

# UNIVERSITIES INFORMAL LIAISON OFFICES NETWORK UNILION

## 2023 REVIEW

CORE GROUP MEETING 5 DECEMBER 2023

Wendy Sonneveld

Co-Chair



Karl Stoeckel

Co-Chair



# LOOKING BACK: OUR WORKPLAN FOR 2023



Our guiding principle: “**as flexible as possible and as structured as necessary**”, meaning that co-chairing should create “**enabling conditions**” for the group as a whole and for individuals to foster participation in the network’s activities. As a result, UnLiON remains an “**informal network for and by its members**”.

- ▶ CORE Group focusses on intelligence sharing
- ▶ The Secretariat supports the WG Chairs & Annual Event Team
- ▶ Enhance visibility towards external partners
- ▶ Acknowledge involvement of individual members
- ▶ A transparent and streamlined approach for activities & internal processes
- ▶ Engage with key decision-makers on topics like the ERA Policy Agenda, Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 2025-2027, EU Council Presidencies, etc.

## MAIN COMMITMENTS OF OUR CO-CHAIRING 2023



# GENERAL REVIEW - 2023



Challenge: make UnLiON a platform that facilitates intelligence sharing in a growing network

- ▶ CORE Group meetings were structured to enable effective information sharing
- ▶ Three UnLiON CORE Group meetings with key stakeholders in the field of R&I.
- ▶ A joint WG with IGLO on ERA action 13 was organised



WE BROUGHT INTELLIGENCE SHARING  
TO THE NEXT LEVEL



Challenge: visibility of the network as a whole, combined with the need for promoting activities initiated by individual members

- ▶ Successful Annual Event 2023 on 'Science for Policy' (120 participants)
- ▶ Renewed approach to have “more open” Open Talks
- ▶ Website challenges solved
- ▶ LinkedIn account to promote both network activities & initiatives taken by individual members



ENHANCED VISIBILITY...



Challenge: management of a rising number of external requests

- ▶ Growing number of applications to be dealt with
- ▶ Multiple solicitations of UnLiON as a stakeholder (see Focus 3)
- ▶ Presentation requests by external players (Sweden: research managers / Czech Republic: CZELO / Spain: CRUE, Spanish Rector's Conference / France: France Universités)
- ▶ Numerous invitations sent to members via the Secretariat



...AND HIGHER EXPECTATIONS



Challenge: UnLiON as an enabler to extend our network(s)

- ▶ WG meetings involving external stakeholders
- ▶ The Annual Event as the main networking event for UnLiON Members
- ▶ Re-opening of Open Talks
- ▶ Social events
- ▶ A successful brokerage event on Horizon Europe Cluster 2 calls with 100+ participants (September 2023)

# A VARIETY OF NETWORKING ACTIVITIES





Challenge: rising number of applications reflecting the attractiveness of the network as well as the need for closer examination of applications and enhanced monitoring of members' participation

- ▶ Implementation of the new Guidelines (adopted in fall 2022) introducing selection criteria to be assessed by CORE Group members
- ▶ Systematic meetings between the Secretariat and new applicants
- ▶ Transparency vis-à-vis the CORE Group to allow better decision making on membership affairs
- ▶ Responsiveness when applicants are not transparent with respect to eligibility criteria
- ▶ Monitoring of individual members' participation: follow-up including suspension procedure to guarantee the credibility and the sustainability of the network

## IMPROVED MEMBERSHIP MANAGEMENT



Challenge: this year has seen the first competitive election in UnLiON with several competitors for the role of Chair/Co-Chair

- ▶ A transparent electoral procedure has taken place
- ▶ An electoral calendar enabled an open election
- ▶ An Electoral Committee composed of CORE and Secretariat members has been set up to help ensure a smooth electoral process
- ▶ A high turnout

# A FAIR & TRANSPARENT ELECTION FOR THE CHAIRING OF UNILION 2024

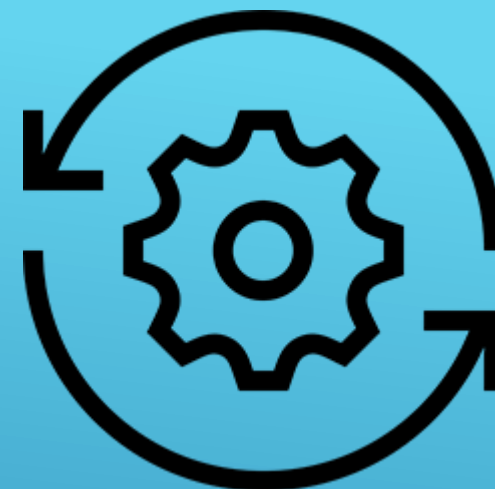


# THREE FOCUS POINTS



WG Chairs did a great job. Secretariat supported them.

- ▶ Standardisation of WGs Terms of Reference
- ▶ Diversity of activities within WGs. Examples:
  - ▶ Training session on lump sum (Horizon Europe WG)
  - ▶ Workshop on evaluation in HE Pillar 2 (Horizon Europe WG)
  - ▶ Europe-Africa project presentations and development (International WG)
  - ▶ ...
- ▶ New! Higher Education Working Group



### Working Groups

### Chairs

*Horizon Europe* **Anne Meidahl Petersen**, Greater Copenhagen EU Office, **Sanna Sjöblom**, Stockholm Trio

*Excellence* **Raymunde Neven**, Maastricht University, **Karen Slej & Veronica Chesi**, Copenhagen Business School

*International Cooperation* **Paul Davies**, Bristol & Bath Brussels Office, **Aliki Varela**, European Office of Cyprus

*Innovation* **Anne Drivsholm Sand**, Aalborg University, **Charlotte Eide**, University of Bergen

*Higher Education* **Adreas Krabbe**, Greater Copenhagen EU Office

# FOCUS POINT 1: WG ACTIVITIES



In a crucial year for R&I policy-making, with the Horizon Europe mid-term evaluation, the implementation of several actions of the European Research Area, and the launch of discussions over the future Framework-Programme for 2028-2034, how can UnLiON activities be at the crossroads of these developments?

- ▶ Sharing position papers for the mid-term evaluation of Horizon Europe (HEu WG)
- ▶ UnLiON CORE Group meetings with key stakeholders in the field of R&I.
- ▶ Dedicated Open Talks on
  - ▶ ERA Policy Actions
  - ▶ The Horizon Europe Strategic Plan 2025-2027
  - ▶ Negotiation over association of third countries to Horizon Europe
  - ▶ The new EU framework for Research careers
  - ▶ Past, current, and future Presidencies of the Council of the EU (Sweden, Spain, Belgium)
  - ▶ ...
- ▶ And valuable information shared via the Core Group mailing-list!



## FOCUS POINT 2: INTELLIGENCE SHARING ON R&I POLICY DEVELOPMENTS



Request towards UnLiON as a stakeholder

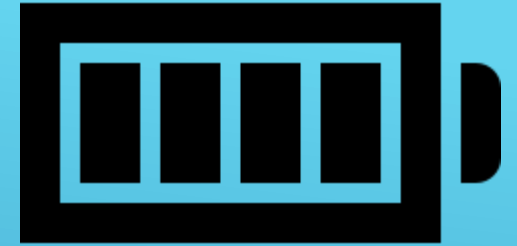
- ▶ DG EAC on the future of the European Universities Initiative
- ▶ DG RTD International Cooperation Unit on the EU-Africa Innovation Agenda
- ▶ DG RTD on the TRAMI project on the evaluation of the five HEu Missions
- ▶ UK Embassy/Mission to involve UnLiON in promoting UK association to HEu
- ▶ UK Mission on EU-UK cooperation in the area of mobility
- ▶ ...



## FOCUS POINT 3: RECOGNITION TOWARDS INSTITUTIONS & EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS



- ▶ Chairs of Working Groups
- ▶ A great Annual Event Org Team; *Orsolya Lugmayer, Francesca Ricardi, Bernard Modic, Karan Novo, Julia Jokelin, Sanna Sjöblom, Fèlix Ruiz Cabré, Eduardo Sánchez Custodio, Irene Palomino, Alastair Ross, and Aiki Varella*
- ▶ Members who do not hesitate to share information in meetings, via the Core Group mailing-list & within WGs
- ▶ Numerous individual members providing UnLiON with skills and expertise, technical support, meeting rooms, etc.
- ▶ Members who take on initiatives (Open Talks, brokerage events, social events, etc.)
- ▶ Brokerage events Task Force members
- ▶ Colleagues back home who take part in Excellence WG & Higher Education WG activities and contribute to the intelligence sharing endeavour
- ▶ ...

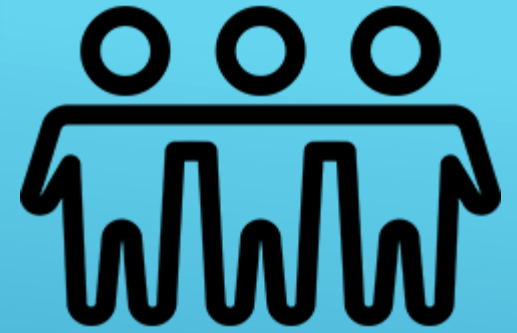


DYNAMICS THAT RELY ON THE ENERGY  
SPENT BY VOLUNTEERS





EÖTVÖS LORÁND  
UNIVERSITY | BUDAPEST



**Paul Davies**  
Bristol & Bath  
Brussels Office

**Orsolya Lugmayer**  
Eötvös Loránd  
University

**Karan Novo**  
FEUGA

**Wendy Sonneveld**  
Ghent University



**Janna Backman**  
University of Eastern  
Finland

**Charlotte Eide**  
University of Bergen

**Karin Lukas-Eder**  
Bavarian Research  
Alliance

**Fèlix Ruiz-Cabré**  
Maastricht  
University

**Karl Stoeckel**  
Aix-Marseille  
University

# A SECRETARIAT TEAM SUPPORTING THE NETWORKS ACTIVITIES





LOOKING BACK TO  
OUR 2-YEAR MANDATE...



Over the past two years, UniLiON has become a bigger and a stronger network. This is the result of teamwork.

- ▶ Stronger attractiveness of UniLiON
- ▶ Two successful Annual Events
- ▶ Intelligence sharing taken to the next level
- ▶ Streamlined application process & improved membership management
- ▶ More activities open to external stakeholders
- ▶ Greater engagement with external stakeholders & institutions
- ▶ More visibility & extended recognition within the Brussels bubble

**As Co-Chairs we are proud of having enabled this collective work.**

**THANK YOU FOR THE TEAMWORK  
IN 2022 AND 2023**



OUR TEAM ROCKS!

