



The European University of Post-Industrial Cities

JOINT STUDENT DECLARATION

In the European University of Post-Industrial Cities (UNIC) we are not developing education, we are revolutionizing it. We, the students, are truly at the heart of this European University. From its inception, UNIC is being co-developed by students and university staff working hand in hand. Together we have the clear aim of building an institution that fosters student-centred learning and teaching, that creates societal impact in the local community and beyond and which enables international mobility for students regardless of their different backgrounds. UNIC brings together eight universities that have all had to find a way to strive in, by European standards, uniquely challenging post-industrial environments. Building a common European University based on these foundations offers the opportunity to turn a disadvantage into an advantage and truly harness the transformative potential of diversity. Therefore we, as the representatives of the eight Student Bodies involved in UNIC, wholeheartedly support the creation of The European University of Post-Industrial Cities.

Beginning

The world around us has become more complex not only because of the technological advances of our time but also because of the socio-cultural developments that Europe has gone through as a result of years of migration to and between the European Member States. These changes bring about new questions about navigating diverse environments and generating opportunities for innovation, so that these environments may grow to their optimal potential. To profit from these opportunities it is more important than ever for us to acquire a deeper understanding of the superdiverse milieu we live and study in and how different social issues relate to each other in order to find effective solutions.

UNIC offers us an excellent setting in which we can investigate, develop, learn and comprehend complex issues. Universities need to focus on the needs of students when it comes to developing such an environment and nobody is better placed to identify these needs than students themselves. From our perspective UNIC has always been remarkably open to critical

student input, and by co-creating the Erasmus+ proposal with students, it has gone much further even, thus ensuring that the student perspective is included in every step. We are confident that this will lead to a co-creative institution-building process that ultimately delivers a truly student-centred European University.

By putting students at the heart of the university, UNIC will bridge the divisions between research and teaching which have bothered higher education institutions for many years. Rethinking research, teaching and learning holistically again and considering students not as passive consumers but as emerging scholars and active co-creators in all areas of the university and its surroundings, will allow UNIC universities to be in touch with the zeitgeist and actively engage with emerging global trends in knowledge creation and transmission and thus remain relevant in the fast-changing global information economy.

Belonging

At universities in post-industrial cities, the possibilities to learn from different perspectives on how to tackle contemporary challenges are endless. The UNIC post-industrial campuses will be places where students are taken out of their academic bubble into everyday life in the city. We will be given the opportunity to actively participate in the transformation of society by investigating, discussing and developing an understanding of local environments and, finally, by creating research-based solutions to its problems and challenges.

At the heart of UNIC is the importance of experiencing and interacting with other cultures. UNIC will further this through mobility by the creation

of increased exchange opportunities, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. On our campuses, mobility is a massive challenge for many students, because they are tied down by work, family and other social obligations or disabilities. UNIC aims to overcome these obstacles and create equal opportunities for all students, staff and researchers, regardless of their backgrounds and/or personal limitations. This will be done by rethinking mobility as integrating physical as well as virtual mobility and by creating virtual learning environments that become an integral part of studying, researching and working at any of the UNIC campuses.

Becoming

By working together at every level with the other universities and their local communities, students develop their intercultural knowledge and are empowered to create societal impact. Not just within their own university and their local community, but on a European level. UNIC embodies European Citizenship. When students start their academic career within UNIC, they will feel part of UNIC and European civil society from the very first day.

The value of studying at the UNIC European University for us, as students, will be that we are actively contributing to the renaissance of post-

industrial cities and at the same time developing a skill set that is uniquely useful in a future full of complex, diverse and rapidly changing new challenges. Being confronted with multiple super-diverse environments and discovering many different approaches to creating social impact in a diverse yet similar set of local communities will give us the knowledge and skills that allow us to engage with similar problems much more easily in the future. This way, UNIC students will become leading representatives of inclusive universities as well as active members of European society. Their accomplishments will be an inspiration for the rest of Europe and the world.

Creating inclusion, mobility and impact
for ourselves and for the students
of the future