



## **The European University of Post-Industrial Cities**

D6.6.1 General UNIC Conference Report (Year 1)



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# The European University of Post-Industrial Cities

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# General UNIC Conference Report

## 1. Executive Summary

On 11 June 2021 from 13:00 – 17:00 CET, the European University of Post-Industrial Cities (UNIC) hosted its first annual conference *Regenerating Post-Industrial Cities: The Role of Universities*. The conference was an important milestone, as it was the first UNIC event to bring together students, staff, associate partners, and local citizens from all eight partner universities and cities.

### 1.1. Introduction

The conference was organized by the UNIC team at Erasmus University Rotterdam on behalf of the European Commission. The conference was originally planned to take place physically in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, however due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, the conference took place virtually. Holding the conference virtually allowed the event to be more inclusive and sustainable, as attendees did not have to incur travel costs to take part in the conference.

### 1.2. The programme

Alliance Coordinator, Prof. Dr. Peter Scholten of Erasmus University Rotterdam moderated the conference and opened the event by introducing the conference program and welcoming the panelists of the first plenary session.

The first plenary session to take place was the *Opening Ceremony*, where a panel of speakers introduced the UNIC consortium and provided a brief overview of the UNIC ambitions and achievements.

The second plenary session and first round table, *The European Study Experience: The Future of European Higher Education* prompted a panel of stakeholders to discuss what European Universities can contribute to UNIC's

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collective future.

The third plenary session and second round table, *Meeting the Challenges of Post-Industrial Cities* focused a panel discussion on cities and the role that UNIC can play in their renewal.

Following the plenary sessions and a short break, a series of parallel sessions were held. The first parallel session took the form of a *UNIC Management Board meeting*. This session was closed to the public.

In parallel to the UNIC Management Board meeting, a public session occurred on *Solving post-industrial societal challenges with UNIC CityLabs*. This session featured an interactive workshop on how multi-stakeholder cooperation can help to solve post-industrial challenges.

The third and final parallel session was a public session on *Superdiversity and the Covid-19 Pandemic*. This session featured a panel of speakers presenting their recent research on key UNIC topics.

In a closing address, current Rector of the European University of Post-Industrial Cities and President of the Board of Erasmus University, Prof. dr. Ed Brinksma invited speakers from each parallel session to report on their session. Brinksma concluded the event by celebrating the progress that the UNIC Alliance has made so far in year one, but also reminded the audience how important it is that the UNIC consortium does not lose sight of its key values, like openness and inclusivity as it continues into the next phases of institution-building.

Details of the programme for our Annual Conference can be seen in Annex 1.

### 1.3. The audience

The conference was publicised on the UNIC website, in the Spring 2021 Newsletter, and across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter to encourage attendance. In addition, each of the eight participating partner universities distributed promotional material using their own networks and channels. Examples of the promotional material can be found in Annex 2.

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Attendance levels at the conference were higher than anticipated, and the audience participated actively in the interactive sessions of the conference. To reach a greater audience, the recordings of the conference will be published on the UNIC Youtube channel.

Over 140 participants from across Europe (and beyond) attended the conference. The figure below shows a map which highlights the many countries where participants viewed the conference.



## 2. Event activities and key messages

### 2.1. Plenary sessions

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## 2.1.1 Opening Ceremony

The first open plenary session, the “Opening Ceremony,” introduced UNIC and provided a brief overview of UNIC’s ambitions and achievements.

Speakers included:

-European Commission Deputy Head of UNIT for Higher Education Tine Delva,

-President of Erasmus University and Chair of Management Board UNIC Prof. Dr. Ed Brinksma

-Rabia Demirelli, student of Ruhr University Bochum and representative of the UNIC Student Board.

**Key messages:**

**Rector of the European University of Post-Industrial Cities and President of the Board of Erasmus University, Prof. dr. Ed Brinksma** introduced the first plenary session *Opening Ceremony* by reflecting on the accomplishments of the consortium in the six months since the official start in October 2020. Prof. Brinksma discussed the challenges of launching a new European University, especially under the special circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. Brinksma argued that despite the difficulties faced by the pandemic, that the UNIC consortium has not lost sight of its ultimate goal: to educate the next generation of leaders that will navigate our societies and cities. Brinksma also recognized that the pandemic has shown that virtual mobility can be a useful instrument to create a more inclusive education model, which is also a key value of the UNIC consortium.

**Tina Delva, European Commission Deputy Head of UNIT for Higher Education,** followed by congratulating the UNIC consortium on securing the opportunity to participate in the competitive European Universities Initiative (EUI) and paving the way for other universities. In particular, the UNIC focus on post-industrial cities and broadening educational opportunities for non-traditional students was an attractive aspect to the EC. Deputy Head Delva encouraged the UNIC Alliance to continue its work in co-creating the European University closely with its students and city stakeholders. Delva also highlighted the fact that the

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European Commission is committed to work together with Member States to ensure that initiatives like the EUIs face fewer issues and instead can count on more seamless cooperation across borders.

**Rabia Demirelli, Student Board representative from Ruhr University Bochum** took the floor next to reflect on the first months of UNIC from the perspective of students. Representative Demirelli focused on the changes in lifestyle brought on by the pandemic and how these changes effected education. Online lectures have become the norm and hybrid education is likely to be a permanent aspect of learning in the future. While online lectures required an adjustment for many students, Demirelli embraced the unexpected benefits that it has brought. Demirelli argued that online or hybrid education opens a new realm of inclusivity, especially for students with physical disabilities or students that experience learning difficulties. Demirelli celebrated the inclusivity of online education, but also highlighted the fact that developing hybrid education still needs to fine-tuned and that it can still lead to inequalities in learning. Particularly, a good internet connection is required to effectively follow online or hybrid education, and this is an aspect that higher education institutions must keep in mind when developing their education programs.

## 2.1.2 Round table I: “The European Study Experience: The Future of European Higher Education”

The second plenary session, “The European Study Experience: The Future of European Higher Education” prompted a panel of stakeholders to discuss what European Universities can contribute to our collective future.

Panelists included:

- Rector of Koç University Prof. Dr. Umran İnan
- Rector of Ruhr University Bochum Prof. Dr. Axel Schölmerich
- Rector of University of Zagreb Prof. Dr. Damir Boras
- Robert Queckenberg, student at Ruhr University Bochum and representative of the UNIC Student Board.
- Vice Rector of Academic and International Affairs at Ruhr University Bochum

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Prof. Dr. Kornelia Freitag served as the moderator.

**Key messages:**

The following questions were answered by the panelists:

*What is the importance of UNIC for your university? Why did you decide to co-found UNIC?*

**Rector Koc University, Prof. Dr. Umran İnan** indicated that his university hopes to internationalize their student population through UNIC, with particular focus on their undergraduate student body. In addition, the UNIC focus on superdiversity is highly valued by Koc University, due to the diversity in the city of Istanbul and the country of Turkey more broadly. Prof. İnan is hopeful that initiatives such as UNIC can stimulate momentum to offer opportunities to the many diverse populations of Turkey.

*In which ways do you think UNIC will develop in 10 or 20 years from now?*

**Rector of Ruhr University Bochum Prof. Dr. Axel Schölmerich** discussed the importance of higher education institutions and the impact they have on cultural traditions. While science and academia has driven innovation in the past, it has also tended to exclusive and elitist – Rector Schölmerich sees the future of UNIC as a way to bring a better balance to society and create inclusive opportunities.

*As a representative of the student board, what do you think is the biggest challenge for European Universities and what do you think we need to focus on most?*

**Robert Queckenberg, Student Board Representative from Ruhr University Bochum**, argued that we are currently in a transformative period, particularly due to the events of the past year (Covid-19 pandemic), and not just in terms of digitization, but also societal transformations. While it is not possible to predict the future, Representative Queckenberg emphasized that UNIC is special because it gives students the opportunity to develop skills of resilience and to be actively involved in the production of education. Queckenberg recognized

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the connection with cities and local businesses as a key strength of UNIC, especially the challenge-based education model that UNIC has employed together with civil society actors.

*What new aspect do you think UNIC is bringing to higher education? And are these new methods that we develop meant to replace traditional methods or is our work supposed to complement what already exists?*

**Rector of University of Zagreb, Prof. Dr. Damir Boras**, discussed that UNIC aims to bring new knowledge and evidence to the European Higher Education Area, and by so doing so, will play a key role in setting a foundation for new education policies in the future. As UNIC faces a multitude of challenges related to disruptive innovation in social or socio economic cycles, our institutions have the opportunity to align values and new methods to best meet the needs students and teachers. In the Zagreb context, their university has faced great adversity from two recent events: the Covid-19 pandemic and the destructive earthquake that rocked the city of Zagreb in late 2020. While these events challenged Zagreb, ultimately the university found new methods to continue providing an education to their students. In replying to the second question, Rector Boras stated that the new methods that UNIC is developing are meant to complement more traditional learning methods, not supplant them.

The second plenary session concluded with a final reflection from each panelist on which key messages they would like the audience to take with them. Common themes named by the panelists were: empowering students to take an active role in building the university; UNIC is already hard at work to fulfill the promise of increased virtual and physical mobility and to provide greater access to high quality education throughout society; the European Universities will only succeed once they are freed from shackles of too many bureaucratic rules and regulations – they should take advantage of this moment to innovate; UNIC’s superdiversity is a unique selling point and this should be harnessed to enhance creativity.

### 2.1.3 Round table II: “Meeting the Challenges of Post-Industrial Cities”

The third plenary session and second round table, “Meeting the Challenges of

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Post-Industrial Cities” focused a panel discussion on our cities and the role that UNIC can play in their renewal.

Panelists included:

- Rector of University of Liège Prof. Dr. Pierre Wolper
- Vice Rector of University of Oulu Dr. Arto Maaninen
- Vice Rector of International Relations of University of Deusto Prof. Dr. Alex Rayon
- President of Erasmus University Rotterdam Prof. Dr. Ed Brinksma.

-UNIC Program Manager of Erasmus University Rotterdam Samira Abbadi served as moderator.

**Key messages:**

The following questions were answered by the panelists:

*Why do you think it is important to have a university of post-industrial cities?*

**Rector of University of Liège Prof. Dr. Pierre Wolper** discussed the importance of Liege as a city of industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While a lot has changed since then, he believes it’s important that UNIC unites universities located in post-industrial settings because it gives them common ground and the opportunity to share best practices. He also sees the University of Liege’s participation in UNIC as a way to attract international talent and attention.

**Vice Rector of University of Oulu Dr. Arto Maaninen** followed by discussing the experience of Oulu, Finland. The city of Oulu experienced a major transformation when, in 2014, Nokia laid off approximately 3400 highly educated workers within a two-week span. The university of Oulu played a key role in the recovery of the city and Vice Rector Maaninen sees UNIC as a place where post-industrial cities and universities can benchmark transitions by sharing data with each other.

**President of Erasmus University Rotterdam Prof. Dr. Ed Brinksma** took the

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floor next and discussed the context of Rotterdam. Brinksma considers post-industrial cities as hotbeds of innovation, which need to go through transitions periodically to ensure that the city evolves and does not remain stagnant. Rotterdam is a wonderful example of a port city and an industrial city that is facing huge problems in respect to the energy transition, and Brinksma sees participation in UNIC as an opportunity to face these difficult challenges using innovative solutions.

**Vice Rector of International Relations of University of Deusto Prof. Dr. Alex Rayon** delved into the history of Bilbao as a former titan in the coal industry. Bilbao had built a society completely around the coal industry, but when the use of coal fell out of favor, the city experienced job loss, which had major social and economic consequences. Bilbao had to rebrand itself and has seen an impressive transition in the recent past, however, Rayon sees the importance of participating in the consortium because these cities can learn from the experiences of the other cities.

*What are the major challenges your city is facing and how could UNIC contribute to addressing these challenges?*

**Rector of University of Liège Prof. Dr. Pierre Wolper** identified the changing type of industries in Liege as a recent challenge, particularly the change to biotech and ICT industries. The University of Liege now has the challenge of educating citizens in these fields, so they can successfully enter the workforce. Wolper looks to the UNIC consortium as a way to share experiences with the fellow university partners and to learn how to best serve their respective communities.

**Vice Rector of University of Oulu Dr. Arto Maaninen** identified the shift to digitization and sustainability as challenges to Oulu. Oulu desires to become a carbon neutral city and hopes to attract international talent to help accomplish this goal. Maaninen recognizes the UNIC CityLabs as a perfect experimentation platform to try to solve these urban issues.

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**Vice Rector of International Relations of University of Deusto Prof. Dr. Alex Rayon Jerez** jumped into the discussion to discuss the case of Bilbao. Rayon Jerez mentioned that talent retention is also an issue in the Bilbao context, which means that the city has not been able to plan adequately for the future of the city. Rayon Jerez sees the value of the close relationship between municipalities and universities as a key factor to finding solutions for the post-industrial challenges.

**President of Erasmus University Rotterdam Prof. Dr. Ed Brinksma** echoed the sentiments mentioned by other panelists but emphasized that the UNIC universities would not only share experiences but should also share talent in the form of staff and students. Brinksma sees each university as a representative of their post-industrial city. In this role, the universities can also unite together and form a lobby that can ultimately influence the European agenda regarding policies that have effect on post-industrial cities.

*How could other cities contribute to what UNIC is doing?*

**President of Erasmus University Rotterdam Prof. Dr. Ed Brinksma** mentioned that he would like to see more interaction between not just other cities, but also other European Universities. Both cities and other European Universities can contribute to UNIC's standpoint of seeing education as a public good.

*The University of Oulu is renowned for innovation; what can UNIC learn from your innovation experiences?*

**Vice Rector of University of Oulu Dr. Arto Maaninen** discussed the University of Oulu's participation in an innovation alliance. This public-private partnership is a triple-helix concept with the goal of boosting collaboration in innovation and businesses in certain technology areas. The city of Oulu has been a facilitator in the alliance and even provided seed funding to be used for the innovation activities. The impact has been great and the alliance is adding new partners each year, which can also be measured by the increasing number of

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patents being submitted each year.

*The University of Liege and Deusto University are both known for their close relationships with their respective municipalities; what will the partnership with the seven other universities and cities add to what you are already doing in your own city?*

**Rector of University of Liège Prof. Dr. Pierre Wolper** echoed Vice Rector Maaninen regarding the role of innovation. Wolper mentions that innovation is not always about creating something totally new but can also take the form of using a new perspective to look at old problems. Wolper identifies the UNIC partners as new perspectives to his city’s ecosystem and envisions that this can only strengthen the existing innovation in Liege.

**Vice Rector of International Relations of University of Deusto Prof. Dr. Alex Rayon Jerez** reinforced this concept of the UNIC consortium acting like an ecosystem, where the universities can work together to solve their issues. Instead of trying to solve university problems by itself, the UNIC partner universities can look to its fellow partners and their regions.

The third plenary session concluded with the panelists sharing their enthusiasm to see UNIC succeed in not only redefining cities for the benefits of their universities, but ultimately for the benefit of all citizens that reside in post-industrial cities.

## 2.2. Parallel sessions

### 2.2.1 UNIC Management Board meeting

The first parallel session took the form of a UNIC Management Board meeting. This session was closed to the public; below are the key topics of the meeting.

#### **Key topics:**

The following topics were discussed by the UNIC Management Board:

- “State of UNIC,” milestones achieved in first academic year of UNIC

- UNIC Joint Degree development, by Prof. dr. Kornelia Freitag (RUB)
- UNIC City Lab development, by Judit Cano (UD)
- Reflection on year one by Teun van den Akker of the UNIC Student Board
- UNIC Governance; discussion and decision making about future UNIC governance structure (annex 1)
- EU developments relevant for UNIC (annex 2), by Marjo Gallé
- Options for UNIC expansion (annex 3), by Peter Scholten
- UNIC Sustainability Strategy (annex 4), by Samira Abbadi

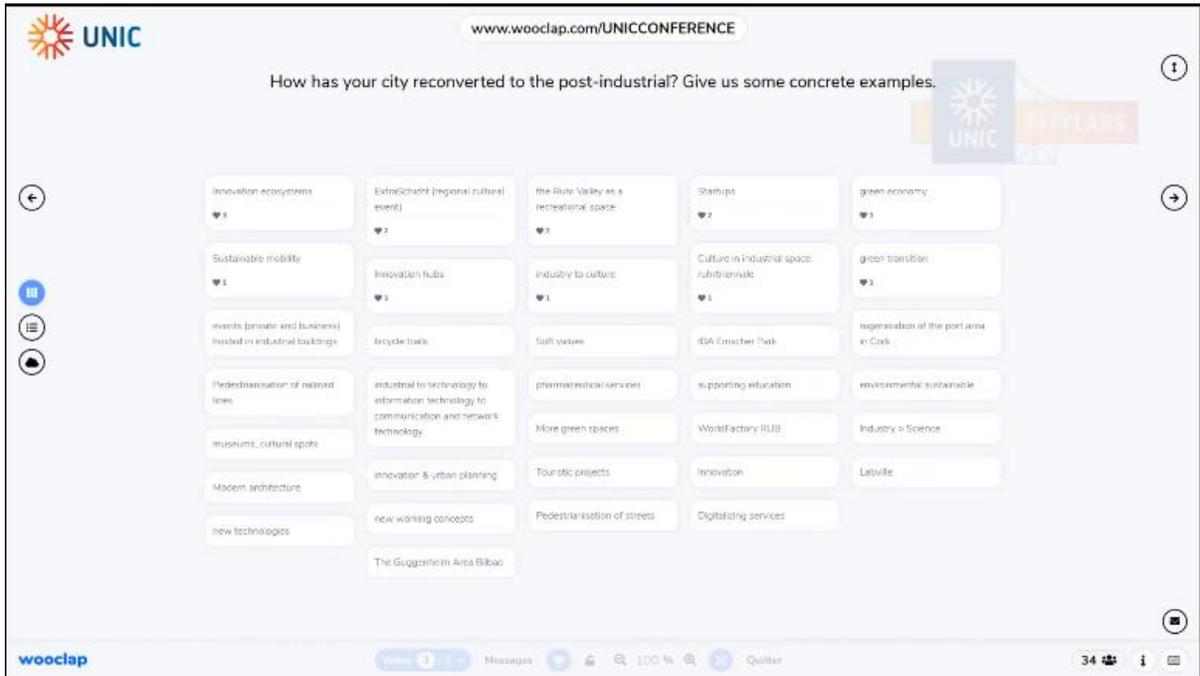
## 2.2.2 Solving post-industrial societal challenges with UNIC CityLabs

The second parallel session was an interactive workshop led by Mia Kemppaala, one of the UNIC coordinators at the University of Oulu (Finland) with more than ten years of professional and personal experience in collaborative problem solving, open innovation practices and co-creation. The discussion focused on how multi-stakeholder cooperation can help solving post-industrial challenges.

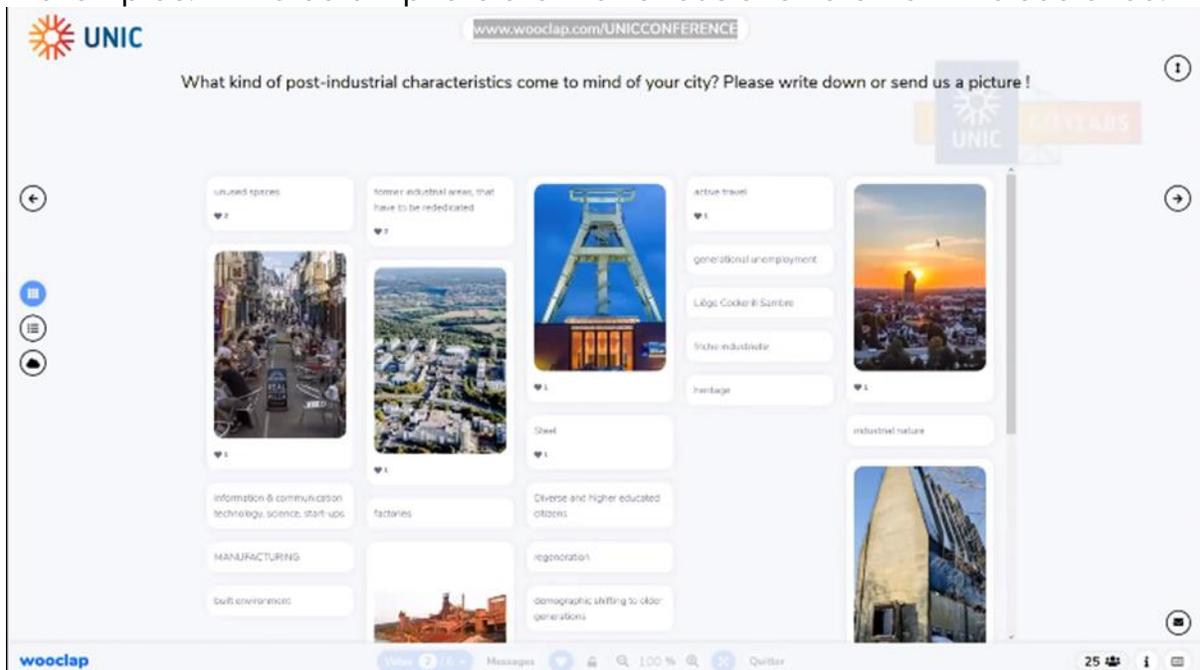
The audience was asked to respond to a series of questions: What are the first things that come to your mind when you hear the term “Post-industrial”? In the photo below are some answers from the participants.



What kind of post-industrial characteristics come to mind when you think of your own city? In the below photo are the various answers from the audience.



How has your city reconverted to the post-industrial? Give some concrete examples. In the below photo are the various answers from the audience.



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The answers from the audience can also be found as a PDF document in Annex 3 of this report.

**Key messages:**

-UNIC CityLabs brings diverse people together - students, researchers, city stakeholders, organizations and citizens – to participate in events of many shapes and sizes – workshops, hackathons, sprints, panel discussions, interviews, courses to collaboratively identify societal challenges, co-create solutions to these problems, and ultimately implement the created solutions locally.

-UNIC CityLabs brings ‘science to the city’ and contributes to the resilience and renaissance of Europe’s post-industrial urban centres by examining challenges that are related to EU’s Urban Agenda. It discusses themes such as:

- § Diversity and inclusion
- § Green cities and sustainability
- § Urban resilience and transformation
- § Digital transition, and
- § Aging population.

-The problem-solving process of UNIC CityLabs follows three main steps:

First, challenges, root causes and core problems are identified locally.

Second, The identified societal challenges are solved at UNIC-wide co-creation events where heterogenous teams tackle the challenges collaboratively. Leveraging the diversity of the UNIC network widens perspectives, magnifies creativity and boosts problem-solving...which could even lead to finding solutions to wicked problems.

Third, Ultimately, local experts and administrators offer support and guidance for materializing created solutions and connect creators with necessary people and resources. The aim of these local events is to help implement the most viable solutions locally and identify ways to overcome barriers for societal impact.

-This is UNIC CityLabs, where students, researchers, city stakeholders,

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organizations and citizens are empowered to identify local societal challenges, co-create solutions to these problems, and ultimately implement the created solutions locally to drive societal change in post-industrial cities.

### 2.2.3 Superdiversity and the Covid-19 Pandemic

The third and final parallel session focused on the concept of superdiversity and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Speakers included:

-Prof. Dr. Selva Demiralp, Koç University on Global Vaccine Inequity during COVID19 Pandemic;

-Dr. Birce Altıok, Dr. Birce Demiryontar, Dr. Souad Osseiran, Migration Research Center at Koç University (MiReKoc) on Superdiversity in Higher Education Settings: State-of-the-Art and its Implications for COVID19,

-Pinar Dönmez, Koç University on Superdiversity and Higher Education during the COVID19 Pandemic: A Student Perspective.

-This session was moderated by University of Liege Prof. Dr. Marco Martiniello.

#### **Key messages:**

##### *Global Vaccine Inequity during COVID19 Pandemic*

**Koc University Prof. Dr. Selva Demiralp** took the floor for the final parallel session and addressed global inequity during the Covid-19 pandemic. Prof. Demiralp presented research that showed trends of “vaccine nationalism” in the beginning of 2021. Vaccine nationalism occurs when there is an inequitable distribution of vaccines around the world. Evidence of vaccine nationalism occurred in the current Covid-19 pandemic when nation states signed exclusive agreements with pharmaceutical companies to ensure a supply of vaccines to their own populations and prioritized the inoculation of their own citizens above the inoculation of the global population. Demiralp argues that policies of vaccine nationalism threaten the global recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, because by focusing vaccination campaigns on specific region or country, the virus can continue to circulate and mutate in regions where vaccinations have not taken place. Mutations of the virus threaten the overall efficacy and efficiency of existing vaccines. Demiralp acknowledged that an equitable global response is required to fight the covid-19 pandemic and that

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there is an underlying humanitarian responsibility for wealthier countries to contribute to efforts to vaccinate the entire global population. However, Demiralp notes that humanitarian incentives are not enough to convince wealthier countries to adopt policies that prioritize vaccinating the entire global population. Demiralp and her team therefore investigated the economic cost of vaccine nationalist policies to answer the question: “What would be the economic costs that will be borne by the rich countries in the case of uneven vaccine distribution (vaccine nationalism) versus a more equitable distribution of the vaccine?” Demiralp and her colleagues calculated that it will cost wealthier countries \$38 billion to contribute to COVAX (an WHO organization that is working for global equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines). On the other hand, if wealthier countries continue their policies of vaccine nationalism, they will likely face total global costs as high as \$3.8 trillion, as covid lockdowns and supply-chain disruptions make it difficult to resume economic activities. Demiralp and her colleagues make the case that there is clearly an economic rationality to contribute to the efforts such as COVAX, because it is an investment worth taking. Demiralp ends her presentation with one clear message: it is true that globalization allows the pandemic to take its course, however it will also take global actions to conquer the pandemic.

*Superdiversity in Higher Education Settings: State-of-the-Art and its Implications for COVID19*

**Koc University Dr. Birce Demiryontar, Dr. Birce Altioek, and Dr. Souad Osseiran** followed Prof. Demiralp with a presentation on *Superdiversity in Higher Education Settings: State-of-the-Art and its Implication for Covid-19*. Dr. Birce Demiryontar started the presentation by highlighting policy gaps in the UNIC higher education institutions and their responses to diversity. One gap that Dr. Demiryontar discussed was regarding students’ identities. Dr. Demiryontar and colleagues found that at the UNIC partner universities, students’ identities are multi-dimensional, complex, and that students increasingly have rapidly changing needs and activist mindsets. Whereas institutional strategies aimed at students are informed by single identity markers, and often strategies are deployed slowly in response to rapidly changing needs.

Dr. Demiryontar and colleagues argue that superdiversity can be applied to fill this gap. Demiryontar defines superdiversity: “superdiversity was introduced as a concept to explain the changing social conditions of the early 1990s, with newly emerging patterns of integration, especially in the urban context. What makes diversity *superdiversity* is a dynamic inter-play of multiple identity variables among and between immigrant groups, including ethnicity, country of

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origin, language, religion, migration channel, immigration status, gender, age, and transnational links. The most defining feature of superdiversity has been the large spread, speed, and scale of diversity.”

Dr. Demiryontar and colleagues suggest that a superdiversity lens can be applied to overcome the policy gaps, because superdiversity perceives identities as multi-dimensional, multi-layered, and with a strong emphasis on complexity. It perceives identity as much more than a demographic understanding; instead, superdiversity offers a fresh lens to analyse the university spaces, by establishing linkages between population diversity, diversity of knowledge, and relevant policy processes, including the production of new forms of knowledge.

Dr. Birce Altıok continued the presentation by discussing the hurdles and opportunities to learning, teaching, and research environment brought by Covid-19. As virtual mobility is a key activity of UNIC, Dr. Altıok explained that the pandemic has highlighted the importance of online teaching and learning tools and shown that virtual mobility has the potential to overcome barriers to physical mobility. While the enthusiasm for virtual mobility is strong, Dr. Altıok argued that the pandemic experience has shown that higher education institutions need to implement more comprehensive strategies, extend the possibilities for virtual mobility blended with real training possibilities, and flexibility alongside traditional learning mobility. The recent pandemic experience with distance learning has also highlighted various infrastructure inequalities, such as internet connection, electricity, and availability of devices that affects access to an utilization of online teaching.

Dr. Altıok argued that future research on mobility is expected to assess and focus on hybrid models and their impact on higher education, including inclusion retention. Dr. Altıok also posited that higher education institutions will face increased pressure to develop innovative methods to achieve sustainable sustainability.

Dr. Souad Osseiran concluded the presentation by discussing superdiversity, higher education, and the ways experiences of HEIs can be applied to urban challenges. Dr. Osseiran started her presentation by acknowledging that the covid-19 pandemic has presented immense challenges for universities and that universities have responded by adapting learning, teaching, and research environments. However, while much of the discussion on the impact of covid-19 on higher education in general has focused on these coping strategies, some researchers are now focusing on the ways the pandemic will change or

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should change and effect the possible future of higher education. Some researchers expect that the covid-19 pandemic will be grounds for higher education institutions to re-center the role of universities around achieving societal impact, and therefore universities must develop new methods to work with the wider public in their municipalities in order to address local challenges. Dr. Osseiran highlights that in this case, the UNIC Alliance is well-positioned with its activities such as UNIC CityLabs to help to foster social or urban level policies that are super diverse-responsive and that may contribute eventually to societal and urban justice.

### *Superdiversity & Higher Education during the COVID19 Pandemic: A Student Perspective*

**Pinar Dönmez, Koç University** concluded the parallel session with a presentation on *Superdiversity and Higher Education during the COVID19 Pandemic: A Student Perspective*. Dönmez presented results of a survey conducted with 143 students from Koc University and the UNIC Student Board. The survey collected data on how non-traditional students were dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. The results showed the most non-traditional students are more marginalized during the pandemic than before. The data show that recurrent concerns fell into a number of categories: mental health (existing mental health problems worsened; students with ADHD or other learning disabilities found it difficult to cope; mental-health related drop-outs increased), socio-economic status (financial difficulties; job loss) disabled students (adaptation problems due to remote education platforms), LGBTQ+ students (increase in family conflicts), and international students (minority groups could not meet for activities that create solidarity; loneliness increased; decrease in participation in exchange programs).

Using the data from the survey, the UNIC Student Board created a list of improvements that can be applied at the UNIC partner universities:

- The need to collect data about non-traditional students with more diverse methods (focus groups, surveys) on a more regular basis.
- Special attention is needed for detecting and supporting non-traditional students with intersectionalities.
- Strengthening the coordination between UNIC bodies and the institutions that provide support for non-traditional students.



Demiralp



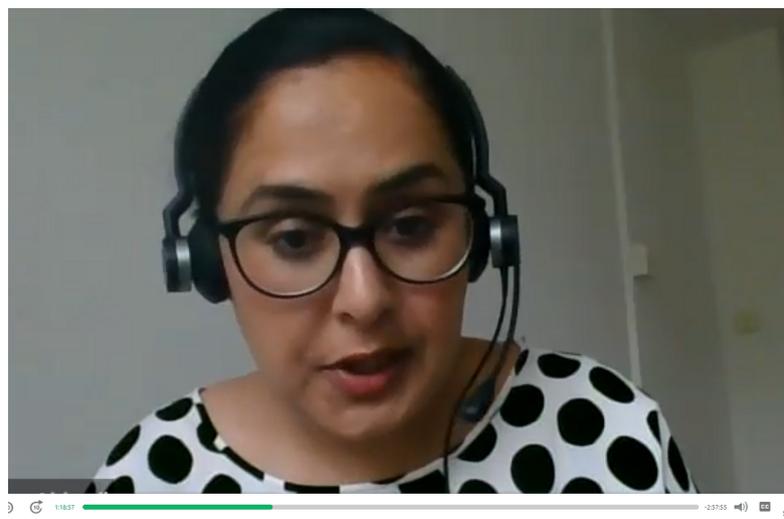
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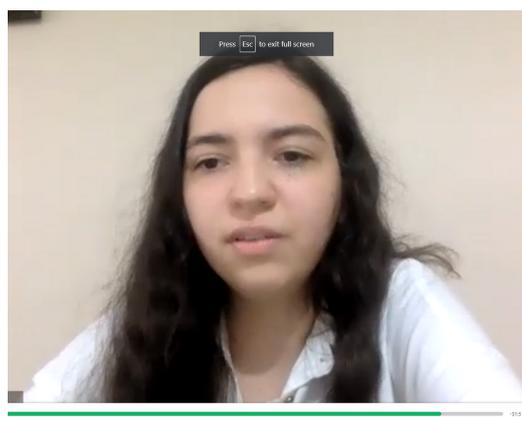


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**UNIC CONFERENCE  
JUNE 11, 2021**







## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

- 13:00-13:20 Opening Ceremony
- 13:20-14:00 Roundtable I; The European Study Experience and the future of European Higher Education
- 14:00-14:45 Roundtable II; Meeting the Challenges of Post-Industrial Cities
- 14:45-15:00 Break
- 15:00-15:50 Solving post-industrial societal challenges with UNIC CityLabs
- 16:00-16:50 Superdiversity and the COVID19 pandemic
- 16:50-17:00 Closing Remarks





# Regenerating our Post-Industrial Cities: the Role of Universities

Innovation - Inclusion - Superdiversity

## UNIC Conference

Friday, June 11 from 13:00 - 17:00 CET

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
HELD VIRTUALLY ON ZOOM WEBINAR

### Plenary sessions

- Opening Ceremony
- The European Study Experience
- Meeting the Challenges of Post-Industrial Cities

### Parallel Sessions

- UNIC Management Board Meeting
- Solving post-industrial societal challenges with UNIC CityLabs
- Superdiversity and the COVID19 Pandemic

Register now: <https://unic.eu/en/events/unic-conference>

Erasmus  
University  
Rotterdam



University of  
Zagreb



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

RUHR  
UNIVERSITÄT  
BOCHUM

RUB



UNIVERSITY OF OULU



KOÇ  
ÜNİVERSİTESİ



Deusto  
University of Deusto



LIÈGE  
université

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1

What are the first things that come to your mind when you hear « post-industrial »?

A word cloud visualization of responses to the question. The most prominent words are 'CHANGE', 'INDUSTRY', 'TRANSITION', 'INNOVATION', and 'DIGITALIZATION'. Other visible words include 'RECONSTRUCTION', 'EMPLOYMENT', 'GENTRIFICATION', 'OPPORTUNITIES', 'SOCIETY', 'INFORMATION', 'SUSTAINABILITY', 'GROWTH', 'POVERTY', 'INDUSTRY', 'FACILITIES', 'ECONOMY', 'CULTURE', 'DIVERSITY', 'CLEAN', 'USE', 'NEW', 'SERVICE', 'HUMAN-DIGITAL', 'ENVIRONMENT', 'INDUSTRIAL', 'SOCIETAL', 'CHOMAGE', 'HIGH-TECH', 'GREEN', 'CREATIVE', 'DIGITALIZATION', 'COMBINATION', 'REPURPOSED', 'EMPTY', 'INCLUSION', 'CITIES', 'AIR', 'MIGRANTS', 'LIVING', 'STRUCTURAL', 'RECONVERSION', 'SPACE', and 'REPURPOSING'.

2

What kind of post-industrial characteristics come to mind of your city? Please write down or send us a picture !

tradition, industrial heritage, museums and exhibitions

♥ 1

digital and service economies



♥ 1

generational unemployment

industrial nature

♥ 1

active travel

♥ 2

unused spaces

information &amp; communication technology, science, start-ups



factories

♥ 2

former industrial areas, that have to be rededicated





Diverse and higher educated citizens

Liège Cockerill Sambre



MANUFACTURING



Cockerill

regeneration

friche industrielle



Chimneys

built environment

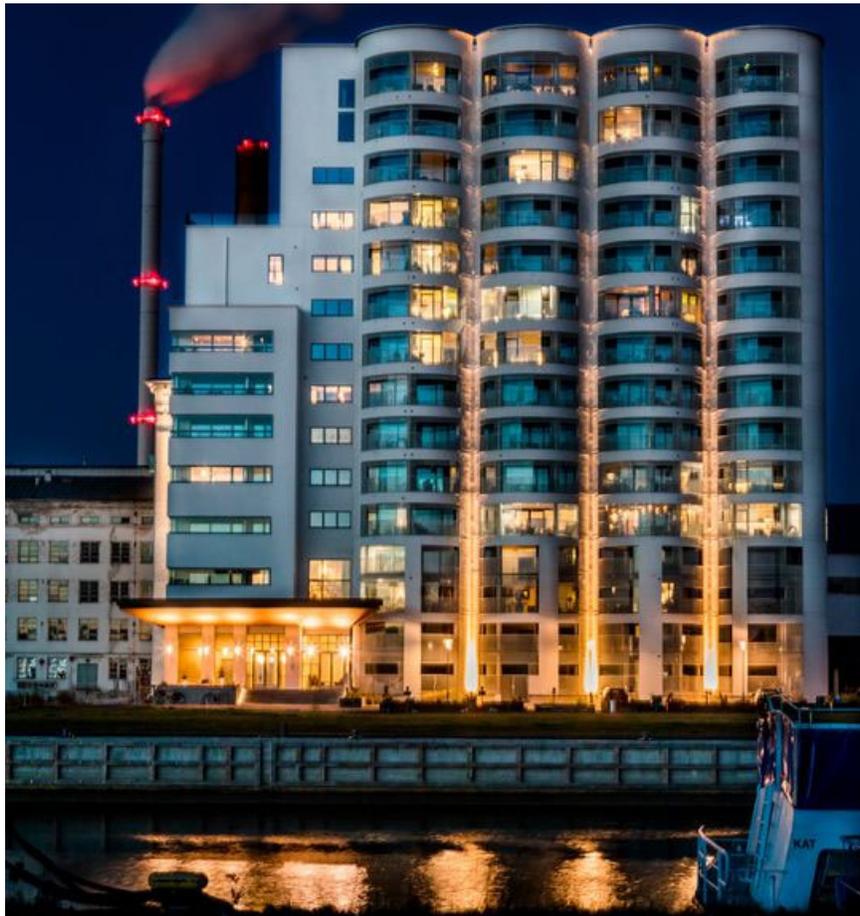




demographic shifting to older generations

♥ 1  
Steel

heritage



Oulu, Toppila







6

What do you think are the most important things in UNIC CityLabs?

