **European values** in some of Europe's most rapidly changing areas and universities. This includes contributing to equality by providing excellent higher education in the European Education Area, embedded in post-industrial settings that are often marked by socio-economic inequalities and youth unemployment. This involves contributing to human dignity and freedom by preparing universities and cities for the superdiverse societies to which they belong. Moreover, this includes the setting-up of a model of good practice for all universities that are dealing with the superdiverse realities of Europe's future.

UNIC's ambitions

- 1. Co-creating a European collaborative structure for UNIC**
Our ambition is for UNIC to become the driver of an ever-closer union of our eight universities. The UNIC institution building will be a **co-creation** between students and university staff, who will identify and remove obstacles and barriers in order to improve inter-university collaboration and to actively and creatively pursue new opportunities for collaborations in research, learning and teaching and university-wide policies and administrative issues.
- 2. Enabling seamless mobility within UNIC to study, train, teach, do research, work or share services**
Our ambition is for students and university staff to be able to move seamlessly within and outside UNIC. We will tailor this mobility to the superdiverse population of our universities. We will develop a **differentiated approach to mobility** to enable different mobility forms (physical, virtual or blended) and different types of mobility (modular collaboration, individual exchange, joint/double degree programmes). This also includes a multi-lingual approach in which we will provide language courses to expand the mobility of our students and staff and enable them to take part in daily life practices. We will make European mobility accessible for a much broader and more diverse group of students than is currently the case.

- 3. Ensuring social inclusion in university life as well as in the broader context of superdiverse post-industrial cities**
Superdiversity is a great asset in today's world, but it is only a first step towards inclusion. **Fair inclusion** means making everyone feel welcome and appreciated. It means understanding differences and using them to everyone's advantage. UNIC will take inclusion to a higher level at our universities, based on the pooling of research and the education excellence of the partner universities in this area. This includes, but is not limited to, developing social and community engagement skills and learning about inclusion and diversity challenges through researching and working with excellent teachers and researchers in the fields of inclusion, diversity, social cohesion, social justice, equality and civil society through real-life urban case studies.
- 4. Contributing to the urban resilience of post-industrial cities by providing excellent education and research with a clear ambition to achieve societal impact**
Within UNIC we will work together to impact post-industrial transformations by developing a core methodology for university-wide education and research. This includes bringing students to the city as well as bringing the challenges of post-industrial cities to our learning pedagogies through a **challenge-based learning methodology**. By excellent research on challenges and possibilities linked to urban transformations we will create impact-by-design.

UNIC's approach

We will develop and implement UNIC in **co-creation** with students and university staff from the eight universities. We believe that this co-creation approach is the only way to deal with the complexities of inter-university collaboration and the best way to make sure that UNIC's activities are feasible, practical and considered relevant by the universities and their cities, citizens and stakeholders.

We will use a step-by-step approach of **begin-belong-become** to move our universities towards an ever-closer union. UNIC **begins** with a strong shared identity and a clear focus on our common challenges and opportunities. By shaping a structure of collaboration we will also shape a sense of **belonging** to the UNIC community. Subsequently, as soon as the structural foundation and sense of belonging are in place, we will **become** UNIC - a solid, systemic and sustainable university that will make a direct and clear contribution to mobility, inclusion and societal impact.

- To achieve our ambitions, we are creating structures and institutions that form the basis for our innovative models of practice. Firstly, we engage in **university building**. This involves creating the **UNIC Institution** and collaborative structures for the ever-closer union of the eight universities in UNIC and for achieving our vision of seamless mobility, fair inclusion and effective societal impact. We will enable a systemic and sustainable collaboration between the universities by setting up sub-groups and taskforces to deal with the many financial, legal, administrative, strategic and practical complexities. We believe that commitment, entrepreneurship and creativity are drivers of institutional convergence. The **UNIC Institution** will consist of:
- **UNIC Governance Structure**, which provides a truly European collaborative structure of governance with the structural involvement of students and all relevant stakeholders.
 - **UNIC Inter-University Campus**, which will enable virtual, real and blended mobility for students and university staff, through an

- innovative, differentiated approach that also includes Mobility Hubs for practical advice, European digital learning opportunities, an open mobility agreement, a multi-lingual approach and a mutual recognition of courses to stimulate both staff and student mobility.
- **UNIC Superdiversity Academy**, which will be our centre of excellence on how to build inclusive universities in the context of superdiverse cities. The Academy will develop models of practice within and between UNIC university teams to address superdiversity through research, educational and outreach programmes, executive training, and the provision of lifelong learning programmes.
 - **UNIC CityLabs**, which are pop-up locations of UNIC in post-industrial cities to bring science to our cities to confront the challenges of post-industrial cities in a challenge-based learning methodology.

Secondly, we will develop, try out and implement a set of **UNIC Models of Practice**. As well as transforming our universities, this set will also establish a model that other universities can use to promote mobility, inclusion and societal impact. This includes a:

- **Differentiated approach to mobility**, combining different forms and types of mobility, in an effort to unlock the prospects of the European Education Area, especially with regard to the learning, teaching and working experiences of the superdiverse populations of our cities and universities
- **Superdiverse classroom**, where we take the goal of inclusion in superdiverse contexts to the next level by integrating it in our teaching, research and administration, in order to be truly and fairly inclusive
- **Challenge-based learning approach** in which we co-create with local communities, stakeholders and experts, working on topical cases to create **impact-by-design**. By doing so, our ambition of societal impact will be integrated university-wide in our teaching, research and administration.

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