

7th OpenEU Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Date: 28 May 2026

Time: from 11.00h to 12.30h CEST

Meeting Venue: online

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/enj-wmsm-wvk>

List of attendees

- Àlex Hinojo, OpenEU Secretary general
- Alfonso Guerra, OpenEU Office
- Anna-Maria Atanasova Atanasova, OpenEU SC, UVT
- Anna Marinova Ivanova, Vice-Rector, UVT
- Chris Christodoulides, Director of Administration & Finance, OUC
- Diogo Casanova, ExBo chair, Vice-Rector, UAb
- Fernando Val Garijo, WP6 leader, Deputy Vice-Rector, UNED
- George Ubachs, Managing Director, EADTU
- Haukur Logi Karlsson, Dean of the Law Department, BU
- Inese Kokina, Vice-Rector for studies, DU
- Jelena Tamane, DU
- Kasper Kristensen, WP7 leader, Head of Rector's Office & Director of Research BU
- Miguel Rodríguez Cuevas; UNED, OpenEU SC
- Leonel Morgado, WP5 leader, Full Professor, UAb
- Pastora Martínez Samper, OpenEU Coordinator and WP1 leader, UOC
- Petra C. de Weerd-Nederhof, ExBo chair, Dean Faculty of Science, OUNL
- Petru Curseu, WP4 leader, Professor, Faculty of Management, OUNL
- Sebastian Lauritz, WP2 leader, FeU
- Sonja Van Ingen, Institutional Coordinator's board chair, OUNL
- Sylvia Velikova, WP8 leader, UVT
- Trine Jensen, representing Hilligje van't Land, Secretary General, IAU

List of excused attendees

- Achilles Kameas, WP3 leader, Professor, HOU
- Athanasios Michiotis, Vice-Rector, HOU
- Laura Alba-Juez, Vice-Rector, UNED
- Manel Jiménez-Morales, Vice-Rector, UOC
- Torsten Linß, Vice-Rector, FeU

Agenda

1. Approval of the current agenda and previous meeting minutes
2. Updates from the Erasmus+ Programme
3. Updates from WPLs, RC and SC

4. OpenEU budget update
5. Updates on deviations on the Grant Agreement
6. OpenEU Innovation agenda on Digital education
7. Expansion of OpenEU educational model to align it with EDL criteria
8. Mutual trust agreement for PhD activities
9. Next meetings in 2026
10. Any other business

Minutes

1. Approval of the current agenda and previous meeting minutes

For approval

The ExBo members were invited to approve the agenda as well as the 6th ExBo meeting minutes. The minutes were open to be amended by the ExBo members. The agenda was open to additional items under item 5 - *Any other business*.

Annex 1: Sixth Exbo meeting minutes

2. Updates from the Erasmus+ Programme

For information only. Written updates. Commented by request

From the EC Alliance coordinators' working retreat (BXL 14/04, [summary](#)) and FOREU4ALL Policy Learning Lab on Sustainable Funding for Alliances (20/04, [recording](#))

- Transformation cannot be dissociated from sustainability. The EC is looking for institutional transformation AND sector transformation
 - Where do we add value? Visibility and impact are key to be incorporated in the OpenEU narrative and initiatives.
- Funding The intention for the MFF 2028-2034 is a new funding model for the Alliances to better connect with objectives, so:
 - with a longer timeframe (from 5 to 7 years)
 - with additional national/regional funding streams.

On the European Degree Label (EDL) next steps, the previous version of EDL criteria guidelines included an exception to mobility formats (Criterion A.8) but it has been finally withdrawn because of the insistence of several Member States. These guidelines are to be approved by the EU Council Education Committee on 26 May 2026 and to be published in June. Agreed to send letter to VP Minzatu and team, inform all affected partners and our student council, as other follow up actions.

The UK will be back on Erasmus+ by January 2027. RC agreed that OpenEU coordinator will informally contact the Open University UK asking them if they will be willing to participate in a future call as an OpenEU full partner.

3. Updates from the WPLs, Rectors Council and Student Council

For information only. Written updates. Commented by request

During the recent joint meeting between the Rectors' Council (RC) and the External Advisory Board (EAB), both bodies aligned on shaping OpenEU's strategic narrative and European advocacy. The RC emphasized critical objectives such as scaling employability through "skills at scale," expanding digital education research, and lobbying for advancements in national and EU distance-learning legislation. To counter traditional academic prejudices, the EAB advised OpenEU to strongly promote its combined focus on digital excellence and social inclusion, while expanding policy outreach beyond standard education departments to address broader European challenges.

The project progress report as of April 2026 highlighted significant results across three core pillars. In Education, milestones included the accreditation of a Joint BSc in Software Development and Testing, the training of 52 city officials from 27 EU cities in evidence-based policymaking, the co-design of an Open Master's program on Climate Change, and a submission to the Erasmus+ European Degree Exploratory Action. Within Research and Innovation, the *OpenEU Innovation Agenda on Digital Education* was finalized for publication, 10 collaborative workshops were held with non-academic partners, 144 PhD students attended the inaugural hybrid Winter School in Athens, and two proposals were submitted to Horizon Europe calls. Community engagement efforts also demonstrated strong traction through an active joint participatory platform, the completion of over 80 staff exchanges, and the finalization of preparations for the upcoming OpenEU Festival.

Complementing these initiatives, the Student Council advanced its governance and outreach efforts by initiating the onboarding of a third representative by each university to the board. Furthermore, council members represented the OpenEU initiative at various European student forums.

Alliance updates:

- **Open Master on Climate Change curriculum co-designed (WP2)**
- **Upskilling with Eurocities (WP2):** 52 city officials from 27 EU cities in the course (3 ECTS) on evidence-based policymaking with Eurocities
- **OpenEU Rural network survey (WP7)** +500 answers by OpenEU students so far (more to come) distributed across all alliance members
- **OpenEU Innovation Agenda on Digital Education (WP5):** Report to be published with the result of a Delphi process of 82 experts of the Think and do Tank
- **R&I workshops on SDGs (WP4):** 10 workshops (one per partner) with +500 stakeholders from academia, industry, public administration, and civil society.
- **OpenEU Festival led by students (WP7)** 23–25 October 2026, online. Tracks:
 - The Democratic Self
 - Deep Democracy, Organizations & DEI
 - Governance, Health & Society
 - Digital Democracy & Futures
 - Education & Knowledge
 - Culture, Language & Expression
 - Festival will engage students and other audience by various interactive means
- **Role model campaign (WP3):** Social media videos targeting people from the 4 underrepresented groups
- **Advocacy European Degree (WP1,8):** EU advocacy to recognize virtual and blended

- mobilities as an acceptable criterion in the ED label
- **Extra funding:** As part of the advocacy strategy, and actively looking for further funding opportunities to complement running activities or envision new but related ones

4. OpenEU budget update

For information only. Written updates. Commented by request

Follow up on the evolution of the OpenEU budget, as well as presenting an update of the expenses that have been made to date by each partner.

An updated version of the OpenEU budget has been reviewed and validated by WP leaders and is now established as the reference working document among all members of the decentralised Quality and Management Office (QMO). The revised version improves clarity by linking each budget line to its corresponding sub-task and year of implementation, facilitating more consistent tracking and coordination across the Alliance.

In parallel, based on the internal financial reports submitted, an overview of expenses incurred to date by each partner has been compiled and is being monitored at Secretariat level. This preliminary analysis shows varying levels of budget implementation across partners.

It is important to recall that, in order to receive the additional 40% pre-financing after the completion of the mid-term report, at least 70% of the initial pre-financing must be declared in the financial statement. If this threshold is not reached, the subsequent payment will be reduced proportionally.

Partners are therefore encouraged to closely monitor their expenditure and, where appropriate, consider the timely declaration of eligible costs (including personnel costs) to ensure adequate budget absorption.

Petra C. de Weerd-Nederhof emphasized the necessity of establishing enhanced sources for content distribution within the alliance.

Anna Marinova Ivanova addressed previous communication activities, noting that a consensus has been reached regarding a responsibility agreement for these specific cases. This includes the WP3 proposal for the role model video campaign and multimedia resources, which will be submitted to WP1 for further consideration.

5. Deviations from the Grant Agreement

For information and approval

Updates on deviations from the Grant Agreement concerning Work Package (WP) changes and re-focusing are required for information and discussion. Specifically:

- Subtask T4.2.2 (Doctoral Stays Funding) requires an update regarding a change in its funding focus.
- Subtask T7.3.2 (OpenEU Volunteer Programme) is to be transferred from UNED to BU.
- Subtask T3.2.2 (Digital readiness training for OpenEU students from the four under-represented groups) is scheduled to transfer from BU to HOU.

In case of deviations that need to be amended, the ExBo may propose rescheduling or new budget measures for approval to the Rector's Council.

6. OpenEU Innovation agenda on Digital education

For information and discussion

Presentation and discussion of the OpenEU Innovation Agenda on Digital Education, a document developed through the Think and Do Tank (TaDT) process to establish strategic priorities for the digital transformation of European higher education. The Agenda, based on stakeholder consensus and empirical validation, advocates for a people-centered approach, emphasizing the need for smart, secure, and interoperable digital infrastructures, alongside the development of key competences in educators and students, such as AI literacy and critical thinking. Furthermore, it integrates principles of ethics, institutional governance, and data protection—specifically transparency, equity, and accountability—to position OpenEU as a strategic contributor to a more inclusive and resilient European higher education ecosystem. The discussion will cover the integration of these priorities within the project's research clusters and will consider presenting a dissemination plan or similar.

Annex 2: OpenEU Innovation agenda on Digital education

7. Expansion of the OpenEU educational model to align it with the European Degree Label criteria

For presentation and discussion

Following the mandate from the OpenEU Lisbon meeting in February 2026, the WP6 Board undertook a review of the Joint Programmes and Degrees Framework to align it with the new European Degree Label (EDL) criteria. Opting to add a supplementary document rather than amend the original text, the WP6 Board engaged in three intensive meetings and extensive consultations with partners and student representatives. This collaborative effort culminated in the document titled "Expansion of the OpenEU Educational Model," adopted by consensus in April 2026. Taking a pedagogical rather than legalistic approach, the "Expansion" outlines eight basic principles and guidance for creating a Joint European Degree, and is intended to be read in conjunction with the existing Framework until the alliance considers a future consolidated version.

Expansion of the OpenEU educational model approved by WPB as agreed in Lisbon:

- Starting point: Each university maintains its own pedagogical model, while simultaneously participating in a shared methodological proposal at alliance level. Proposed Principles of the Expanded Model
- PRINCIPLE 1 · Student-Centred Model and European Learning Experience
- PRINCIPLE 2 · Digital Pedagogical Design (Not Merely Online Format)
- PRINCIPLE 3 · Methodological Flexibility within a Shared Framework
- PRINCIPLE 4 · Learning Outcomes and Competences
- PRINCIPLE 5 · Coherent, Transparent and Recognised Assessment
- PRINCIPLE 6 · Mobility Integrated into Programme Design
- PRINCIPLE 7 · Flexibility, Inclusion, and Lifelong Learning
- PRINCIPLE 8 · Alignment with the European Degree

Addenda: Guidance on the Elements of the Pedagogical Minimum Denominator.

Rectors liked the approach.

Annex 3: Expansion of the OpenEU Educational Model

8. Mutual trust agreement for PhD activities

For discussion

The Board discussed a proposal to establish an alliance-wide "Mutual Trust Agreement" designed to bypass existing institutional recognition barriers. By leveraging the flexible regulatory environment for PhD courses, the agreement aimed to ensure that all partners automatically recognize each other's doctoral educational activities. No formal agreement was reached at this stage; however, the Board agreed to continue these discussions.

9. Next meetings in 2026

For information only. Written updates. Commented by request

This year, the ExBo will meet when required, and at least quarterly. Next ExBo planned meetings in 2026:

- Exbo Q3 Sep 16
- Exbo EADTU hybrid meeting Oct 29-30 TBC
- Exbo Q4 Dec 16

10. Any other business

For information and discussion

The ExBo members were invited to expose any other item before ending the meeting.