

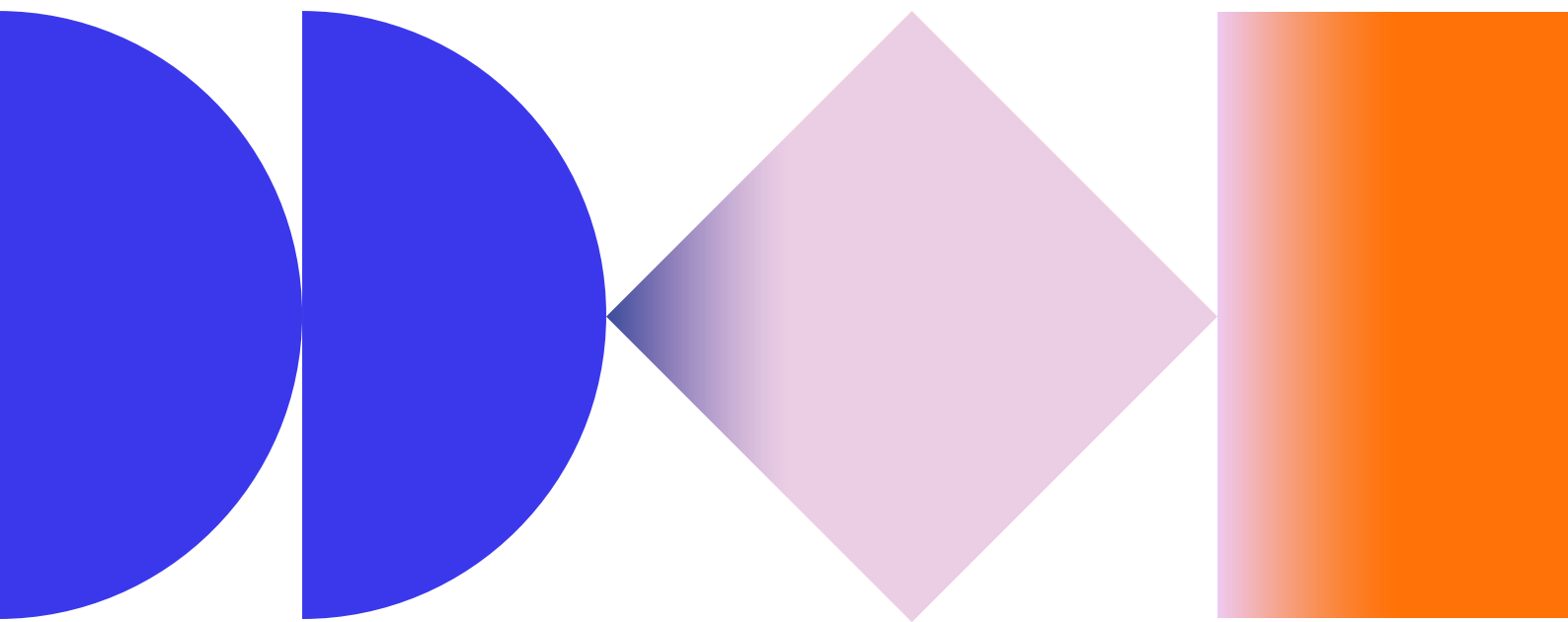
# Engaging with Diversity in European Universities



The Diversity Council of Una Europa

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Edited by Mira Karjalainen



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# Executive summary

Ana Laura Rodriguez Redondo &  
Mira Karjalainen

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Una Europa established its Diversity Council to fuel the transformation towards more diverse and inclusive university communities that are to change the future world. Diversity – promoting equity and social justice to end discrimination and to foster inclusion – is the foundation on which a Una community is built. Guided by this approach, the current report summarises the work of the Diversity Council and its four Action Groups on data collection, research, education and sharing good practices, bringing together the key findings and recommendations on diversity across all Una Europa universities.

Reflecting on and exploring the ways in which Una Europa and other European universities can embed diversity in their practices, the report consists of five parts:

1. An introduction to the role of the Diversity Council within Una Europa, and its main aims and goals;
2. The Diversity Council's definition of diversity for Una Europa;
3. The key findings and recommendations of the four Action Groups;
4. Students' views, including the Student Challenge on Diversity and the Affordably Abroad initiative;  
and
5. A conclusion, with key findings, lessons learned and future steps.

The report supports building a more diverse Una Europa and, by extension, a European Higher Education space with potential impact on civil society and stakeholders. In this space, all members may feel safe, express themselves as they are and be acknowledged as valuable contributors to the advance of European social, cultural and economic progress and wealth.

## Key overall findings and recommendations

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1. **Ground the work of each university community and alliance on the progressive definition of diversity in all its dimensions** to ensure a common basis for efficient work on diversity in each Una Europa university.
2. **Make the most of the Diversity Council.** Involve the Diversity Council in overall strategy work and planning, and clarify its role in the university community and network. Include diversity professionals in developing projects, programmes and initiatives.
3. **Establish specific sets of actions** linked to the overall strategy to mainstream diversity and create evidence-based and targeted actions that translate value-based commitments into action. A monitored and assessed overarching diversity strategy supports this mainstreaming process.
  - a. **Work with a diverse group from the start.** Build diversity into governance and make it an institutional priority. Involve the target groups in the design, implementation and monitoring of the actions concerning them.
  - b. **Ensure constant financial support for diversity work** in order to achieve the targeted aims. Promoting diversity needs to be given proper resources in terms of people, expertise, skills and time.
  - c. **Promote and evaluate training actions (for staff) to embed diversity.** Encourage the recruiting of more dedicated and trained staff and strengthen the mentoring and training of both new and existing staff.
  - d. **Develop strategies of communication.** Develop internal and external communication of policies and initiatives in order to promote awareness and engagement. Use interventions across Una Europa to promote diversity. Share best practices for improving diversity.
4. **Set up regular evaluations of each existing policy and practice.** Ensure routine data collection to generate needed information for strategy assessment. Follow up on progress against established performance indicators and develop tools to assess how diversity becomes mainstreamed.

# Foreword

Una Europa is a *mirror of humanity in all its diversity, reflecting cultures and languages, conventions and disruptions*. This core belief expressed in the Una Europa Manifesto describes the very essence of our alliance. The Una Europa partner universities are united by a shared commitment to multilingualism and cultural plurality and they each contribute to the design of a **socially, culturally and linguistically diverse Una Europa** in a unique way. Our universities stand together to face the global and societal challenges of our time and believe in the power of international cooperation as the best means to realise and promote our values, both within Europe and beyond. In 2022, we extended our alliance to welcome three new partners: Leiden University, University College Dublin and the University of Zurich. In this process, we were not only looking for like-minded institutions with excellent academic credentials but, importantly, for serious long-term partners that ascribe to the same core European values. Together, the now-11 Una Europa partner universities are taking bold steps into the future to strengthen Una Europa's role as a value-driven alliance that is open, inclusive and striving to provide quality education for all.

Since the very beginning of the 1Europe project, the Diversity Council, bringing together leading diversity experts from across our partner universities, has laid the groundwork for integrating diversity into the different dimensions of Una Europa, based on **multidimensional and intersectional approaches**. This important work has put a spotlight on the issue of diversity and brought the topic to the forefront of numerous activities within our alliance. **The four Action Groups** dedicated to data collection, education, research and good practices all provide crucial insights to inform future policy development in Una Europa. Furthermore, important transversal collaborations have been ongoing with other strategic bodies, such as with the Una Europa Research Strategy group on the topic of diversity in research structures.

In the spring of 2022, students from across our universities came together in the **Una.Together Challenge** to collaboratively develop concepts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion across our campuses. They tackled specific issues related to the inclusion of working students, support for first-generation university students and integration of international students. The winning team, which explored the concept of fostering inclusive environments for international students at big universities with multiple campuses, got a unique opportunity to pitch their solutions in person. In addition, we saw the establishment of the **Una Europa Affordably Abroad Task Force**. This student-led and staff-supported group was set up especially to explore existing challenges and obstacles to student mobility and to jointly develop solutions for future mobility opportunities within our alliance. Based on the concept of **Mobility for All**, the Task Force designed a dedicated student guide, which includes recommendations for more affordable, inclusive and sustainable mobility experiences, taking diverse student realities as a starting point. The expertise and guidance of Diversity Council members has been crucial throughout both these initiatives.

In Una Europa's roll-out project, which sets the framework for our collaboration for the next four years, we have introduced diversity and inclusion as one of six transversal themes that will act as guiding principles for our collaboration in the future. The Diversity Council is ideally positioned to oversee the conceptualisation of an overarching Una Europa vision on diversity and inclusion as well as advise on the development of specific action plans to ensure embedding in Una Europa's core activities going forward. We will also develop a special **programme for service learning**, which will open up concrete opportunities for societal engagement and equip Una Europa students with future-proof civic competences based on European values.

Personally, I am very much looking forward to moving into the next phase of our alliance together and to build on the excellent work and achievements of the Diversity Council during the 1Europe project.



Prof. Peter Lievens  
Coordinator of the 1Europe Project

# Table of contents

<b>Executive summary</b> .....	3
Ana Laura Rodriguez Redondo & Mira Karjalainen	
<b>Foreword</b> .....	5
Peter Lievens	
<b>Introduction</b> .....	8
Mira Karjalainen & Timo Valtonen	
<b>Defining diversity</b> .....	10
Gabriele Rosenstreich	
<b>Strengthening diversity data</b> .....	13
Gabriele Rosenstreich, Kurt De Wit, Tom Bekers, Catherine Botoko, Aki Hagelin, Päivi Kuuppelomäki, Stella Strzemecka & Caroline Wallace	
<b>Foregrounding diversity in research and innovation</b> .....	20
Mira Karjalainen, Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Cristina Demaria & Catherine Botoko	
<b>Fostering a diverse and safer campus through equipping staff with diversity skills</b> .....	26
Ishimwe Marie-Aimée Ntawukulityayo, Joyce Koeman, Heidi Mertens & Ana Laura Rodriguez Redondo	
<b>Collecting good practices on diversity for the university of tomorrow</b> .....	33
Cristina Demaria, Marianne Blidon, Daniela Bolzani, Francesco Cattani & Michał Powszedniak	
<b>Students and diversity</b> .....	41
Affordably Abroad – Katrien Vanelven Una Europa Student Challenge – Una.Together – Stinne Vognæs & Sara Korjus	
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	46
Sarah Cunningham-Burley	
<b>Reflections on diversity</b> .....	50
Tom Böhling – Chair of the Diversity Council	

# Introduction

## Mira Karjalainen & Timo Valtonen

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Diversity is a key factor in creating an equal university alliance for all, which promotes equity and social justice. Diversity as a concept acknowledges the multidimensional differences between people that are structured by social categories. Diversity is understood to be a positive aspect of society that should be acknowledged, welcomed and fostered in order for all people to be able to fully participate in society. This requires existing inequity to be addressed (for a comprehensive definition of diversity, see the next chapter). Una Europa created its Diversity Council as a permanent body to assist Una Europa to achieve this goal. The Diversity Council has worked to embed diversity in all dimensions of Una Europa collaboration. The goal of the Diversity Council is to promote an equal and non-discriminating study- and work-related environment for all members of the Una community. With the close of the 1Europe project, which the Diversity Council is part of, this publication brings together the key findings and recommendations derived from the work of the Diversity Council that has been done so far (2020–2022) with eight partner universities.<sup>1</sup>

### The Diversity Council

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The Diversity Council consists of the partner universities' respective units responsible for issues on equality and diversity, and it is led by the University of Helsinki, with the University of Bologna as a co-lead. The core of its work is comprised by four Action Groups, which focus on data collection, research, education and good practices. The members of the Diversity Council have worked towards incorporating diversity in all Una Europa functions. The Diversity Council regularly reports on its progress to the Una Europa Board of Directors and the Rectors' Assembly. It invites the Student Board, the Affordably Abroad initiative and Una Europa Student Challenge on Diversity to present and discuss current topics in its meetings.

The goal of the Diversity Council is to promote equity and social justice, including all possible disadvantaged groups. This includes activities that are aimed for students, academic staff and professionals. The Una universities are committed to promoting equality and respect for diversity in their operations. The universities each have their own equality/diversity plans that guide this activity, including concrete measures to promote diversity. Sharing good practices, institutional action plans and expertise, as well as learning from each other, are central to Diversity Council work. Because the Una universities often share the same successes, challenges and structural problems, open discussion is vital for addressing those successfully. This reinforces the member universities' ongoing activities and creates new joint actions.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has also affected the operations of the Diversity Council, as its members only got an opportunity to meet face to face after two years of joint work. For the same reason, collaboration with different Una Europa bodies, such as of 1Europe and Una.Resin, have required creativity. The allocation of

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<sup>1</sup> Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna, Freie Universität Berlin, Helsingin yliopisto / Helsingfors universitet, KU Leuven, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, University of Edinburgh, and Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie.



resources is a constant and practical theme in all diversity work, and it has been no different with the Diversity Council. The resources have not been sufficient, considering the varied objectives and concrete measures expected of the Diversity Council. The demands on diversity work are growing with each passing year, as the different needs of different groups have to be heard and responded to. This work concerns university staff, students and stakeholders.

## Aims of the publication

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We aim this publication at other European universities attempting to achieve the same goals of diversity that Una Europa has worked towards. The Diversity Council publication brings together the key findings and recommendations derived from the Diversity Council's work on diversity across all Una Europa universities. The Diversity Council publication may be used to help each Una Europa university, Una Europa as a whole and other universities in Europe to create a more diverse university or university network. As a medium to share some of the results of the Diversity Council's work, it provides information for the European Commission on the work of Una Europa regarding diversity. The key goal is to reflect on and find ways in which Una Europa and other European universities can imbed diversity in their practices. Therefore, the publication seeks to disseminate what Una Europa has done in terms of bringing diversity work into Una Europa functions.

The Una Europa Diversity Council members have written this publication, comprising the work of four Action Groups on data collection, research, education and good practices. Each Action Group shares the knowledge gathered and produced during their work, including observations, findings, recommendations and next steps. 1) The Action Group on Data Collection looked at what kind of diversity data is currently being collected and how it can be ensured that Una Europa has the data it needs. 2) The Action Group on Research analysed Una Europa work on research strategy to find out how diversity could be best embedded in it. 3) The Action Group on Education focused on how Una Europa can jointly expand the knowledge base and awareness of staff and students on diversity. 4) The Action Group on Sharing Good Practices collected and reflected on the good practices of the Una Europa community, and how we can learn from each other. It has to be noted that these four focus areas do overlap at times. For example, education and research intertwine, and data collection is vital for human resource management on staff in education and research. In addition, good practices are found in all three areas.

Each Action Group section in this publication is structured by a set of overarching questions that bind the themes together. The sections reflect on how diversity is important to each theme and what the key issues on diversity are; how each theme was approached, what the identified barriers and enablers were, and how staff and students can be engaged; and finally, what the lessons learned were, and what recommendations and future steps to succeed in each theme were discovered. In their work, all four Action Groups aimed at helping the policy-building of the Una Europa alliance.

After this brief introduction, the concept of diversity is defined to provide a common understanding of what we mean by diversity in this context. After the above-mentioned sections on data collection, research strategy, education and good practices, the 2022 Student Challenge on Diversity is presented, followed by the Una Europa Affordably Abroad Initiative, both of which give a voice to the student body in Una Europa and its work on diversity. Finally, the conclusion brings together the key findings, lessons learned and next steps towards a diverse Una Europa that strives for equity and social justice.

# Defining diversity

Gabriele Rosenstreich

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‘Diversity’ has emerged as a pivotal concept in debates over the role and meaning of plurality and marginality, be they political or academic. In recent years, European universities have begun engaging with diversity not only as a subject of theory and research but also in relation to their own organisational and pedagogical practices. Diversity is increasingly a factor taken into account not only by potential staff and students in their choices, but also by funding bodies and regulators. So, what does diversity mean?<sup>2</sup>

Diversity is not an ‘objective’ term to describe a static reality but rather a contested conceptual framework that is both descriptive and programmatic. How diversity is defined is associated with the vision underlying it and has implications at a strategic, policy and operational level.

Common to all concepts of diversity is the acknowledgement that there are multidimensional differences between people structured by social categories, such as ‘race’/‘ethnicity’,<sup>3</sup> citizenship, migration status, religion, gender (including gender identity), age, class, (dis)ability and health status, sexual orientation, family/relationship status, etc. Individuals are positioned at the intersections of multiple social categories, as members of social groups created by and within them. Which categories are relevant, the meaning they are accorded and their impact depends on the given society, time and context as well as their specific intersections.<sup>4</sup>

‘Diversity’ not only describes the fact that differences exist but is also a programmatic term: it advocates for diversity as a positive aspect of society that should be acknowledged, welcomed and fostered so that all people are able to fully participate.

The vision or interests underlying diversity are socio-political. They are defined in anything from utilitarian (e.g. ‘Diversity Management’ approaches that aim to effectively manage difference to maximise the profitability of or benefit to organisations) to social justice or human rights terms (aiming to dismantle or at least reduce inequality and promote equity). The later approaches have recently begun to be termed ‘Critical Diversity’ and the definition and associated vision outlined here can be understood to fit within that discourse.

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2 This paper is based on G. Rosenstreich (2018) *Diversity*, [www.rosenstreich.net/en/home/diversity](http://www.rosenstreich.net/en/home/diversity) and (2007) *The Mathematics of Diversity Training: Multiplying Identities, Adding Categories and Intersecting Discrimination*. In A. Broden & P. Mecheril (Eds.), *Re-Präsentationen: Dynamiken der Migrationsgesellschaft* (pp. 131–159). IDA-NRW.

3 ‘Race’ and ‘ethnicity’, like other social categories, are social constructs. These intertwined terms refer to racialised identities (processes of attributing racial meaning to people’s identity, embedded in a hierarchical framework), to ideas of shared cultural, biological and historical belonging and/or to categorisations of skin colour and other physical attributes. There is no scientific basis for defining groups of people in terms of race or ethnicity beyond the social practice in which the groups are constructed. At the same time, these categories structure society (hierarchically) and, in terms of their impact, exist as real-world phenomena.

4 Of particular significance for European discourse on diversity were the four directives on equal treatment adopted by the Council of the European Union between 2000 and 2004, which were incorporated into the national law of each member state. They referred to discrimination on the grounds of racism/ethnic origin (Directive 2000/43/EC), religion/belief, disability, age, sexual orientation (Directive 2000/78/EC) and gender (Directive 2002/73/EC). These six categories therefore form the basis of not only most antidiscrimination legislation but also diversity policies and practices among members of the European Union. Social status/class and family status or caregiving responsibilities are known to also play a particularly significant role in relation to access to higher education and employment, and have thus received specific attention in many universities.

As used here, the concept of diversity acknowledges that social categories are constructs that interlock with complex, intersecting societal and organisational power relations and inequality. This means that some social groups experience individual and structural discrimination and thus face barriers to accessing societal resources (including education and social status). People may even directly experience violence and/or the threat of violence related to their membership of a minoritised group. They are unable to participate as fully and actively in society as more privileged groups.

English-speaking organisations have increasingly adopted the terminology ‘Diversity, Equity and Inclusion’ (DEI) or ‘Diversity and Inclusion’ (DI) to describe programmes that strive to dismantle systemic barriers to participation in the workplace. The use of these terms reflects an understanding of three interlocking core elements:

- + Diversity: As outlined above, diversity is both the descriptive acknowledgement of differences structured by social categories and the programmatic advocacy for those differences to be actively valued and promoted.
- + Equity: Providing fair access to opportunities, resources and ultimately power. The distinction to equality is significant:<sup>5</sup> equality refers to sameness, for example, providing all people with the same resources or opportunities. The result can, however, be unfair given that needs differ. Equity, on the other hand, aims to address diverse needs by providing differing resources and opportunities to enable full participation at all levels. Implicit is the need to dismantle systemic barriers to access and thus the vision of social justice.
- + Inclusion: Generally understood to refer to a sense of belonging, an environment in which all individuals are visible and feel valued and connected. Importantly, however, inclusion also incorporates the idea of active participation, that is, having agency within the organisation. Enabling inclusion is the collective responsibility of both individuals and the organisation and relies on the acknowledgement of privilege.

In non-English speaking European discourse, however, and frequently in English-language discourse too, all three aspects are generally understood to be an integral part of the concept referred to when using the English term ‘diversity’. In fact, the terms ‘equity’ and ‘inclusion’ can be difficult to translate or can carry their own specific connotations within the discourses in different countries.<sup>6</sup>

The emphasis placed on antidiscrimination varies according to the model of diversity. It is argued here that it is inherent in the concept of diversity, given that antidiscrimination is the act of reducing barriers to equitable participation at both an individual level and a systemic level (organisational and institutional).

Diversity is a fundamentally horizontal and intersectional approach that considers all social categories and forms of discrimination and addresses practices and structures of inclusion and exclusion rather than putting particular identities in the forefront. Focusing on specific groups or categories implies on the one hand that people are members of only that one group (whereas they in fact have multidimensional identities, associated with both privileges and disadvantage), and, on the other hand, it risks reproducing stereotypes and power imbalances. At the same time, not naming marginalised groups can make them, their needs and actual disparity invisible, and invisibility contributes to exclusion. Targeted approaches are thus sometimes required

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5 UK discourse in particular has drawn on the term ‘equality’. For example, the Equality Act 2010 replaced a range of individual laws that protected specific groups from discrimination. In many other countries, such legislation would be described as ‘antidiscrimination legislation’ or similarly.

6 It should be noted that while the discourses of diversity are not strictly delineated according to national borders – indeed, a significance point of reference in Europe are concepts developed in the USA – the respective languages, legislative frameworks, academic traditions, social movements, social history, etc. influence both the discourse around difference and how institutions such as universities engage with it. For example, German lacks a specific term for ‘equity’ and in general it is translated as ‘Gleichheit’, meaning ‘equality’, and the term ‘Inklusion’ is firmly located in the discourse around disability specifically. The terminology ‘Diversity’, ‘Diversity und Antidiskriminierung’ (Diversity and Antidiscrimination) or ‘Diversity und Gleichstellung’ (Diversity and Gender Equity/Equality) is currently most common in German discourse and ‘D&I’ or ‘DEI’ terminology is generally only found where US or UK models are being drawn on.

in order to amplify marginalised voices, to identify and address specific needs and to provide spaces to support empowerment. Working in the field of diversity requires critical self-reflection of this tension between a horizontal and a targeted approach.

Diversity is also associated with numerous other challenges. For example, universities do not exist in isolation from the rest of society. As much as they strive to be meritocratic, the very definition of merit is the product of multidimensional, intersecting societal power relations. Social inequity is reflected in the structures, the epistemology, and the everyday practices of higher education institutions as well as in the biases, privileges, stresses and vulnerabilities of their members. This impacts access to higher education and employment within it, experiences within the institution for those who have been able to gain entry, what is valued as knowledge/science and the interface of the university with the rest of society. A diversity approach therefore requires both the recognition of differences and vigilance for the power relations associated with them. These relations are dynamic and contextual, and individuals are rarely completely powerless or completely privileged because they are members of numerous social groups simultaneously. For example, while the 'leaky pipeline' continues to result in women being underrepresented among professors in most disciplines, those women who do manage to succeed in this career path appear to be disproportionately white and middle- or upper-class.

Diversity is thus relatively simple as a concept, yet complex in its practice.

The Diversity Council of Una Europa has committed to the understanding of diversity outlined here as its overarching conceptual framework and guiding vision. Thus, 'diversity', as used by the Council, encompasses equity and inclusion. The Diversity Council also acknowledges that individual universities and stakeholders may use the term 'diversity' differently and may draw on other terminology to describe both the theory and practice of engaging with difference. This reflects a discourse that is dynamic, inconsistent and contested, even within single institutions and certainly across countries. As such, it is essential to critically reflect on what is respectively meant by the terms used in a given context.

# Strengthening diversity data

Gabriele Rosenstreich, Kurt De Wit,  
Tom Bekers, Catherine Botoko, Aki Hagelin,  
Päivi Kuuppelomäki, Stella Strzemecka &  
Caroline Wallace

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Most universities engage with diversity in some way and have their own ways of collecting data in relation to it. But it is seldom evident to those outside each university (and sometimes to those within it) what is actually being done, let alone how this practice compares with other universities and the extent to which it could be considered *good practice*.<sup>7</sup>

The Una Europa Diversity Council established an Action Group on Data Collection to explore the practices of its member universities with regard to gathering and analysing quantitative data on diversity. In particular, it aimed to:

- + identify issues in relation to collecting diversity data;
- + provide an overview of the indicators currently used in the member universities;
- + assess practices (and share some examples of good practices);
- + formulate recommendations that could improve practices within the Una Europa universities, or indeed in higher education institutions in general.

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<sup>7</sup> This paper is a summary excerpt from the Action Group's comprehensive stand-alone report (Rosenstreich et al. 2022). Correspondence in relation to the paper or the Action Group's work can be addressed to [diversity@fu-berlin.de](mailto:diversity@fu-berlin.de).

Seven member universities of Una Europa contributed to the work of the Action Group:

Freie Universität Berlin

Germany, represented by Gabriele Rosenstreich (AG Lead)

KU Leuven

Belgium, represented by Kurt De Wit (AG Co-Lead) and Tom Bekers

Helsingin yliopisto / Helsingfors universitet

Finland, represented by Aki Hagelin and Päivi Kuuppelomäki

University of Edinburgh

United Kingdom, represented by Caroline Wallace

Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie

Poland, represented by Stella Strzemecka

Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

France, represented by Catherine Botoko

Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna

Italy, represented by Azzurra Meoli.

The Action Group members mapped their universities' data collection practices related to numerous categories of diversity (focusing on quantitative administrative data) and explored some of the many issues that came to light in the process.

Diversity data collection is an evolving field, to which the Action Group is contributing by sharing its findings and thinking with other stakeholders in a comprehensive final report (Rosenstreich et al. 2022 ). The current paper provides just a brief snapshot of the key findings and recommendations that the Action Group derived from its reflections. It lays no claims about providing firm conclusions about how to address the many issues identified, but rather it aims to provide some food for thought to others also engaging with diversity data collection so that we may together strengthen this field.

## Good practice

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The core criteria of good practice is that it is fit for purpose. In the case of diversity practice, that includes taking diversity into account, in all its complexity, and contributing to the achievement of diversity goals such as equity. In the case of diversity data collection specifically, the core of good practice is providing the evidence base required to identify and/or address needs related to diversity and doing so in a way that adheres to basic principles of diversity work, such as inclusion and equity. This evidence base should enable the robust planning, evaluation and monitoring of diversity measures in a wide range of fields. Good practice also adheres to broader ethical and methodological quality criteria for data collection more generally, including protection of privacy, robust statistical analysis and representative samples (e.g. taking diversity into account when considering representation).

Key Findings	Recommendations
<p>The focus in most universities is on fulfilling external reporting requirements rather than monitoring and promoting equity, and it is often not clear how data collected is actually used to support policy development and practice within the university.</p> <p>There are gaps in data collection in some areas known to have significant impact in higher education (e.g. racism, impact of class, gender identity).</p> <p>Often the data that is gathered is at best collated, with little analysis in relation to the diversity goals of the organisation.</p>	<p>Use 'why' rather than 'what' as a starting point: ensure that purpose drives data collection and is clearly defined at the outset. When making decisions, critically reflect on the reasons behind (not) gathering data together with other stakeholders and ensure that the data gathered is fit for purpose.</p>
	<p>Determine the way in which data will be used and made accessible as part of the planning phase.</p>
	<p>Place the purpose of reducing discrimination and promoting equity at the forefront of data collection (for example, gaining information to identify needs and to inform the response to these needs).</p>
	<p>Where possible, collect data in a 'design for all'/mainstreaming logic, rather than focusing on categories of people as target groups.</p>
<p>Each university operates in a very specific context (e.g. legislation, public discourse, education system, data management, organisational culture) and conceptualises diversity issues differently. This limits comparability of data and the opportunities to adopt good practices from other universities.</p>	<p>Supplement the data required by external regulatory frameworks with needs-driven data collection. In some cases, an interface can translate internal data into the form required to meet external reporting requirements.</p>
	<p>Treat any comparison of data with the utmost caution.</p> <p>When reporting on diversity data collection, provide extensive and explicit notes on definitions, contextual factors and methodological decisions. This enables assessment of comparability and robust consideration of potential transferability of practice.</p>

Key Findings	Recommendations
<p>There is a lack of knowledge on what privacy and data protection entail and how they can be operationalised. This often leads to data simply not being collected due to 'data protection' concerns.</p>	<p>Use the guidance offered by the legal data protection framework to develop clear, accessible internal guidelines and a strict policy that defines quality criteria and requirements to ensure that all personal data is collected, processed, stored and reported in a way that protects the privacy of individuals. Unless there is a justified need to link the data to individuals, gather data anonymously or, where that is not possible, anonymise it.</p>
	<p>Provide clear information from the outset about the privacy policy, the purpose of the data collection and how the data will be used.</p>
	<p>Limit access to personal data on a transparent need-to know basis (with a signed confidentiality declaration).</p>
	<p>Consistently and proactively inform individuals about how to access all personal data collected on them, how long data will be stored (as per data protection regulations), and how they can make changes as required.</p>
<p>The universities vary enormously in their approach to collecting, analysing and using diversity data. There is seldom a specific policy on diversity data, demographic data or dealing with sensitive data more generally (beyond general data protection policies).</p>	<p>Develop a strategic policy on data for the university as a whole that provides direction based on accepted good practices and the university's own strategic goals, including those related to diversity. Include guidance on what data should be prioritised and what it will be used for (e.g. which diversity categories and the areas of focus), principles and standards (e.g. definition of purpose, data protection/privacy), the instruments/methods used to gather data (e.g. consistent definitions across the university), how often data should be gathered and to whom it should be accessible and how.</p>
	<p>Acknowledge and proactively communicate the limitations and potential for error, and take a pragmatic approach in combination with a continuous learning approach (reflecting on and improving practice).</p>
<p>Both administrative and survey data almost always focus exclusively on singular identity indicators (measuring representation of members of defined social groups within the university), with little data gathered on experiences (e.g. of inclusion or discrimination) or on multidimensional/intersectional identities.</p>	<p>Monitor the experiences of university members and relate them to their membership of minoritised groups. For example, conduct regular surveys on how respondents experience the organisational environment.</p>
	<p>Formulate survey items/questions on the basis of currently accepted good practices, including acceptance by the target group. Where possible, use them consistently across time to maximise comparability, unless they are misaligned with current best practices, in which case revision should be considered.</p>
	<p>Conduct multivariate analysis where possible to provide insights into intersectional identities and experiences.</p>



Key Findings	Recommendations
<p>Indicators are a mix of self-identification (i.e. the person determining their own identity) and other external criteria such as legal status or official assessments. The two do not always align. For example, a person's own understanding of whether they have a disability may differ from whether they meet defined legal thresholds.</p>	<p>Where possible, enable respondents to determine for themselves how they relate to diversity categories (self-identify). Take a flexible approach that puts the purpose of the data collection at the forefront, recognises that there are sometimes discrepancies between documents and lived experience, and makes it transparent to respondents exactly how indicators are being defined.</p>
<p>The definitions used for indicators and values are not always clear, increasing both potential variance in respondents' interpretations and barriers to the robust interpretation (and utilisation) of findings.</p>	<p>Formulate items so that they are easily comprehensible to the target group (both questions and response options), including descriptions to explain key terms.</p> <p>Include comprehensive notes in all reporting, with clear definitions of the indicators and values used and any caveats relating to the findings.</p>
<p>There are significantly different practices in relation to the publication of data, and when it is made available, it is seldom communicated in an accessible way.</p>	<p>Make the results of data collection available to those from whom it has been collected and to those who can derive practice implications from it. If that is not possible, at least communicate transparently why the data is not available.</p> <p>Communicate data communicated in a way that is accessible and that the subjects can understand.</p>
<p>Data collection is generally carried out by practitioners with either expertise on diversity issues or expertise in data analysis, seldom both.</p>	<p>Build dedicated and qualified staff capacity for diversity data collection, analysis and reporting, combining expertise in both data analysis and diversity policy. Address gaps in expertise (e.g. by staff development or buying external expertise).</p> <p>If responsibility lies in separate units, foster systematic collaboration between them.</p>
<p>Similar data is often collected in different contexts and by using different instruments.</p>	<p>Adhere to the principle of data minimisation. For example, record personal data once and make it accessible where it is required so that people do not need to tell their stories repeatedly.</p>
<p>There is little linkage between administrative and survey data.</p>	<p>Triangulate different instruments and methods, in particular in relation to sensitive data.</p>
<p>There is often significant variance between data collected for the different populations within the university. Often different indicators are used for staff and student data.</p>	<p>Consider the needs of the university community as a whole (staff and students).</p> <p>While there might be different data needed for the different groups, if data is being gathered on the same category of diversity, use consistent indicators where possible, based on accepted best practices at the time (multiple indicators where necessary).</p>

## Reflective questions to guide data collection

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Derived from these recommendations, consideration of the following questions can assist in the development and implementation of robust and useful diversity data collection:

1. Why do we intend to collect this data? (purpose) What exactly are the policy needs we seek to address and how would data help us to do that? In whose interests is the data being collected? How will it contribute to the goals of the university in relation to diversity?
2. Do we have the right to collect this data? Legally? Ethically?
3. Do we have an ethical responsibility to collect this data?
4. How will members of minoritised groups/target groups participate in the definition of purpose, the development of instruments, the implementation and the analysis, the interpretation and the reporting of findings?
5. Is the data fit for purpose? (see Question 1)
6. What will be done with the data? Who will have access to it and why? How exactly will it be used? How will findings be made available to stakeholders, including the respondents?
7. How is data privacy being addressed? How is this communicated to (potential) respondents?
8. How does this data link to other data already being collected? (Within our own organisation, external/official reference data.) Are the definitions and questions comparable? If not, why not?
9. How are the indicators being defined? Does this reflect current understandings of good practice? How does it relate to understandings within minoritised groups and to the conceptual framework of the university in relation to diversity?
10. Are the questions being asked/the forms formulated in a way that is clearly understandable for all respondents and unambiguous? Does the terminology reflect the language used by the respondents themselves? Is the language used in the instrument as a whole non-discriminatory?
11. Is the instrument being used accessible to all members of the target group? Which groups may face barriers (e.g. language, technology, distrust) and how will those barriers be addressed?
12. How will the data collection process be evaluated? What understanding of quality underlies that evaluation? How will the target groups be involved? How will the learning derived be incorporated into future data-collection planning processes?

## Conclusion

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Data collection is not an end in itself but rather a means to an end. The Action Group calls on universities and researchers to take a deliberate and reflective approach when engaging with diversity data to ensure that it is fit for purpose and all people benefit from policies, activities and research, whether they are developed under the label of 'diversity' or not. Our findings and recommendations are neither final nor exhaustive. By grappling with numerous issues as we formulate data needs or develop research questions, design instruments and methodologies, analyse data, and report and use the results, we can continuously improve quality, deliver ever more rigorous findings and strengthen the evidence base that supports us to achieve our vision of diversity.

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# Foregrounding diversity in research and innovation

Mira Karjalainen, Sarah Cunningham-Burley,  
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Mainstreaming a progressive approach to diversity to be broadly understood and embracing the related concepts of equity and inclusion is key to the success of the Una Europa vision for research and innovation. It has been well established that research and innovation are enhanced through diversity within teams. We will do better, more creative and more collaborative work within and across disciplines and sectors if we educate, train, recruit and support an inclusive environment. Una Europa's values-led, core-principles approach provides the foundation for the cultural and behavioural shifts required for an inclusive, equitable and diverse research and innovation landscape. Yet, structural barriers persist that prevent or slow progress towards truly inclusive, accessible research and innovation. Una Europa provides an exceptional opportunity to work together to identify and dismantle such structural impediments. This is accomplished through generating a research and innovation ecosystem that places diversity as an essential prerequisite for success – success not only for research staff (teacher-researchers, researchers, doctoral students and the range of professional services and administrative staff) as they pursue their careers but also for the overall mission of creating knowledge that is transformative, challenging and impactful.

Diversity will not take care of itself, despite a values-led commitment to and recognition of the importance of inclusion, because of the complex institutional and societal power relationships that continue to shape inequality and inequity. Diversity must be a strategic priority, part of the roadmap of institution-building and thematic priorities. This requires the creation of strategic instruments, including dedicated institutional policies, to mainstream diversity as well as to target specific priority areas where evidence and experience demonstrate significant diversity-related gaps in our research and innovation landscape. This is why, beyond the actions aimed at taking diversity into account in all Una Europa programmes, a dedicated diversity strategy, specific to research, with specific and targeted actions, must be embedded within, not just alongside, an overall research and innovation strategy.

## The Action Group on Research – our approach

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The Action Group on Research analysed four Una Europa documents that are building a shared research strategy, in order to identify how diversity is being understood and implemented in research and to identify gaps and opportunities for deepening commitment and engagement. Three documents were produced by the Una.Resin Project, the goal of which is to build a common research strategy for Una Europa. The fourth document was the Una Europa 2030 Strategy, which has a section on research (strategy):

1. Benchmarking R&I Strategies and Priorities for a Joint Una Europa Strategy
2. Mapping RIRs (Research Infrastructures and Resources) and priorities for joint strategy
3. Mapping HR Strategies and priorities for joint strategy
4. The draft for Una Europa 2030 Strategy

Our approach to analysing the documents was to ask the following questions:

- + How is diversity articulated in the documents?
- + Is diversity embedded in the documents as a strategic and operational priority?
- + What suggestions and recommendations are made that would support diversity?
- + What significant gaps exist that hinder mainstreaming diversity in Una Europa's research strategy and practices?

After collectively reviewing the documents, we identified key recommendations that will support foregrounding diversity at all levels of the research environment and infrastructure and could help in assessing the diversity impacts of the proposals.

## Una Europa Strategy 2030 draft

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As noted above, the values-led approach provides a principled commitment to diversity, even if this is not directly stated. The strategy outlines six institutional priorities, although promoting diversity is not one of them. The closest priority is building a strong community, but this does not centre around the core requirements of our diversity agenda, namely, equity and inclusion. In a similar way, the thematic priorities do not mention diversity. On the one hand, this may support mainstreaming, with promoting diversity being an inherent part of each theme. On the other hand, diversity may slip off the agenda and opportunities for progressive action may be missed. The core principles mention diversity and inclusivity, but adopting the Diversity Council's broad definition of diversity would strengthen these commitments. This could include promoting equity, thus foregrounding the importance of fairness and the impact of power relations in perpetuating inequity, inequality and discrimination. This would demonstrate a responsibility to address diverse needs by providing differing resources and opportunities to enable full participation, at all levels, in research and innovation.

## Benchmarking R&I Strategic Priorities for a Joint Una Europa Strategy

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This document states a commitment to inclusivity and the need to develop work culture and professional development. The one short paragraph on diversity reinforces that commitment, noting that the Una Europa strategy should not replicate or reinforce existing career structures that harm diversity. The overarching emphasis on supporting early career researchers (who may not necessarily be young, it should be noted), is to be welcomed in terms of developing a supportive career structure.

The data and consultations informing this report did not detail how diversity is threaded through research strategy. However, overarching institutional strategies frequently prioritise societal health and well-being and also link to sustainable development goals. This suggests that what is being researched itself contributes to more equal societies within which all people can flourish. The emphasis on bottom-up developments in research could be a mechanism for inclusion but also for exclusion. Biases operate at every level and without institutional and strategic interventions, and Una Europa institutions may fail to realise their diversity commitments by not intervening effectively in promoting truly inclusive bottom-up approaches. Such approaches have the potential for increasing diversity and equity – if barriers can be overcome. They can attend to everyday experience and culture, and engage diverse staff in creating solutions.

The commitments to interdisciplinarity and to engaging beyond the academy with citizens and non-academic organisations could be effective pathways to diversity, but only if commitments are enacted through equitable practices and supported by evidence-based interventions. Research on research (evaluating policy and practice) is one way to ensure that Una Europa develops the evidence base required to meet its overarching research and innovation mission and objectives with diversity at their heart.

## Una.Resin Mapping HR strategies and priorities for joint strategy

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People are central to the research and innovation landscape, along with a range of infrastructural resources. HR strategies are thus key to developing a diverse and inclusive workforce where individuals and research can flourish. Diversity is a key strand in the work of the Strengthening Human Capital work package of Una.Resin. The findings obtained from different methods (quantitative, qualitative and textual) demonstrate some high-level commitments to diversity. The focus tends to be on behaviour and attitudes (described as unwelcome but probably often experienced as bullying and harassment) and on supporting and enabling disabled staff. There is a variety of training to promote equality and prevent discrimination and some evidence of an embedded, strategic approach to diversity in HR and institutional strategy and frameworks, as well as specific interventions for some categories of staff. A combined approach of prevention (promoting diversity through holistic and institutional approaches) and protection (ending discrimination and harassment) will help create the kind of research and innovation landscape Una Europa seeks, while attending to the pressing issues of current harms within our cultures, behaviours and structures.

There is recognition of the need to promote more flexible career pathways and to adopt good practices, such as the use of narrative CVs or promoting mentoring. There is implicit understanding of the need to avoid narrow definitions of excellence. While there is a significant focus on early career researchers, there is also an awareness of the need to support staff across the whole researcher life course.

Survey evidence particularly points to the need for better internal communications, as survey participants seemed unaware of types of institutional support and activity for strengthening diversity. The experience of individuals depends very much on local practices and the teams within which they are placed. As noted in the previous section, a challenge remains to link individual, cultural and institutional practices in a way that ensures diversity is promoted at each level. While equality and diversity featured in this work, it was still not thoroughly

embedded in all the dimensions of human capital strategy, which a fully holistic and mainstreamed approach would demand if it is to promote equity. It is worth noting that diversity and related concepts were not obvious in any of the mind maps reporting on the interview data.

Developing richly supported and flexible career pathways for all staff involved in research is essential for an outstanding research and innovation ecosystem. Such a system actively enables diversity, is accessible to those who may be excluded and disadvantaged, and is inclusive of difference. Diversity should be promoted and celebrated; its lack should be called out at all levels of institutional practice.

## Mapping Research Infrastructures and Resources (RIRs) and priorities for joint strategy

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Alongside human capital, research infrastructures and resources are essential enablers of research and innovation. Promoting diversity through RIRs should therefore be a key strategic aim. This detailed document begins to lay the groundwork for such an approach but does so implicitly, not explicitly. There is no discussion of diversity, other than as a descriptor of the plethora of RIRs; in other words, diversity as a recognition of the differences between people and how these are socially constructed through ongoing power dynamics does not make an appearance in this important document. This is perhaps because the focus is on infrastructure, yet it is a missed opportunity as infrastructures enable – and thus contribute to – an equitable, accessible, inclusive research and innovation ecosystem.

There is much in the strategy that will support diversity, most importantly the emphasis on interconnecting RIRs, whether they are small, medium or large. There is recognition of the importance of local embeddedness and local connections as well as the added value of interconnections and the opportunities they may bring for researchers. This emphasis on ensuring the inclusion of smaller-scale infrastructures is fundamentally inclusive; it can engender wider and more diverse engagement (e.g. with local communities), be more accessible, and prioritise research areas relevant to local context. The proposed Charter for Research Infrastructures should attempt to make visible the way in which RIRs can support Una Europa's overall commitment to diversity: sharing, opening up access and providing researchers at all career stages, but especially during their early career, with access to resources can help promote an equitable research environment.

## Conclusions

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The Diversity Council definition of diversity encompasses equity and inclusion. There is limited discussion of all of the dimensions of diversity in the documents reviewed, although there is an overarching commitment to it and some identified policies and interventions, particularly in relation to HR. There is little or no attempt to embed a strategic approach to promoting diversity within the research strategies either at individual institutions or within Una Europa. There is a reliance on unarticulated aspirations that the infrastructures and priorities being developed will themselves support diversity. While they may well do so, a strategic approach would map those pathways and evaluate the evidence to identify good practice, barriers, enablers and what works.

Commitments and intentions are an excellent starting point. We now need to develop the frameworks and tools to move to the next level. This could be transformative in centring diversity as both a key enabler of excellent research and a key outcome of an inclusive and equitable research culture and environment.

# Recommendations

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The following themes and possible areas of interventions were identified in the analysis of the four Una Europa research strategy documents. The recommendations are grouped under four themes.

## **Governance**

- + Build diversity into governance and make it an institutional priority
- + Make governance structures diverse and drivers of diversity – the Diversity Council should be the main enabler for this process but governance for diversity must permeate all processes
- + Adopt the concept of diversity provided by the Diversity Council and embed it in all functions, projects and programmes
- + Involve diversity professionals in developing projects, programmes and initiatives

## **Management & HR**

- + Develop inclusive leadership and management criteria and practices
- + Build and support inclusive teams
- + Promote diversity in recruitment, including proactive interventions
- + Develop and evaluate training actions (for staff) to embed diversity
- + Share best practices for improving diversity

## **Community, culture and careers**

- + Build inclusive communities across the research and innovation landscape which embrace difference, promote equity and end discrimination
- + Develop bottom-up initiatives to promote a positive research culture including, for example, mentoring and peer support
- + Identify under-representation at all levels and address it
- + Involve minoritised groups in developing strategies
- + Develop internal and external communication of policies and initiatives to promote awareness and engagement
- + Promote research and data collection in order to identify the cultural, behavioural and structural barriers to diversity in research communities and cultures to ensure everyone has equal opportunities and access to a successful career
- + Ensure that research funding supports diversity
- + Promote diversity in research design and practice
- + Use interventions across Una Europa to promote diversity, for example, through mobility of researchers and accessible resources, online platforms to connect people and groups/cohorts for support, engagement and action



## Evaluation

- + Develop strategic and operational equality impact assessments for each policy/strategy
- + Ensure that routine data collection to generate needed information is available to inform strategy
- + Follow up on progress against established performance indicators
- + Develop tools to assess how diversity is mainstreamed in research and innovation strategy

Lastly, the Diversity Council Action Group on Research encourages Una Europa to take two main types of action as a matter of priority:

1. **Take into account the progressive definition of diversity in all its dimensions**, as outlined in the chapter 'Defining diversity'. This should involve linking the Diversity Council Action Group on Research with the overall research strategy work of Una Europa so that diversity is embedded in all research and innovation strategy work.
2. **Develop a specific set of actions** linked to the overall research and innovation strategy to enable the mainstreaming of diversity and to create evidence-based, targeted actions to promote diversity, including for all staff involved in the research and innovation ecosystem.

# Fostering a diverse and safer campus through equipping staff with diversity skills

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Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have been developing educational programs on diversity as one of the main tools to create a more inclusive and safer campus environment (Eurydice Rapport 2022; Claeys-Kulik et al. 2019; Campbell 2021).

The Action Group on Education (AG) was commissioned to guide the diversity Council of Una Europa on how to start building a fertile ground for staff and students to be ready and willing to join the journey towards a diverse campus environment. In light of this, the AG was tasked to conceptualise a massive open online course (MOOC) on diversity for staff and students. Hence, we worked on a document developing a shared vision on what learning objectives (or diversity skills) are relevant and how these are currently defined and operationalised in educational resources across HEIs in Europe. For this we reviewed both academic literature and practices as well as existing education training materials. The [TICKET](#) project, which focuses on the development of intercultural competences among academic and service staff, is taken as an example to envisage what the development of a future MOOC on diversity for staff and students can entail. Given the importance of structural change in diversity work, we decided to first start with staff members as a primary target group, as the AG does want to replicate existing initiatives or training materials targeting students. Moreover, we consider staff development key to protect both students and staff from a structurally inequitable education system (HEPI Report 120, 2019).

To create a shared vision and an action plan, the AG has worked on:

- + Evaluating the strengths, opportunities, results and aspirations of the Diversity Council
- + Identifying diversity definitions and diversity competences to build an inclusive campus
- + Discussing good practices among our working group university members
- + Evaluating ways to embed the TICKET project into the Action Group's final educational material proposal
- + Creating a framework for the next steps and recommendations to strengthen energies among Una Europa partners to reinforce their diversity commitment to an inclusive campus

## Developing a shared vision: Defining key concepts

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The AG members conducted a Strengths Opportunities Aspirations and Results (SOAR, **see Annex Figure 1**) exercise to create a shared vision for the group as well as a Funnel Exercise to review and select the most relevant EU values (regarding [Gender Equality](#)), [LGBTQI strategy](#) and [Anti-racism action](#). In doing so, we clarified the definitions and assumptions that underpin our shared vision and goals within Una Europa. These exercises disclosed the fact that Una Europa alliance university members attach various meanings to diversity, which may confuse shared goals and actions. Therefore, a given shared approach was needed and it was found in the definition of the Diversity Council (see the chapter 'Defining diversity' in this volume), as it unites concepts of equity, diversity and inclusion. The AG recommends this definition when developing educational resources, supporting diversity knowledge and awareness and developing diversity competences in HEIs, such as intercultural competences. In addition, the outcomes of the SOAR and Funnel Exercise supported the need to narrow the scope of the target. Thus, the AG suggests that the Diversity Council invest in the development of educational resources that support (faculty and administrative) staff in developing their diversity competences at different levels (**see Figure 2**) and hence drive diversity on campus instead of making this a responsibility of students or staff alone.

**Diversity**

- Recognizing the intersectional diversity we already have within our own universities (“intersectional diversity at home”)
- How to reach academic goals in a context of equality and equity
- Strive for equity

**Deconstruct stereotypes and combat stigmas**

**Prevent discrimination**

- Build safe environments
- Identity-threats
- Bystander
- Tolerance

**Figure 2:** Recommended elements of diversity education resources / diversity competence training

## Developing diversity competences: Review of TICKET resources

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One popular approach used by HEIs over the last decades has been to equip staff and students with intercultural competences (IC). To build a fertile ground for staff and/or students to be ready and willing to create a diverse campus environment, one recent project to look into is the [TICKET](#) project.

The TICKET project's objective is to equip professional and faculty staff with IC to better welcome and support diverse groups of students on campus. To support the Una Europa Diversity Council's aim to equip staff and students with diversity competences, the AG scrutinised its intellectual outputs (e.g. the open source modular program, the staff training tool kit) as well as the project development (e.g. the process, tasks and collaboration) to build our recommendations for a preliminary MOOC on diversity in the main lessons learned within the TICKET consortium and its Community of Practice.

The TICKET modular program aims to raise awareness of IC in practice, and the AG believes that it can be one of the first steps in building a diverse campus environment. Hence, the full content of the modules (**see Annex Figure 3**) was reviewed to evaluate which ones would best fit the goal of developing (wider) diversity skills for staff members within Una Europa (i.e. resonating with our previously defined values and emphasis on equity, diversity and inclusion). We recommend the embedding and further development of some modules, as highlighted below:

- + Module 1: Supports staff with managing the expectation that students and staff have before, during and after international exchanges in a) equipping them with intercultural competences and how to deal with mental health, and b) highlighting the importance of IC for the job market. However, we would suggest diving into more depth on affordability abroad, incoming mobility, and the opportunities and challenges for students with refugee status (for other references, please see the chapter 'Students and diversity' in this volume).
- + Module 2: Addresses a) cross-cultural communications, b) awareness of diversity and how to build inclusive communities.
- + Module 4: Helps in thinking and designing strategies to create an inclusive and welcoming campus environment and study experience for minoritised students (in this exemplary case, the realities of people with disabilities). However, we would encourage a more intersectional approach and revise the material to embed the material in Una's educational material.
- + Module 5: Highlights particular diversity skills reinforcing diversity and IC skills such as a) unconscious bias, b) bystander training, c) [TOPOI](#) with communication, d) inclusive language, and e) mindfulness. Nonetheless, when implementing unconscious bias trainings, we would be inviting professionals to think about the idea of compulsory training and the importance of having multiple trainings to increase effectiveness (Atewologun et al., 2018; Bhopal, 2022; HEPI Report 106, 2018) and create a long-lasting impact.
- + Modules 6–8 (the theme of the internationalisation of the curriculum): we recommend working with experts on questions of diversity and curriculum design to provide a more intersectional and decolonial approach in our education.
- + Module 9: Touches on questions of HEIs and how they can become a place of inclusion, paying attention to dynamics of power.

After reviewing the modules of the TICKET training program, we suggest not reinventing the wheel and instead starting with the modules of the TICKET training program in designing the MOOC on diversity for staff, as the AG has been commissioned to do.

## Barriers and enablers

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During our review we also identified key enablers and barriers. On the one hand, the benefits of working in the Una Europa consortium gives us a head start with access to a) a myriad of training material, b) diversity definitions and c) existing good practices from partner universities. On the other hand, the lack of clarity on funding and the specific mandate of the Diversity Council challenges the initiatives the AG may take. A possible solution may be found in further clarification on funding from partner universities and/or the possibilities for additional funding to develop and implement action plans in both the short and long term.

After developing a shared vision on definitions, identifying diversity skills and reviewing education trainings material in HEIs in Europe, academic references and current practices (such as the TICKET project), we identified six important next steps to equip staff with resources and skills that foster diversity on campus.

## Recommendations and next steps

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1. **Recognition of the intersectional diversity we already have within our universities:** the lived experiences and expertise of minoritised groups in Europe can be the basis for building a more welcoming and diverse university campus (Nousgroup, 2020).
2. **Working with a diverse group from the start of the educational material:** it is essential to include the target groups we have in mind from the beginning of the process.
3. We advise developing a **mapping** exercise to identify all the **diversity trainings/education materials** in our Una Europa alliance, evaluating the effectiveness trainings for change at a systematic vs individual level (Devine & Ash, 2022). It is also an opportunity to **identify alliance experts** to co-develop a MOOC on diversity.
4. We recommend **clarifying the Diversity Council's role** to strengthen our collaboration with Una's work packages and probe whether the AG work may support achieving their goals.
5. We advise using an **intersectional approach** in the theories and practices that action groups chose (LERU Position Paper, 2019) and move away from using the concept as a buzzword by anchoring it in its historical foundations (Collins et al., 2021; Bhopal, 2020; Harris & Patton, 2019).
6. We advise **organising a conference** as a committed project to discuss the limitations and opportunities of diversity in HEIs in the Una Europa alliance and to show the work and relevance of the Diversity Council. This would create avenues of expertise collaboration within Una Europa working groups.

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# Annex

Figure 1: Results of the SOAR exercise

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversity is a paramount value for the UNA 2030 ;</li><li>• Diversity expertise ;</li><li>• A broad definition of diversity allows us to work with the existing diversity and put intersectionality into practice ;</li><li>• Founding shared interests/intentions for collaborative projects ;</li><li>• The extensive network of experts in diversity.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A lot of university expertise : programs to prepare students for exchange programs, TICKET, service learning, teacher courses with diversity topics, and high-level missions that must be better translated into practice ;</li><li>• Importance of walking the talk to foster accountability ;</li><li>• Possible funding opportunities for education and research within the EU and nation-states on topics of diversity ;</li><li>• Bringing together universities and outside-university stakeholders to support universities diversity and inclusion goals ;</li><li>• Deconstruction of stereotypes as a quality asset for education and research ;</li><li>• Recognizing and working within “intersectional diversity at home” will help improve the strategies of internationalization of each institution ;</li><li>• We don’t have to reinvent the wheel, and we can look for good practices within the alliance ;</li><li>• University critical thinking is the basis for deconstructing non-inclusive or discriminating social and cultural conceptual categories.</li></ul>
Aspirations	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nothing about us without us: co-creation with minorities communities ;</li><li>• A flexible course that starts from problems teachers are facing now ;</li><li>• Create a non-violent campus experience for staff and students ;<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires a clear definition of violence and a safe space.</li></ul></li><li>• Bridging gaps between staff who accompany students in their learning :<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thinking in terms of trajectories and personal development of students ;</li><li>• Inclusive communication skills ;</li><li>• Reciprocity and willingness to learn.</li></ul></li><li>• Provide opportunity for professional growth and for personal well-being in the European higher education environment ;</li><li>• Learning management system/certification :<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep track of who got an introduction to basic or more advances training and encourage participants to go to the next step, but also reward them for their efforts (certification).</li></ul></li><li>• Ways to reconcile tensions between politics, academic freedom, safety, and critical thinking.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Course/ MOOC/ training for staff and maybe students on diversity ;<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grounded in research/ diversity expertise and facilitated by trained professionals who create safe learning environments ;</li><li>• An overview of flexible knowledge clips and tools for staff ;</li><li>• Evaluation of a pilot of the course on the use for staff and secondary impact on students ;</li><li>• Growing awareness, respect, and even interest in diversity, as well as promoting the implementation of inclusive practices at both the methodological and didactic level, and at the level of personal staff-student interaction.</li></ul></li></ul>

**Figure 3:** Ticket Modular Training Program

<b>Module</b>	<b>Training Modules</b>	<b>Theme</b>
<b>1</b>	Making academic mobility truly intercultural	<b>Mobility (and its effects on campus)</b>
<b>2</b>	Welcoming international students and staff	
<b>3</b>	How to encourage contact among diverse groups of students	
<b>4</b>	How to foster participation and learning for all	<b>Student (learning, health and socio-economic) needs</b>
<b>5</b>	Using your intercultural awareness competences to enhance equity, diversity and inclusion	
<b>6</b>	Making disciplines intercultural	<b>Internationalisation of the curriculum</b>
<b>7</b>	The multilingual and multicultural classroom	
<b>8</b>	Challenging assumptions about good learning and teaching	
<b>9</b>	Developing an intercultural-sensitive work environment in academia	<b>University as an intercultural workplace</b>



# Collecting good practices on diversity for the university of tomorrow

Cristina Demaria, Marianne Blidon, Daniela Bolzani, Francesco Cattani & Michał Powszedniak<sup>8</sup>

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In order to further promote an equal and non-discriminating teaching, research and work-related environment, sharing the already implemented actions and goals of each Una Europa university partners is a first necessary step. The main goal of the Action Group (AG) on Sharing Good Practices was to collect good practices and share them, thus offering members of the Una Europa community a way to learn from each other, and to build a better Universitas for the future. First, the AG discussed the concept of good practice and identified focus areas of intervention where good practices should be implemented. Secondly, it designed a detailed questionnaire, which was subsequently used to collect good practices from the partner universities of Una Europa. The collected good practices were then analysed and used as a basis for the formulation of recommendations and a general framework for diversity practices to be disseminated within the Una Europa community.

From the identification of the areas of intervention up to the formulation of the recommendations, the AG was guided by the definition of diversity elaborated by the Diversity Council. This definition stresses how 'Diversity is a fundamentally horizontal and intersectional approach that considers all social categories and forms of discrimination and addresses practices and structures of inclusion and exclusion rather than putting particular identities in the forefront' (see 'Defining diversity' in this volume). Therefore, the AG has taken into account such key aspects of diversity as equity, inclusion and intersectionality.

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<sup>8</sup> We acknowledge the contributions of Rita Monticelli and Chiara Elefante, who were UNIBO members of the Diversity Council until October 2021.

## Definition of good practices and focus areas

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What is a good practice? In order to formulate a sound and working definition, the [approach of the European Institute for Gender Equality](#) was adapted to the aforementioned definition of diversity. In this way, the AG devised a good practice as:

- + **contextual** (created in a specific institution) but potentially **transferable** (to another institution);
- + able to **advance knowledge and skills** through experience (to develop the institution's capacities);
- + **transversal** and **intersectional** (covering several different dimensions, identities, etc.);
- + **relevant** (providing answers for defined/diagnosed problems, needs, etc.);
- + **sustainable** (embedded in structures and policies, its sustainability is ensured, for example, in terms of human and financial resources); and
- + **having impact** (that is, not only producing efficient and effective results within the institution but also, if possible, resonance outside the academic community).

Good practices can relate to different **focus areas** of the university structures and community. The AG identified six of them: 1. **University structures and procedures supporting diversity** (including organisational culture, thus ensuring diversity in leadership and decision-making); 2. **Diversity in recruitment and career progression**; 3. **Occupational well-being and the integration of academic life with family and personal life**; 4. **Integration of diversity and intersectionality into research, teaching and third-mission activities**; 5. **Measures against discriminatory violence** (including sexual harassment and hate speech); and 6. **Diversity in times of crisis** (e.g. pandemics, wars, refugee status, etc.).

## Questionnaire

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With the aim at designing a template for the Diversity Council, the AG analysed an Strategic Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and other evaluation templates or toolkits. Wanting to keep a central focus on intersectionality, in drafting the questionnaire significant questions were: which dimension(s) of diversity is the good practice relevant for? Does it contribute to advancing equality/equity only for a specific target group?

The AG collected thirty-nine good practices from the partner universities, as shown in the following table.

## Good practices

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University:	Description:
<b>Focus Area 1. University structures and procedures supporting diversity</b>	
Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna (UNIBO)	Gender Equality Annual Report
Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM)	Unit of Diversity and Inclusion at the UCM
Freie Universität Berlin (FU)	Diversity Strategy and Action Plan
Helsingin yliopisto/ Helsingfors universitet (UH)	Equality and Diversity Plan, which includes concrete actions like Minna Canth Equality Award
Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie (JU)	The filter for ICT systems for transgender and non-binary students
KU Leuven (KU)	KU Leuven Diversity Structures
Université Paris 1 Panthéon- Sorbonne (Paris1)	The University Disability Policy
<b>Focus Area 2. Diversity in recruitment and career progression</b>	
UNIBO	Office for the Inclusion and Employment Protection – Circular Method
UCM	Academic management of gender identity protocol
UH	Orientation of the appointment committee and external assessors
JU	Health & Safety Courses – Psychosocial issues
KU	Gender and Diversity Vanguard in Selection Committees
Paris1	Refugee Welcome and PAUSE Programme
<b>Focus Area 3. Occupational well-being and the integration of academic life with family and personal life</b>	
UNIBO	Positive Action Plan
FU	Dual Career & Family Service
UH	HEI LIFE Spouse Network
JU	Mini-grant for academic teachers
KU	KU Leuven Lifestance Network
Paris1	Measures to take into account the living conditions of students and staff at the university
<b>Focus Area 4. Integration of the diversity and intersectionality into research, teaching and third mission activities</b>	
UNIBO	Activities of Training, Mentoring and Awareness-Raising – CUG
UCM	Guide for Inclusive Communication and Interaction
FU	Toolbox: Gender and Diversity in Academic Teaching
UH	Departmental Diversity and Work Well-being Group
JU	Diversity-Related Student Research Groups
KU	Service Learning under the umbrella of KU Leuven Engage

University:	Description:
Paris1	Certificate of Gender Studies and Master on Gender Studies
<b>Focus Area 5. Measures against discriminatory violence (including sexual harassment, hate speech)</b>	
UNIBO	Alias Career
UCM	Strategies to incorporate the ethnic perspective in the University
FU	Directive on Respectful Behaviour
UH	Equality and Diversity events and trainings and instructions
JU	"The Global 16 Days Campaign"
KU	Harassment Help Desk
Paris1	Anti-bullying mission and awareness campaign against gender violence and harassment
<b>Focus Area 6. Diversity in times of crisis</b>	
UNIBO	Cross-cultural Counselling Service for International Students
UCM	Welcome Plan for Refugees
UH	Bachelor's feedback and the International Student Barometer survey
JU	The Student Centre for Student and Adaptation
KU	Support in times of corona – Small group meetings for international colleagues
Paris1	Social Aids

## Analysis of good practices

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The analysis of the thirty-nine practices led the AG to reduce the focus areas into five broad categories, which are meaningful in terms of an organisational perspective on diversity practices:

1. Diversity plans, policies, and strategies
2. Diversity structures
3. Diversity in human resource management (HRM)
4. Diversity in students' affairs
5. Diversity in communication and interactions

The practices display a wide understanding of diversity characteristics across all universities. Although slightly different types of action have been collected depending on the different target group, generally speaking, universities tend to operationally approach diversity rather 'vertically' by focusing on a single characteristic of diversity rather than adopting an intersectional approach. It is worth mentioning that some initiatives were spurred by the recent pandemic crisis, especially to address the needs of foreign students, staff or academic staff with family care duties.

The AG acknowledged that the practices reported by the universities might not be the only ones addressing the topic of diversity available at the surveyed institutions. We thus considered them as single 'case studies' of possible patterns of action in this domain.

## **1 Diversity plans, policies and strategies**

In this category, we include high-level, strategic initiatives which orientate subsequent practical actions with respect to different diversity groups at each university. The main facilitating factor for the development of diversity plans, policies and strategies is the legitimacy and endorsement of diversity issues by the governance (first at the central level but also in decentralised bodies, such as faculties and departments). Through such endorsement, it is more likely that materials, technologies and dedicated human resources will be assigned to support the administrative work needed to develop these documents, for instance, the organisation of data collections (e.g. climate surveys targeted to recipient groups) and the building and facilitation of networks among the different involved units. As these are often documents having limited temporal validity, endorsement can ensure their revision and alignment with the changing local landscape and needs and entail partial processes of participatory co-design with the target groups.

## **2 Diversity structures**

By 'diversity structures', we refer to practices which have sustained and led to the creation of organisational structures, either at the central or decentralised level, to support the promotion of diversity and inclusion in the partner universities. Across all universities, these structures are often established by drawing both on the participation of targeted groups (e.g. in terms of improvement and re-design of practices based on feedback over time) and the involvement of external partners (e.g. companies, local municipalities, international and national networks in the domain of diversity), for instance, to exchange practices and learning. The implementation of diversity structures is demanding in terms of financial resources, involving the need for trained and dedicated personnel who can allocate sufficient working time and count on a budget and necessary arrangements to implement different initiatives.

## **3 Diversity in HRM**

In this category, we have identified three main sets of practices: (a) recruitment, (b) well-being and work-life balance, and (c) training. For recruitment, given the general opacity of the results of HR selection processes, diversity practices are successful only if evaluators are committed to collaborate in the process, either thanks to compulsory norms set by governance or progressive sensitisation and information on these issues.

With respect to well-being and work-life balance, several partner universities have implemented measures to sustain dual-career families, internationally mobile families of academics, or parental support for academic staff. These services can become successful if there is enough awareness and demand for them by the targeted groups, who should also get involved in networking to find such dedicated opportunities.

With respect to training, some universities engage in ad hoc training for staff to promote awareness of diversity issues and their integration in administrative work, research, teaching and third missions. The development of these training involves the identification of speakers, who may be internal or external to the university, the creation of materials, and the availability of technologies to host hybrid or virtual events.

## **4 Diversity in student affairs**

Diversity in student affairs refers to three main sets of actions: (a) training and teaching, (b) climate surveys, and (c) specialised inclusion services. Several universities have provided evidence of events, training and teaching activities focused on diversity. Some of these initiatives are targeted at students, but they can also extend to the wider academic community (as seen in the paragraph on HRM) to deal, for instance, with implicit bias, antiracism, pride initiative and anti-harassment behaviours, including a view of making diversity more central in the teaching mission. Another form of teaching related to diversity issues is the creation of certified programs (e.g. Masters degrees), service learning (i.e. extracurricular learning activities with civil society

organisations working with vulnerable groups in society), or research groups focused on specific topics, such as feminist or gender studies.

A second group of practices refers to the collection of data (e.g. via surveys) to assess the climate for diversity, according to students' perceptions. These tools are very useful to obtain accounts of the students' perceived situation, but they can suffer from response bias, thus being not truly representative of the reality for all students.

The third group of practices regards the provision of specific inclusion services for some student communities. For instance, several universities provide a service dedicated to transgender students (which is also extended to staff) to allow them to replace their personal data to reflect their gender identity. These practices require the existence of supportive national legal frameworks and regulations about the use of sensitive data. Other actions have been taken to sustain students with a refugee status, often promoted as a local response to national initiatives by the Ministries of Higher Education/University. Some universities have implemented initiatives for students in need of psychological support, paying attention to intersectional issues such as cultural diversity or material support, with respect to socio-economic status. The practices examined testify to their success if they are considered systemic solutions that work in cooperation with other university structures or are supported by wider national or international programs.

## 5 Diversity in communication and interaction

In this category, we include three main groups of practices: (a) guidelines and directives, (b) campaigns, and (c) awards.

Guidelines, directives, or codes of conduct are high-level, strategic tools that university management and governing bodies can implement to define behavioural expectations and obligations (e.g. non-discriminatory and inclusive communication and interactions). Some universities reported fundamental participatory processes guiding the preparation of such documents.

In the group of practices labelled as campaigns, some universities have engaged in anti-harassment or anti-violence campaigns, especially addressing women's rights. These forms of communication are very important to demonstrate the university's position with respect to these topics.

The AG have mapped only one initiative conferring an award for people or groups promoting the development of a positive atmosphere, new knowledge, or methodologies for diversity in teaching, research, administration, or other activities.

## Recommendations and conclusions

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Analysis of the thirty-nine good practices collected allowed the AG to formulate **seven recommendations** that could be disseminated among the members of Una Europa, thus consolidating existing measures, enriching the repertoire of possible actions and better taking into account the diversity within our institutions. Before listing these, it should be underlined that all practices, in order to be meaningful, should be embedded in diversity policies defined through the engagement of governance and managers and supported **by the creation of dedicated structures and activities.**

- 1. Involve the target groups in the design, implementation and monitoring of the actions concerning them.** This stems from the observation that diversity is very differently defined, interpreted and delimited according to partner universities and academic and national contexts. Depending on the university, good practices are open to different diversity dimensions and different recipients. Therefore, a simple replication of practices is not possible. Sensitivity is required for context specificities which might be tackled by involving target groups, allowing university policies to consider particular invisibilised subjectivities with specific needs not always thought of.
- 2. Translate the contents of websites and all kinds of information into one or more foreign languages and promote accessibility in other types of languages** (like language for the visually impaired or sign language, when applicable). This is based on the consideration that the strengthening of European exchanges, refugee policies and actions of the Una Europa alliance have reinforced the internationalisation of higher education. This requires each institution to consider its communication and dissemination of information within an international framework. The use of more than one European language should therefore be favoured to allow better access to information. The analysis of good practices also highlighted the need to take specific audiences into account.
- 3. Develop strategies of communication within different groups of recipients and structures** (visibility and accessibility of good practices, diversification of means, tools and channels). Many good practices concerning diversity are often unknown because the dissemination of information is limited or has difficulty in reaching the target groups.
- 4. Ensure constant financial support and/or possibly revise it, in order to achieve the targeted aims** (financial support is often fragmented and under-budgeted). An ambitious diversity policy is not only based on good intentions. The most effective good practices require resources and the sustainability of these resources.
- 5. Encourage the recruiting of more dedicated and trained staff and strengthen the mentoring and training of both new and current staff.** A diversity policy cannot achieve its objectives if it is not understood or is poorly implemented by the university staff. It is essential that the people in charge of its implementation understand the foundations and objectives, and this requires specific training.
- 6. Set up a regular evaluation of existing devices, encourage certification and reinforce incentives for the effective implementation of good practices, with a view also toward their potential transferability.** Few good practices are regularly monitored and evaluated to measure their impact and results. In order to maintain or adjust good practices, evaluations should be carried out on a regular basis and even certifications should be used to make efforts visible and valuable. Consistency with contextual characteristics (e.g. different legal systems) should be assessed before and during implementation.
- 7. Develop additional practices that have an impact on civil society and stakeholders.** More consideration has to be given to the beneficiaries of these good practices, and good practices need to be considered in a wider ecosystem.

The collection and analysis of good practices are very effective tools for implementing a policy on diversity for the whole Una Europa community, based on the sharing of initiatives that address the specific needs of certain categories of the population. Among the good practices analysed, several can easily be replicated and implemented, paying attention to the specificities of the local context. Reflecting on good practices could allow each institution to consider its strengths and weaknesses in relation to what already exists, in order to broaden the spectrum of subjectivities that are considered within its scope of action and to create synergy and convergence of practices that satisfy the European academic and democratic requirements of promoting the values of diversity. This could offer a common framework of requirements and objectives, thus fully fulfilling Una Europa's role as an incubator to prepare the European universities of tomorrow.



# Students and diversity

This publication has showcased a range of valuable outcomes of the Diversity Council's work in the past years as part of the Una Europa alliance. This final chapter presents two initiatives that included students and student/staff collaboration.

## Affordably Abroad – Katrien Vanelven

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With Affordably Abroad, Una Europa students and staff members embarked on a joint endeavour to clear away the remaining hurdles that keep us from making physical mobility an option for every student. A project group under the umbrella of Una Europa's Student Board was asked to develop the practical support the alliance wishes to provide to its students as far as student mobility is concerned. The group consisted of student representatives and staff members from the Mobility Cluster of Una Europa's Flexible Support Services, the alliance's Diversity Council and its Task Force on Sustainability and Climate Protection, as well as the relevant work package leaders in Una Europa's 1Europe project. The students identified obstacles for mobility and suggested possible solutions.

The ambition was twofold: to find more ways to allow students to travel without additional costs, and to stimulate sustainable transport. Accommodation strategies were researched to enable mobility and promote cultural exchange. The group also had the task of examining how students can get a clear overview of the costs related to taking part in student exchange programmes, so that they can budget properly. The proposed solutions were looked into by the relevant Una Europa bodies and their staff, allowing them to eventually implement the feasible solutions.

The first Student Congress of Una Europa identified the need for an accessible website, providing a well-structured overview of each partner's offerings. Currently, Una Europa's website features a [Student Guide](#). The guide functions as a portal to the details available from the partner universities' websites and allows students to quickly find information on the academic offer, but also on all the practical matters that need to be taken care of when applying for a mobility, before the start of the mobility period, during the exchange period, and upon return. Detailed information on tuition and registration fees and on cost of living is included.

The next step was to identify barriers that prevent participation in physical mobility programmes, and to detect the problems interested students faced in terms of information and support, studies, living and finance, social life, and discrimination. A questionnaire was disseminated among students from all Una Europa universities. Despite the rather low response rate, the input was valuable as a basis for further brainstorming and action. The questionnaire prompted us to shift our focus, which was initially on finding ways to make physical mobility more affordable, to the broader topic of inclusion. We accomplished this by eliminating all forms of discrimination, and by removing obstacles to participation resulting from family background, gender, age, disability, etc.

The students in the 2021-2022 Affordably Abroad Task Force suggested possible solutions to achieve our goal of including students with different needs (such as students with disabilities, students of all ages, students from different socio-economic backgrounds, and students with children) into our mobility programmes because they face barriers that could exclude them from participating altogether.

The student representatives emphasised the need for an individual approach. They asked about the possibility to introduce mandatory one-on-one counselling for prospective exchange students to identify their needs (e.g. childcare, disability) and provide adequate solutions. The availability of staff members to address a student's questions one-on-one was considered essential, and communication about that availability should be improved. In those instances where a full evaluation of a mobility period was not yet in place, the students asked to create a form they could fill in before the exchange, followed by a second form to evaluate their mobility period and make suggestions for improvement.

The students called for appropriate scholarships to make sure that students from all socio-economic backgrounds can participate in the mobility programmes. A broader range of mobility options was requested. A need for shorter mobility periods was reported, as well as a continued need to create mobility opportunities in all study fields. Somewhat surprisingly, curriculum restrictions were brought up. If participants in a mobility programme do not have access to enough classes that align with their curriculum, this can lead to a prolonged academic trajectory, something not every student can afford. A lack of certainty prevented some students from applying. The student representatives stressed the need for flexibility with regard to the requirements for the recognition of credits obtained during a mobility period.

Some students thought the application criteria were too strict. Rather than imposing rigid language requirements as part of the application criteria, partner universities were asked to test a student's language proficiency after a mobility period, to measure improvement. In line with this, more flexibility was called for with regard to the required language certificates. A language certificate can be quite expensive, costs that could be waived for some students, such as those studying a particular language. The students who experienced the application process for a mobility period as a hurdle, indicated that it would help them if their home university would provide hands-on guidance by organising workshops on preparing a CV and writing a motivation letter.

More could be done to facilitate the social integration of exchange students during their mobility period. In many cases, exchange students have little contact with local students because of the language barrier or a lack of touch points between local and exchange students. The students suggested a range of activities to actively embrace diversity within the local university community so that everyone feels welcome. In addition to setting up and promoting buddy or mentor programmes and pen pal initiatives, the importance of joint accommodation for local students and exchange students was highlighted. It is essential to organise social activities for both local and exchange students, such as theatre evenings, music concerts, sports activities, video game nights, barbecues, sightseeing tours, and speed dating formats to meet new friends. Students also suggested to break down the language barrier between local students and exchange students by offering language courses for incoming exchange students before and during the mobility period, with the possibility of an additional intensive language course right before the beginning of the academic year. Existing language training should focus more on intercultural communication, body language and kinesics. Students also see value in connecting students from different Una Europa universities who are learning the same language.

Bringing students and staff together for this co-creation process was both enlightening and inspiring. Flexibility is necessary when collaborating with students with limited availability, but it is equally important with respect to the scope of the activities. Una Europa went further than planned as the students raised the much broader topic of inclusion, which clearly resonates with them.

During the meetings with the students, the participants put forward potential solutions, which turned out to be already present at many partner universities in the Una Europa alliance, without the students being aware of

it. Communication is key to ensure that we use the full potential of the many actions already implemented in Una Europa universities to improve the diversity of the student population taking part in mobility programmes. Efforts will be made to improve the information flow between the mobility units in the partner universities and the students, to make sure that the information about opportunities and available support is properly disseminated.

The Mobility Cluster and the Task Force on Sustainability and Climate Protection of Una Europa provided further input to add information on sustainability (e.g. sustainable travel) to the [Student Guide](#).

The staff of Una Europa's Mobility Cluster mapped out good practices in each partner university with regard to the problems and possible solutions identified by the students, and will continue to exchange information and experiences. As we move forward, the partner universities will implement those good practices that are feasible in their institution.

## Una Europa Student Challenge – Una.Together

### Stinne Vognæs & Sara Korjus

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The Una Student Challenge is a challenge-based learning experience, which aims to give students the opportunity to work in intercultural, international teams to solve real-life problems and put their academic knowledge into practice for the greater good. By using concepts such as design thinking, the double diamond, empathy mapping, and entrepreneurial thinking, to mention just a few, students combine these methodologies with their academic expertise with the goal of developing concepts with a real impact within a predetermined theme.

The Una Europa student challenge aims to give students the opportunity to work together across universities to bring forth concrete ideas and solutions to current global issues. This year's iteration was organised by the University of Helsinki and inspired by the fact that it is also leading the Diversity Council. In the Una.Together program, eight universities from the Una Europa alliance each presented a challenge related to students and diversity. These revolved around topics that the university was keen to hear ideas and suggestions about. More than 120 students applied for the program and 50 students were selected, based on motivation and representation from each university, backgrounds, fields, and experiences. The students were allocated to teams that were international and interdisciplinary, and they worked together in a virtual setting for seven weeks. They joined lectures related to the theoretical and practical aspects of diversity in academic communities, met mentors and experts and joined workshops on a variety of topics. They finally presented their solutions at the final [showcase](#), which was streamed across Europe.

Eight universities submitted a challenge for Una.Together, which can all be read [here](#). The challenges were related to issues of supporting first-generation university students, the integration and inclusion of international students, how to support students having to work full-time to support themselves during their studies, how to foster inclusive multilingual spaces and many other topics. Students were divided into teams by the organisers, based on their motivation and applications. The winning team received the opportunity to travel to the university which presented the challenge they worked on: the team working on the Bologna challenge won and visited there in September 2022. A solutions booklet is also being developed with all the ideas that were generated, which will hopefully spark further discussion.

The program had the vision of dealing with concrete issues related to diversity and allowing the students to have an opportunity to have an impact on these issues at the participating universities. Seen from a student's

perspective, giving students real and concrete issues that universities are facing can make them feel like their input is truly wanted and respected. It sends the message: 'Regarding these issues, we want to hear from your side, too.' If the problems presented to the students are just made-up problems (or seem like that), it can give the message that students cannot be trusted with real issues. It can be seen as akin to giving mathematics students practice equations before they are allowed to take the real test. It was also an aim to have staff and academics involved from across the eight universities. This allowed a valuable opportunity for student/staff engagement and collaboration. Having staff and academics involved in this program showed students that their voices are heard on different levels of the university. Students learned and received a lot of help from these interactions.

While the aims focused on diversity in the content of the program, an additional layer evolved organically in the community and atmosphere of the program itself. During the initial online meetings, there were spaces for students to share their own experiences, ideas, feelings, and thoughts on the issue of diversity within their own university. They felt that they were allowed to show up as themselves, bringing their full identities and experiences to the virtual space that had been created. Many were missing the opportunity to do this in their daily life, and most expressed that they had not otherwise felt comfortable doing that in their academic careers. For students, most experiences in the university are related to the subject area they are studying, rarely allowing discussions beyond that. For the students, having such meetings between different fields of studies was an important experience, since they are aware of how rare they are. Being able to discuss a topic and hearing a new perspective broadened the perspectives of many and gave them the opportunity to engage with students from across a range of academic fields with whom they would not have otherwise crossed paths.

While students are not employees of the university, they are central members of the community. They have a valid interest in being included and considered in conversations on ensuring diversity and they have a right to expect a thorough discussion of the issues that affect them. While it can be hard to involve students and ensure continuity, it does not mean that this should not be done. Working with students is an essential way to understand what the issues and current efforts look like from their perspective. As mentioned in the section 'Affordably Abroad', many universities are taking meaningful action, but students are unfamiliar with this. They think that their university is not acting and engaging on issues that students find important, which makes them concerned and frustrated. For some students, it even gives a sense that the issues they are personally affected by are not considered by their university and the community they are supposed to be safely participating in. What students need in most cases is open communication. Universities and their administrations need to find a way to ensure that students are informed about the steps their university is taking to solve issues. Students do not need to constantly be bombarded with information, but they do need to receive enough information that they do not feel like they are being left out of the conversation. Including students in changes also involves asking their opinions on different topics and listening to what they are saying. These can be challenging efforts, but they are very necessary.

Based on this experience, and since we have been collaborating on this section as staff and students, we found that there were many lessons learned about how to better include and work with students on real issues within the university community.

1. While there may be a concrete task at hand and work to be done, it is valuable to leave space for organic and personal conversations to also take place. It appears that students are keen to have a space where they can be themselves fully, including within an academic context. Could we create and open this space collaboratively with students?
2. When we say we want to include students, and when we ask for their opinions and they work on real issues, we also need to take their solutions seriously and allow them a chance to make an impact with their ideas and solutions. There is nothing more discouraging than putting a huge amount of work into a great idea and then not feeling that it is being heard or taken seriously.
3. When universities want to learn more about different problems that students might be facing in the academic world, the most trusted source is the students themselves. Universities should actively seek their students' opinions on different topics, and even give them space to bring up new problems that might not have been discussed before.

# Conclusion

## Sarah Cunningham-Burley

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Diversity – to promote equity and social justice, to end discrimination and to foster inclusion – is the foundation on which a Una community should be built. But this foundation still needs to be made solid and robust, so that diversity, in the end, is embedded in all the activities and dimensions of Una Europa. The Diversity Council has started this process by providing both an assessment of the current state of diversity across Una Europa and the beginnings of a roadmap of how to promote it more actively and with greater commitment.

### Data collection

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Building diversity within and across Una Europa institutions demands a good understanding of relevant data. Strengthening diversity data and analysis supports evidence-based practice and its evaluation. The Action Group on Data Collection assessed practices across the Una Europa institutions and identified a range of issues.

Diversity is a complex concept and a range of data are generated but not always in ways that are fit for purpose. Fundamental good data practices must be adhered to and this includes taking diversity into account through these practices, ensuring that our data are inclusive. This could include ensuring that administrative data, based on externally defined indicators, are supported by self-identification. Gaps in evidence should be identified, local contexts understood and methodological decisions made transparent. The purpose of diversity data collection and guidance about privacy issues should be made clear to all. Ideally, those from minoritised groups are engaged in data, including methods, analysis and utilisation. Robust data collection requires resources, and dedicated, qualified staff should support this essential element of promoting diversity.

The Action Group developed a set of useful reflective questions to guide the development and implementation of robust and useful diversity data collection. These promote reflection on intended use, ethics, participation, definitions and accessibility.

### Research

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Research and innovation are enhanced through diversity, whether the focus is on teams, careers or infrastructures. Promoting diversity requires cultural and behavioural shifts and the dismantling of structural impediments. The Una Europa research and innovation ecosystem should centre diversity through the creation of strategic instruments to mainstream diversity as well as target specific priority areas. After reviewing four key Una Europa documents/strategies, the Action Group on Research identified areas for improvement.

Recognition of the power relationships and structural factors that continue to hinder progress in equity needs to be articulated in order for strategies to be developed to overcome them. Research and innovation strategies could more openly and reflectively engage with diversity throughout their development and implementation.

Emphasis on what is being researched, how and by whom provides a way of linking different levels of intervention and influence. Access to resources should also be made more equitable. More specifically in relation to HR strategies, a high-level commitment to diversity needs to find traction in institutional practices that end discrimination and promote equity. Greater transparency around existing policies as well as engagement in developing inclusive practices are required.

The Action Group concluded that the existing strategic documents did not yet take into account the broad definition of diversity and did not adopt a clear mainstreaming approach to diversity. Recommendations relating to governance, management, community and evaluation were made to support Una Europa in its next steps.

## Education

Educational training programmes are a key tool to equip staff with the knowledge and skills to promote diversity and end discrimination. The Action Group on Education reflected on current education materials and created a framework for next steps.

A broad definition of diversity should underpin educational offerings, and it is important to focus on staff to develop their diversity competences. Staff need support to become agents of change and promote equity by deconstructing stereotypes and preventing discrimination by building a safe environment. The TICKET project is one example, aiming to develop intercultural competence. Reviewing this modular programme enabled the Action Group to propose a MOOC on diversity with eight modules, which include components on curriculum design, strategies for an inclusive environment, and bystander training, among other topics.

The Action Group highlighted the need for a clear mandate and associated resources if the Diversity Council is to advance a MOOC on diversity. A mapping exercise would identify current trainings and any forward planning must engage with minoritised groups. A conference would promote an intersectional approach and areas for collaboration across Una Europa.

## Sharing good practices

Sharing good practices from with the Una Europa universities is a good first step in promoting diversity. The Action Group collected and analysed information from across the partner universities, identified focus areas of intervention and created a general framework for dissemination. Good practices are defined as, among other dimensions, contextual yet potentially transferable, intersectional and capacity-generating.

Overall, universities tend to approach diversity vertically rather than horizontally, focusing on a specific dimension rather than on intersectionality. Good practices were identified across five broad areas. Diversity plans, policies and strategies are facilitated through high-level endorsement; diversity structures are enabled by the supported participation of targeted groups. With respect to diversity in HR, both mandated practices and cultural norms can support diversity in recruitment, work-life balance and training. A range of practices – such as training, data collection and inclusion services – support students, and these work best if integrated into other university structures and processes. Diversity in communication and interaction includes high-level guidelines and directives, which should be developed through participatory processes. Campaigns include those focused on anti-harassment and help raise awareness and signal a university’s commitment to ending violence and discrimination. Awards for promoting diversity are also a potential tool for promoting and rewarding good practices.

The Action Group on Sharing Good Practices developed key recommendations that were framed by the overall need to create dedicated structures and activities. Recommendations include involving target groups in the design, implementation and monitoring of actions; ensuring adequate resources; and developing accessible websites, including through availability in different languages.

## Specific initiatives

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### **Una Europa Affordably Abroad**

The aim was to remove hurdles to student mobility and students were engaged in a project group under the umbrella of the Una Europa Student Board. A survey and workshops helped identify issues and suggest solutions. The focus extended beyond physical mobility to inclusion more widely. Students suggested the need for an individual, tailored approach to assess and meet needs, as well as the need for flexibility with regards to recognition of credits and for language requirements. More efforts must be made to ensure integration of exchange students, including through intercultural communication. Communication needs to be improved so that existing support for diversity becomes better known.

### **2022 Student Challenge on Diversity**

The Una Europa Student Challenge gives students the opportunity to work together across universities to develop concrete ideas and solutions to a current global issue. The Una.Together programme in 2021/2022 focused on diversity. Fifty students were selected and allocated to international, interdisciplinary teams.

The areas of focus included supporting first-generation university students; the integration and inclusion of international students; and support for students who need to work full-time, among other topics. The programme's focus was on diversity and creating solutions for implementation. Additionally, participation in the programme itself yielded important insights into students' experience of diversity, as those engaged in the programme shared their experiences and identities. One key message from the programme is to ensure that students are represented and included in issues that directly affect them. Another is the importance of communication, so that everyone becomes more aware of what their university is doing to promote diversity.

## Overall recommendations and next steps

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Education, research and innovation, management and leadership all have a key role in promoting diversity and anti-discrimination by dismantling the power relationships that create the unequal distribution of advantages and disadvantages. Each of the Action Groups made key suggestions for the next steps for Una Europa and the Diversity Council. These all demand reflection and the willingness to embrace complexity and challenges. There are some common themes and concerns which we highlight here:

Una Europa should adopt the broad and progressive definition of diversity that the Diversity Council commends.



The concept of diversity acknowledges that social categories are constructs that interlock with complex, intersecting societal and organisational power relations and inequality. This means that some social groups experience individual and structural discrimination and face barriers to accessing societal resources.

- + Diversity needs to become part of all strategies and activities, in order to translate value-based commitments into action. An overarching diversity strategy that can be monitored and assessed would support this mainstreaming process.
- + There is a need to build a robust, ethical and inclusive evidence base, using administrative and other data and sharing good practices.
- + Diversity strategies need to take a horizontal and intersectional approach with appropriate targeting where need is identified.
- + More effort needs to be made within partner universities and across Una Europa to communicate what is already being done to support diversity.
- + Students and staff, especially those from minoritised groups, should be involved in creating strategies and interventions that promote diversity and end discrimination.
- + Promoting diversity needs to be given proper resources in terms of people, expertise, skills and time.

# Reflections on diversity

## Tom Böhling – Chair of the Diversity Council

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It has been an honour to chair the Diversity Council during these years. I have learnt a lot, and the active and positive attitude of the whole group has been invaluable for our work. Due to the pandemic, we have had the chance to meet face to face only once, and that was this year, late in the project. I do believe that our work would have advanced faster if we would have had the possibility to meet at the beginning of the project to discuss the goals and responsibilities of our council. Nonetheless, the council has been able to promote diversity as an important element of Una Europa, as shown in this publication.

We realised early during the project that we have to clarify the definition of diversity, so that we have a common vision. This work – especially promoted by our colleague from Freie Universität Berlin, Gabriele Rosenstreich, with enthusiastic support and expert views from the whole group – is in fact the basis of the report.

I was somewhat surprised that although we all represent universities within the EU, the legislation as well as the cultures significantly differ between the countries and institutions. Concerning legislation, this means that data collection is not easy, as in several countries, including my own, it is not allowed to ask or register certain aspects which would be important in evaluating diversity in our institutions. There are vast differences in the practices that each of our universities has adopted to advance diversity and inclusion. Instead of 'best practices', we opt in this report to talk about 'good practices'. What works in one context may not always be entirely applicable to another regulatory, institutional, or organisational setting. But be that as it may, we always gain by learning from each other's way of seeing and 'doing' diversity.

The purpose of this publication is to disseminate the work of the Diversity Council during the past three years to the whole Una Europa community and beyond. In the future, it will be important that this and further work of the Diversity Council are even better integrated into all activities within Una Europa, from the Una Europa student experience to teaching and learning, and from individual researcher careers to research collaboration. In order to achieve that, the diversity work needs to be resourced adequately. Diversity can only be realised genuinely when everyone understands that it is cross-sectional at all levels.



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