



UnLiON Annual Event 2025

Competitive Together: Universities and Industry for a Prosperous Europe

Programme and speakers

Thursday, 20 November 2025 14:30 - 18:30

Fondation Universitaire, *Rue d'Egmont 11, 1000 Bruxelles*

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Agenda

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14:30	Opening Welcome Massimo Busuoli, Chair of UnLiON, Director of NTNU Office
14:40	Presentation of the Experts Session
14:45	Panel 1: Empowering Europe's Innovation Ecosystem through Strategic University-Industry Collaboration <i>Aligning Research, Skills, and Industrial Policy for Global Competitiveness</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eszter Lakos, Member of European Parliament, member of ITRE & STOA• Manuel Aleixo, Cabinet Expert, Cabinet of Commissioner Ekaterina Zaharieva• Željko Pazin, Executive Director, EFFRA / Made in Europe Partnership• Pär-Erik Martinsson, Rector Advisor, Luleå University of Technology Moderator: Luis Fernando Bautista, Deputy Vice –Rector, Rey Juan Carlos University
15:45	Panel 2: The Contribution of Universities in Industry Innovation Strategies <i>From Research to Market: Universities Driving Innovation Across Key Sectors</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kerstin Jorna, Director - General, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW)• Tor Grande, Rector, NTNU• Francesco Regoli, Vice-rector, UNIVPM• Roxane Feller, Director General, Animal Health Europe Moderator: Shivani Sharma, Deputy Pro-VC, Research & Enterprise, Aston University
16:45	Closing Remarks
17:00 - 18:30	Networking Reception

Speakers



Manuel Aleixo, Cabinet Expert, Cabinet of Commissioner Zaharieva, European Commission

Manuel Aleixo is a cabinet expert in the cabinet of Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation, Ekaterina Zaharieva. Formerly, he was a Head of the Unit at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation responsible for the ERA, Spreading Excellence, and Research Careers. Manuel has also worked in the European Parliament and as a diplomat in Portugal's Foreign Ministry.



Luis Fernando Bautista, Deputy Vice –Rector, Rey Juan Carlos University

Luis Fernando Bautista has served as Deputy Vice Rector for Scientific and Technological Transfer and Structures since May 2025. Previously, he was Vice-Dean for Internationalisation, Employability, and Corporate Relations at the Higher School of Experimental Sciences and Technology. He is a professor of Chemical Engineering in the Department of Chemical Environmental Technology at URJC, and he has been a visiting researcher at the Technical University of Denmark and at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in Brazil. His research spans both fundamental studies and industry-oriented projects, resulting in more than 70 publications in high-impact journals and four patents. Alongside extensive teaching experience, he has contributed to the design and implementation of university study programs at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels.



Massimo Busuoli, Director NTNU Brussels Office

Massimo Busuoli has been Head of the NTNU Brussels Office since January 2016. He holds a degree in Physics from the University of Bologna. He is currently chair of UniLion and chair of EOREA Secretariat. Previously, he was Head of the EU and International Bodies Unit at ENEA and Director of its Brussels Liaison Office. He was part of the Secretariat of the European Energy Research Alliance (2008–2015), which he coordinated from 2013, and a member of IGLO (2006–2015), chairing it in 2013–2014. He also founded and chaired the GIURI network of Italian liaison offices in Brussels. Expert evaluator for the Commission since FP5, he has served on the Board of Directors of CUP2000, and coordinated the organisational secretariat of the 2014 SET Plan Conference during the Italian EU Presidency.



Roxane Feller, Director general, Animal Health Europe

The association works to highlight the importance of healthy pets and farm animals and to demonstrate the reliability and value of animal health solutions to society. Roxane has also worked in two trade associations, one representing the food and drink manufacturing industry in Europe and the other European farmers and Agri-cooperatives, acquiring experience in food and feed safety-related issues, animal health, welfare and sustainability. Roxane is a trained lawyer.



Tor Grande is Rector at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)

He was Pro-Rector for Research and Dissemination in 2021 – 2023 and has previously been Vice-Dean for Research at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Head of the Department of Materials Science and Engineering. Grande is professor in chemistry and materials science and has broad experience with teaching, research, innovation, and collaboration with industry. He has been visiting researcher at NIRIM, Japan and University of Rennes, France. He has been on sabbatical leave at the EPFL in Switzerland and the Northwestern University in the USA. Grande has extensive experience in research evaluation including ERC evaluation panels. In 2009, he received the Gender Equality Award at NTNU.



Kerstin Jorna, Director-General, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW)

She is a German national and a civil servant at the European Commission where she has held various positions, amongst others as Head of Cabinet of several Commissioners and different Director posts in the areas of Intellectual Property, Innovation and Standards, Single Market Policy, Regulation and Implementation. Since December 2016 she was Deputy Director General in the Economic and Financial Affairs Directorate General. Her areas of responsibility included, amongst others, macroeconomic surveillance of EU Member States, structural reforms, finance matters including the European Investment Plan and coordination with international financial institutions.



Eszter Lakos, Member of the European Parliament

Eszter Lakos (EPP, Hungary) was elected to the European Parliament in 2024 as a member of the TISZA Party. In the Parliament, MEP Lakos serves as a member of the Committee on Industry, Research, and Energy (ITRE), Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), Committee on Security and Defence (SEDE) and special committee on the European Democracy Shield (EUDS). She is member of STOA, the Parliament's Science and Technology Options Assessment Panel. Before assuming her mandate, she worked at the European Institute of Technology & Innovation (EIT) in Budapest and as a research attaché at the Permanent Representation of Hungary to the EU, representing Hungary in Horizon Europe negotiations. She holds a PhD in International Law & Economics from Bocconi University in Milan.



Pär-Erik Martinsson, Rector Advisor, Luleå University of Technology

Pär-Erik Martinsson is Rector's Advisor at Luleå University of Technology and Director of ProcessIT Innovations, a research and innovation platform advancing industrial digitalisation and sustainable transformation. He holds a PhD in Industrial Electronics from LTU and has over two decades of experience in strategic research collaboration and EU innovation policy. He represents LTU in several European partnerships, including Clean Steel, A.SPIRE, and INSIDE Industry Association, and serves as an expert advisor to Vinnova and the European Commission on industrial transformation and digital innovation. His work focuses on strengthening LTU's strategic partnerships and engagement in European research and innovation ecosystems through evidence-based policy and cross-sector collaboration.



Željko Pazin, Executive Director, EFFRA / Made in Europe Partnership

As head of the EFFRA office, Željko Pazin is responsible for the overall management of the association and political outreach. EFFRA is an industry-driven association, promoting the development of innovative manufacturing technologies in Europe. EFFRA is engaged, as the official partner, in the European Union's 'Made in Europe' Partnership under Horizon Europe. EFFRA brings together the European manufacturing stakeholder community composed of companies, industry associations, research institutes, technical university, clusters and national manufacturing initiatives. Prior to EFFRA, Željko Pazin worked among others at a technology industry association, at the European Institutions, at a Chamber of Commerce and at an Economic Policy Department of a German University.



Francesco Regoli, Vice-rector, UNIVPM

Former Director of the Department of Life and Environmental Sciences, Vice Rector for Research at Polytechnic University of Marche. Full Professor of Applied and Cellular Biology, Chair of 'Ecotoxicology' and 'Biological and Ecological Risk Assessment'. He is the Italian Delegate for the European Mission on Ocean Health (Restore our Ocean and Waters) and since 2024 he has been part of the United Nations Pool of Experts for the assessment of Ocean and Human Health. He is an expert in marine pollution from traditional and emerging pollutants, environmental toxicology and risk assessment. He has coordinated several international and national projects, being also evaluator of research proposals for several international Agencies. From 2022 he is included in the Highly Cited Researchers, representing the top 1% of the most influential scientists in their field worldwide. He is the author of almost 280 publications in international journals with a h-index 70 (Scopus).



Professor Shivani Sharma, Deputy Pro-VC, Research & Enterprise, Aston University

Prof. Shivani Sharma - Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Enterprise at the College of Business and Social Sciences at the Aston University in Birmingham, the UK. With a background in psychology, her research focuses on health equity in management of long-term conditions, organisational and systemic factors that impact access and outcomes in health services, and the role of inclusive research cultures in bridging the health divide. Apart from many academic leadership roles, she also chairs the Board of the Swindon South Asian Performing Arts Centre, serves as a Trustee at Kidney Care UK, and participates in the Police Now Diversity and Inclusion Committee, co-chairs the BAPIO Institute for Health Research within the Association of Physicians of Indian Origin. In 2023, Prof. Sharma was listed as one of 50 leaders in the UK who bring kindness, transparency and equity centre stage in their approach.



Luke Southan, Head of Research Commercialisation & Director of SPARK UK

Luke Southan heads up the technology transfer function of Aston University. A biologist by training he worked for a major diagnostic firm helping develop several diagnostics currently in clinical use before moving into academia. He spent two years carrying out research at the Charite Universitätsmedizin Berlin before returning to the UK and taking up his post at Aston. He has supported over £55 Million of public and private investment into technologies being developed at the University in the last seven years. Further to this Luke is the Director of SPARK UK, the UK branch of the Stanford preclinical accelerator programme which supports 15 Universities across the UK, and COO of Estuar Pharmaceuticals, a preclinical stage therapeutics company developing novel small molecule entities for the prevention of cerebral edema.



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