

# The Brescia Declaration

The **European Universities Initiative** was launched in 2019. Since then, **65** European university alliances have been accredited by the European Commission, thus involving more than **570** higher education institutions of all types located all over Europe.

The initiative has sparked unprecedented enthusiasm among numerous higher education and research institutions, which have quickly and massively adhered to it. Moreover, numerous subsequent reports have provided a **positive assessment** of the work and experimentation that have been carried out so far by these new and innovative European bodies.

The **UNITA *Universitas Montium* alliance** was accredited in 2020 and now counts **10** founding members<sup>1</sup> from five Romance-language countries (Romania, Italy, France, Spain and Portugal) and **2** close associate partners<sup>2</sup> in Switzerland and Ukraine. Besides sharing the use of **Romance languages**, these institutions are all located in **rural mountain and border areas** and firmly committed to contribute to the development of their eco-systems, a unique feature that entails shared challenges and issues which, in turn, facilitate cooperation.

After an initial phase (2020-2023), during which the member universities convened and implemented the first collaborations, the ongoing consolidation phase fosters a deepening and broadening of **common actions**, as well as reflections on **long-term strategies** and a forward-looking vision.

As European public universities, we feel the responsibility to actively contribute to the **development of a European higher education, research and innovation area**, capable of attracting and motivating talented students and staff, and promoting excellence and competitiveness. We also bear in mind that we have a prominent role to play in **promoting European citizenship** and values of peace, human dignity and human rights, equity, diversity, inclusion and democracy.

Our long-term vision for UNITA is inspired by the **confederal approach**, a model of political integration in which each constituent member retains its sovereignty and the right to leave. An institutionalized confederal system of this kind seeks to exercise all the prerogatives and missions of a university, and to manage common activities (education, research, innovation, etc.) on a European scale at the highest level of quality, including that of awarding the much-awaited **European degree**.

<sup>1</sup> Università degli Studi di Torino, Universidad de Zaragoza, Université Savoie Mont Blanc, Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara, Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, Universidade da Beira Interior, Università degli Studi di Brescia, Universidad Pública de Navarra, Universitatea Transilvania din Brașov, Instituto Politécnico da Guarda.

<sup>2</sup> Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale, Чернівецький національний університет імені Юрія Федьковича (Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University).

Our ultimate goal is therefore to build a genuine *European confederal university*, which pursues common university missions. We are aware that such a goal implies a form of convergence of our individual strategies, the homogenization of the teaching standards - in the perspective of the **Union of Skills** - and we firmly believe that the institutionalization of university alliances is a prerequisite for their sustainability and long-term commitment of their communities to consolidate the alliance.

We therefore appeal to the European Commission, the Regions and the Member States to **provide the legal framework and status**, and the **necessary funding** to achieve the ambitious objective of building a genuine European university.

From our side, we, the partners of the UNITA alliance, are prepared and committed to work on these issues of importance for the future of Europe.

*This Declaration was approved in Brescia on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and delivered in Pamplona on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025.*

Francesco Castelli

Francesco Castelli (Mar 6, 2025 16:59 GMT+1)

Ioan Vasile Abrudan

Stefano Geuna - Rector

Stefano Geuna - Rector (Mar 13, 2025 17:14 GMT+1)

Ioan Vasile Abrudan

Ioan Vasile Abrudan (Mar 10, 2025 18:45 GMT+1)

Joaquim Briggs

Joaquim Briggs (Mar 11, 2025 11:34 GMT)

Philippe Briand

Philippe Briand (Mar 7, 2025 09:11 GMT+1)

Joaquim Briggs

Joaquim Briggs (Mar 11, 2025 11:34 GMT)

Ramón Gonzalo

Ramón Gonzalo (Mar 7, 2025 10:19 GMT+1)

Jean-Michel Verdier

Jean-Michel Verdier (Mar 12, 2025 08:46 GMT+1)

Ruslan Biloskurskyi

Ruslan Biloskurskyi

Mário Lino Barata Raposo (Mar 13, 2025 16:53 GMT)

Ruslan Biloskurskyi (Mar 9, 2025 13:45 GMT+2)