

On the UNICA 2nd PR and Communication Workshop:

The group of participants was composed of PR responsables, communication directors and academic authorities, with a nice mixture of nationalities spread throughout Europe.

The workshop provided a twofold added value. Firstly, the presentation of case studies on how to amplify the identity of a university and the exchange of experiences in branding enhanced the professional capacity of the participants. Secondly, the informal interactions during the meeting and during evening events in the beautiful city of Ljubljana created networks for future use. Globalisation does not only change economy but also forces universities to brand their unique qualities very specifically, in order to attract the best students and researchers from other countries. Universities must intensify their information efforts and adapt their communication strategies. For this, the UNICA workshop offered a nice learning opportunity.

On the future of the universities in a period where governments and companies are cutting costs.

Universities are rapidly learning to become efficient organizations with cost reducing operations that still allow high quality performance. Throughout Europe, they are implementing strategic plans with a clear goal, supported by strategic actions, based on priorities. At the same time, we observe that nowadays, the academic staff has a complex and time-consuming job: teaching, developing research projects, doing actual research, and relating academic activities to society. If governments want young people to develop competences to strengthen the creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship of the country's economy, then the governments have to provide sufficient financial means to encourage both students and academics to achieve that goal.

Universities realize that they have a responsibility towards the society. Universities are strong contributors to the future of a country. Their scientists perform research with results that impact on the evolution of the society. Their professors educate students to become graduates who are able to contribute to the progress of a society and its population. But the problems that societies face are very often global problems. This holds for all possible areas: finance, economy, health, environment ... To address these global issues, international experience and competences such as creativity and entrepreneurship (which are stimulated through international experience) are a must. Universities can take up their responsibility by stimulating their international activities, extending them, and bringing them to a higher level. They owe it to their stakeholders, students, researchers and society, to strive for the best. Interacting at high level with the rest of the world is a way to achieve that.

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