D7.3 BEST PRACTICES ANNUAL REPORT – 2ND REPORT

Type of Deliverable: Report, Public

30 September 2023

Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), Ireland and Polytechnic of Leiria (IPL), Portugal

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List of Abbreviations

C&D	Communication and Dissemination
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EZ-ID	European Zone for Interregional Development
FASA	Future and Advanced Skills Academy
FB	Facebook
FHV	Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences
HAMK	Häme University of Applied Sciences
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IG	Instagram
IPCA	Polytechnic of Cávado and Ave
IPL	Polytechnic of Leiria
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NHL Stenden	NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences
RDI	Research, Development, and Innovation
SAB	Students Advisory Board
SAP	Short Advanced Programme
SZE	University of Győr – Széchenyi Istvan University
TUS	Technological University of the Shannon
WP	Work Package

Executive Summary

This deliverable is the second of a series of three reports, following on from **D7.2**, the first Best Practice Annual Report of the RUN-EU PLUS project. The report summarises best practices utilised by the RUN-EU PLUS project in communication and dissemination activities related to the work package activities and details the measured impacts by the RUN-EU PLUS alliance partners from M13 until M24 of the project development, matching them with target audiences, tools and channels and key performance indicators. It follows the provisions of the **D7.1 Communication and Dissemination Strategy**.

The results of the communication and dissemination actions carried out by all RUN-EU PLUS alliance partners from M13 until M24 of the project development are encouraging and positive. They reflect the success of the strategy implemented at the beginning of the project, as well as the commitment and engagement of the members.

The RUN-EU PLUS project was launched in 2021 by an alliance composed of seven alliance partners (commonly referred to as RUN-EU PLUS members). The universities that compose RUN-EU PLUS are the Polytechnic of Leiria (IPL), the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), the Polytechnic of Cávado and Ave (IPCA), the Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK), the University of Győr – Széchenyi István University (SZE), the NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (NHL Stenden), and the Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences (FHV). RUN-EU welcomed two new alliance members for the RUN-EU2 submission, The University of Burgos (Spain) and Howest University of Applied Sciences (Belgium).
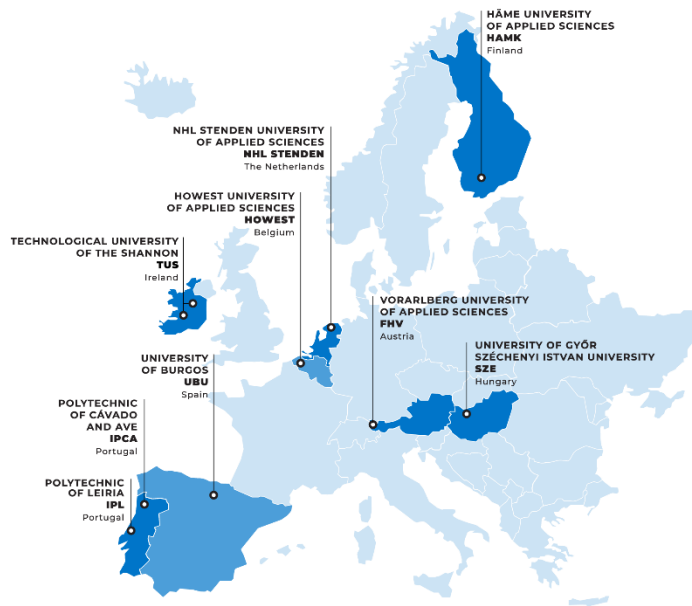
Figure 1 – RUN-EU PLUS ALLIANCE MEMBERS

The evidence of all activities reported by the seven members was collected by each HEI and is available on the MS Teams General team, under a folder dedicated to communication and dissemination. This folder contains an Excel file of a dissemination log and screenshots/other forms of evidence of activities where appropriate.

1. Introduction

The establishment of a community of best practices across all RUN-EU PLUS partners was an essential tool in aiding the communications, dissemination and exploitation of results generated from the work package activities for the first stage of the process (**D7.2**) which continued to develop and strengthen over the subsequent months (M12-23) for this report.

This best practice report also informs the other work packages on how to target their specific audience, whether it be on Open Science or Research and Innovation or Gender Inclusion and Equality in career pathway development. It will promote the discussion and identification of the best practices to advance technical collaboration in R&I activities, improve the average level of R&I and maximise the impact of Professional Practice-based Research programmes.
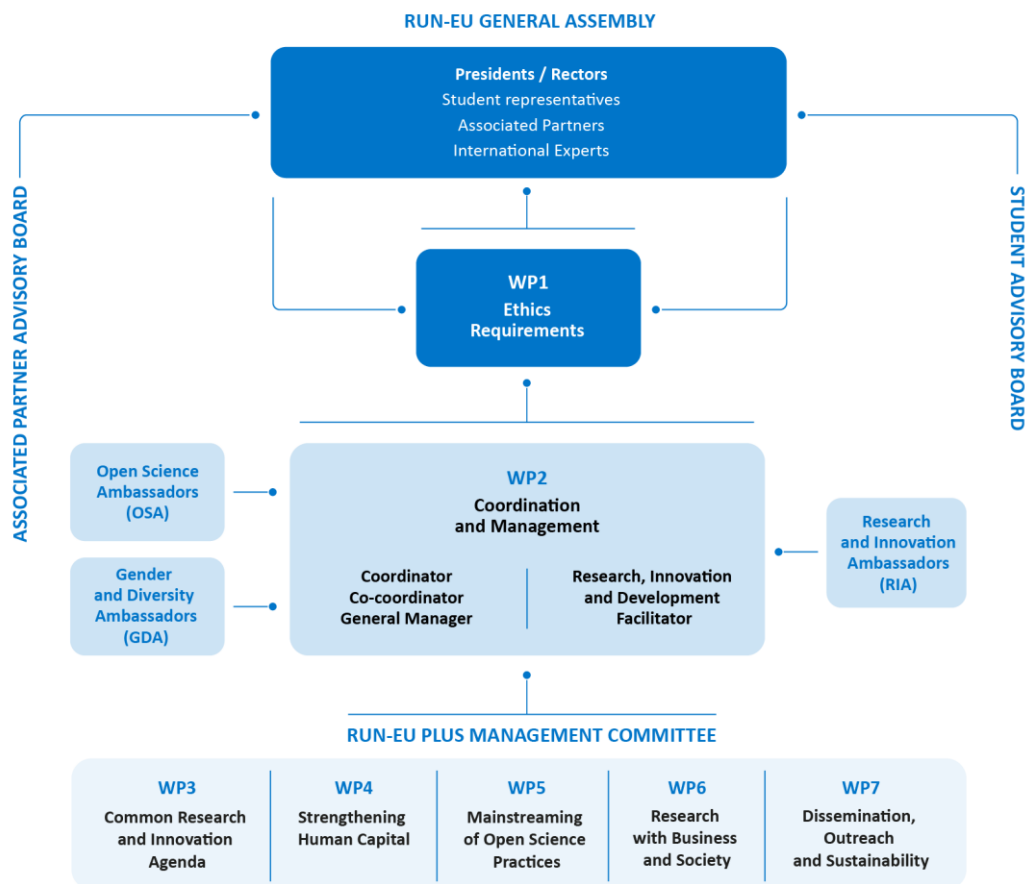
Figure 2 – RUN-EU PLUS Management Organisation

Work Package 7 (WP7) implements the communication, dissemination and exploitation strategies linked to all work packages of RUN-EU PLUS (see **Figure 2** for the RUN-EU PLUS Project Management Structure). This implementation results in the establishment/promotion of a sound and consistent brand, creation/animation of the communication channels (particularly the website and social media), development and distribution of several attractive promotional materials and organisation of dissemination and exploitation events.

WP7 works towards four objectives:

- **O7.1** To develop and implement the communication, dissemination, and exploitation strategies, envisaging the sharing of best practices and learning lessons to ensure system-level impact.
- **O7.3** To disseminate the activities and results within the R&I community, including students and researchers, from the alliance members but also other national and European HEIs.
- **O7.3** To deploy events and produce communication material engaging the R&I community, reinforcing cooperation with external partners, strengthening the outreach, and sharing the project achievements.
- **O7.4** To exploit joint structures and share best practices among the members of the RUN-EU PLUS alliance and their associated partners, including business and society stakeholders, and promote structured collaboration at the European level, among other pilot Alliances.

1.1 Meeting agendas

A crucial step in the formation of good practice is frequent dialogue among the work package 7 members. Full WP7 meetings with minutes recorded, with representatives from each partner, were held online using the Teams platform on the following dates:

Meeting Dates:	8 June 2022
	6 October 2022
	3 November 2022
	8 December 2022
	16 January 2023
	10 February 2023
	9 March 2023
	10 May 2023
	14 June 2023
	12 October 2023

Standing agenda items:	• Introduction to new member(s)
	• Each member takes 5 minutes to update colleagues on dissemination from their Institute on RUN-EU PLUS:
	1) Internally in their organisation
	2) To businesses
	3) To community/ societal organisation
	• Deliverable discussion
	• Next steps
	• AOB

The RUN-EU PLUS meetings allow for the sharing of good practice ideas. The meetings with representatives from each WP7 partner allow presentation of updates from each university, the sharing of good practices and to plan work on upcoming deliverables and tasks.

1.2 Lessons learned from period October 2022 – September 2023

Work Package 7 (WP7) is responsible for executing the communication, dissemination and exploitation strategies associated with all the work packages within the RUN-EU PLUS project. This entails creating and maintaining dynamic communication channels with a special focus on the project, website, and social media platforms. It also includes crafting and disseminating a variety of engaging promotional materials and organizing events dedicated to disseminating the project information and maximizing its exploitation potential. Some of the lessons learnt during the period from October 2022 to September 2023 are summarized below:

- More video content: Prioritize the creation of more video content to enhance the dissemination of our project activities.

- Social Media Interaction: Actively boost our social media engagement to enhance the dissemination of our project activities including more and better tagging of posts.

- Feedback Loops: Implement mechanisms for collecting feedback from stakeholders. Regular surveys or feedback forms can help gauge the effectiveness of our communication efforts.

- Content Calendar: Planning content creation and dissemination in advance because it ensures a consistent flow of information and avoids last-minute rushes.

- Storytelling: Incorporate storytelling into our communication strategy. Real-life stories and case studies can make the project more relatable and engaging.

- Accessibility: Ensure that all communication materials, including the website, are accessible to individuals with disabilities, in compliance with relevant guidelines and regulations.

- Adaptability: Continuously adjusting our communication and dissemination strategies based on ongoing feedback and changing project needs.

- Evaluation: Continuously evaluate the impact of our communication efforts and make data-driven adjustments as necessary.

It is essential to adapt these lessons and recommendations to the specific context and goals of the RUN-EU PLUS project and to continuously assess and refine communication and dissemination strategies based on project-specific feedback and outcomes. More promotional videos are in the pipeline and for that, new equipment is being procured for better sound and

video quality. Additionally, there is an upcoming Adobe Illustrator training to further enhance the effectiveness of the WP7 team members.

2. RUN-EU PLUS Target Groups and Key Messages

2.1 Target Groups

• Students, alumni, and potential applicants

• Teachers, researchers, and staff from RUN-EU members

• Alliance partners on regional, national, European, and global levels

• RDI partners and funders

• Associated partners

• Regional and national authorities, decision-makers, and other relevant stakeholders

• Regional business, industry, and cultural representatives

• Media on regional, national, European, and global levels

2.2 Message to Students

Together our seven alliance partners are producing and enabling teaching, learning, and researching opportunities, and conducting joint projects that will meet future skills needs. This means that students can flexibly participate in mobilities and intensive periods at RUN-EU PLUS alliance partners and complete tailored R&I skills development workshops and Postgraduate European degrees.

2.3 Message to Staff

We will collaboratively co-design and deliver innovative pedagogical, research, innovation and engagement activities that meet the future skills needs of our students and promote regional development. The staff of the RUN-EU PLUS alliance partners will be offered the opportunity to build up international competence through, for example, staff exchanges, and joint education and research projects. Short-term and flexible student and staff mobilities are the key operating models for achieving these goals.

2.4 Message to Stakeholders and Society Partners

RUN-EU PLUS will secure the sustainable economic, social, cultural, and environmental progress of its regions and stakeholders. This mission will be implemented by delivering the future and advanced skills necessary for students and stakeholders to successfully meet the

challenges of the future, engage in societal transformation and promote active citizenship, thereby leading to the creation of a new multinational interregional alliance, the RUN-EU European Zone for Interregional Development.

3. How we reach our audiences

The RUN-EU PLUS target groups are reached and involved during the project lifetime using several channels and communication events, including:

- Project promotional materials (brochure, e-newsletter, leaflets)
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube)
- RUN-EU website
- Publication of news in the media on the different alliance partner countries
- Invitation for participation in project events
- Invitation for participation in Short Advanced Programmes
- Invitation for pop-up café, round table discussions, workshops, conferences (physical or virtual)
- Mailing to target groups and stakeholders with key project information
- Scientific and professional papers written in collaboration with RUN-EU members.

WHICH CHANNELS AND MATERIALS ARE USED?

Figure 3 - Which Channels and Materials Are Used

Other means of reaching our audiences include Regional and International Fairs, Partner Organisations and Agencies that hosted events and conferences such as RUN-EU General Assemblies, RUN-EU European Innovation Hub Networking events and RUN-EU PLUS ICARUS events.

RUN-EU PLUS Key Concepts for Dissemination:

- Practice-based masters and PhD programmes.

- International programme development.

- Trans-European supervision and programme delivery.

- Collaborative Research and Innovation.

- Open science practice.

- Researcher Career Development.

- Regional development.

4. Communication and Dissemination Tools – Analysis of Impact

Communication and dissemination will benefit the target groups at all levels (local, regional, national, European, and international), by providing information and raising awareness, enabling target users and stakeholders to have direct access to and understand the project vision, objectives, and results. There is therefore a requirement to ensure clear and informative information about the activities of RUN-EU PLUS is being produced. This is done through a clear communication strategy, measurement of engagement metrics via the feedback after events and monitoring of visitation sites and resharing of articles on media platforms. Therefore, the following communication and dissemination tools have been adopted for use in RUN-EU PLUS implementation and analysis of their performance and effectiveness will be measured via identified key performance indicators (KPIs).

4.1 Content created to date (visual summary)

Figure 4 illustrates the range of content created during 2022-2023 for the communication of ongoing results and initiatives in the RUN-EU work packages.
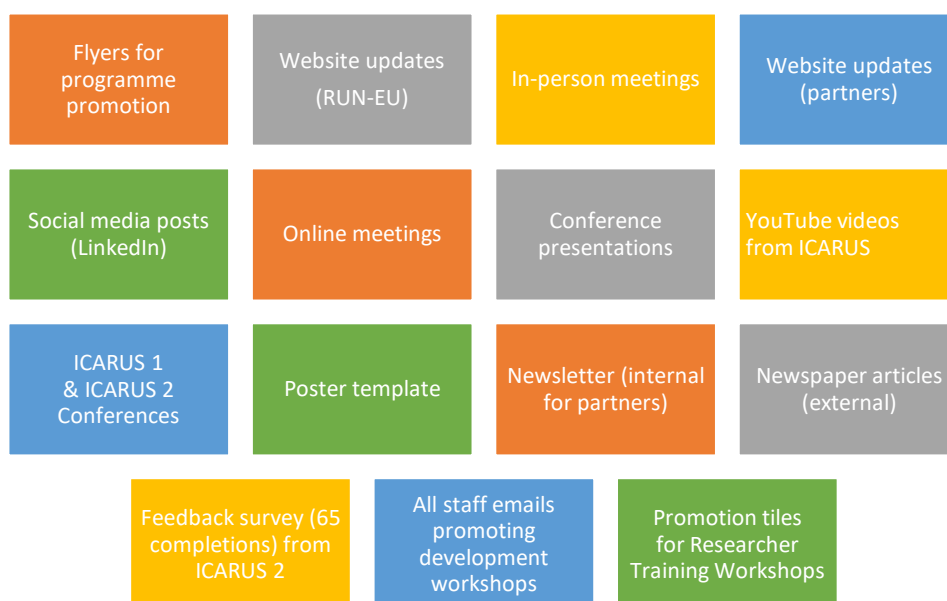

Figure 4 - Content created to date

4.2 Communication and Dissemination Channels and Tools

4.2.1 Branding

The RUN-EU PLUS Brand Guidelines continue to be applied. These were created at the outset of the project, developed by the Polytechnic of Leiria and shared with all WP7 colleagues in 2021. This brand guide has been adopted and utilised throughout for dissemination. This was the first step in the implementation of the **D7.1 Communications and Outreach Strategy** for RUN-EU PLUS.
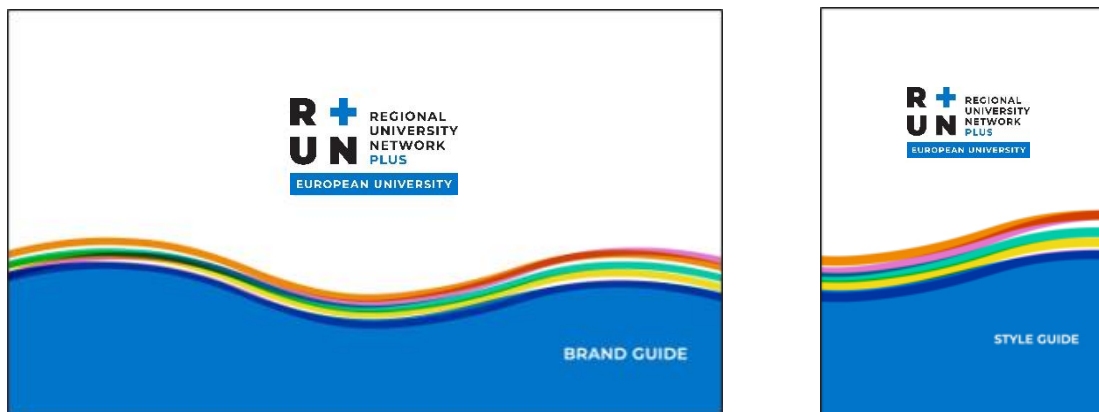

Figure 5 – RUN-EU PLUS Brand Guide

The **RUN-EU PLUS Brand Guide** includes:

• Brand Key Message
• Brand Mission
• Brand Personality
• Brand Tone of Voice
• Visual Identity
• Typography
• Colours
• Logos Composition
• Social Media Guidelines
• Graphic Elements

This is the first key element to the establishment of a best practice approach for clear and informative communication. Singular templates and identities encompass all alliance partners.

Training for all staff in Communications Offices within the Alliance Members is recommended to ensure the correct implementation of the Brand Guide.

The **RUN-EU PLUS Style Guide** includes:

• Target Groups and Brand Key Message
• Our Style
• Brand Personality
• Brand Tone of Voice
• Writing for the Web
• Producing Accessible and Inclusive Web Content
• Writing for social media
• General Style Preferences
• List of Abbreviations
• Further Reference

A set of potential logos was presented for discussion with all WP7 colleagues to choose the final one. The following logo was approved as the new official logo of RUN-EU PLUS in May 2022:

Figure 6 – RUN-EU PLUS Logo

4.2.2 Branding & Merchandise Sustainability

Built into the branding should be a consideration for the sustainability of the branding process. Sustainability of materials, branding processes and supply change of raw materials are also considerations to be adopted by RUN-EU PLUS Alliance members' Communications Departments. The need to produce physical media such as pull-up banners and posters should be designed with longevity in mind, keeping the overall message clear and aligned to the strategic objectives of RUN-EU PLUS, such as Open Science and Research & Innovation rather than specific events such as workshops.

4.2.3 Templates

To harmonise the documentation produced by all project members, Microsoft Word and PowerPoint templates inspired by the Brand Book were defined for the project. These templates have been used by all members for relevant documents and presentations prepared for RUN-EU PLUS.
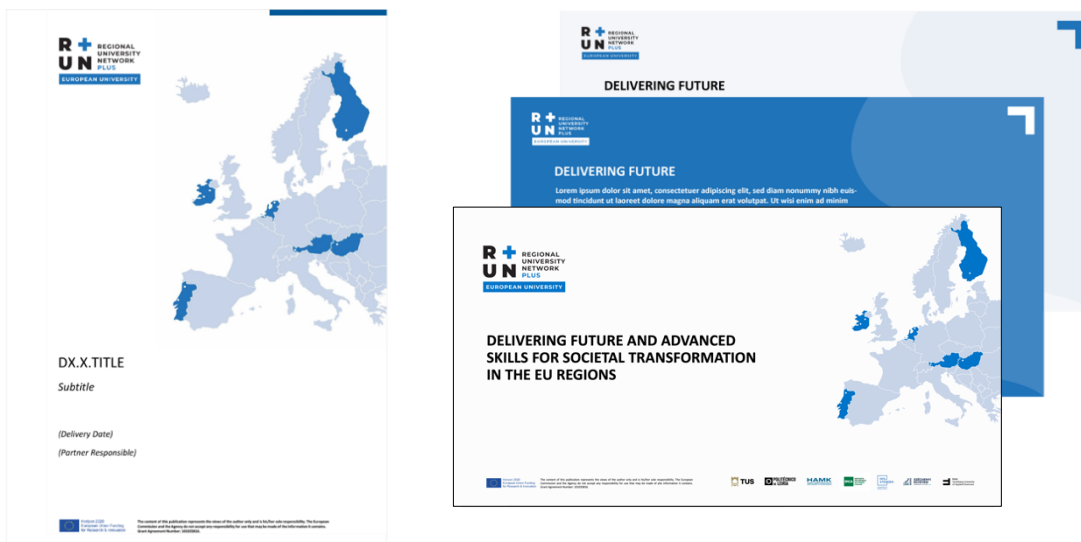

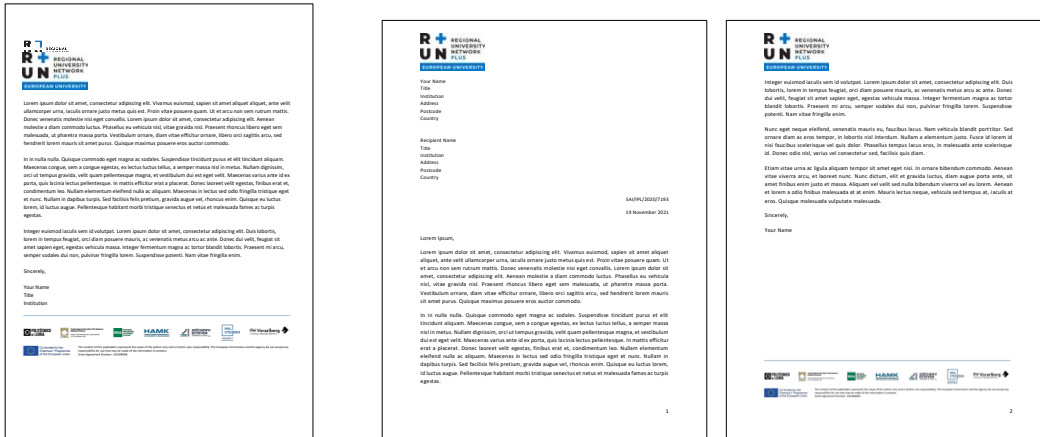**Figure 7 – Word Report and PowerPoint Presentation Templates**

Figure 8 – Email and Letter Templates

Figure 9 – Press Release Template

4.2.4 Website

The webpage of the project has been maintained fully functioning since March 2022, hosted on the RUN-EU website. All website content is available in English at https://run-eu.eu/run-eu-plus/.
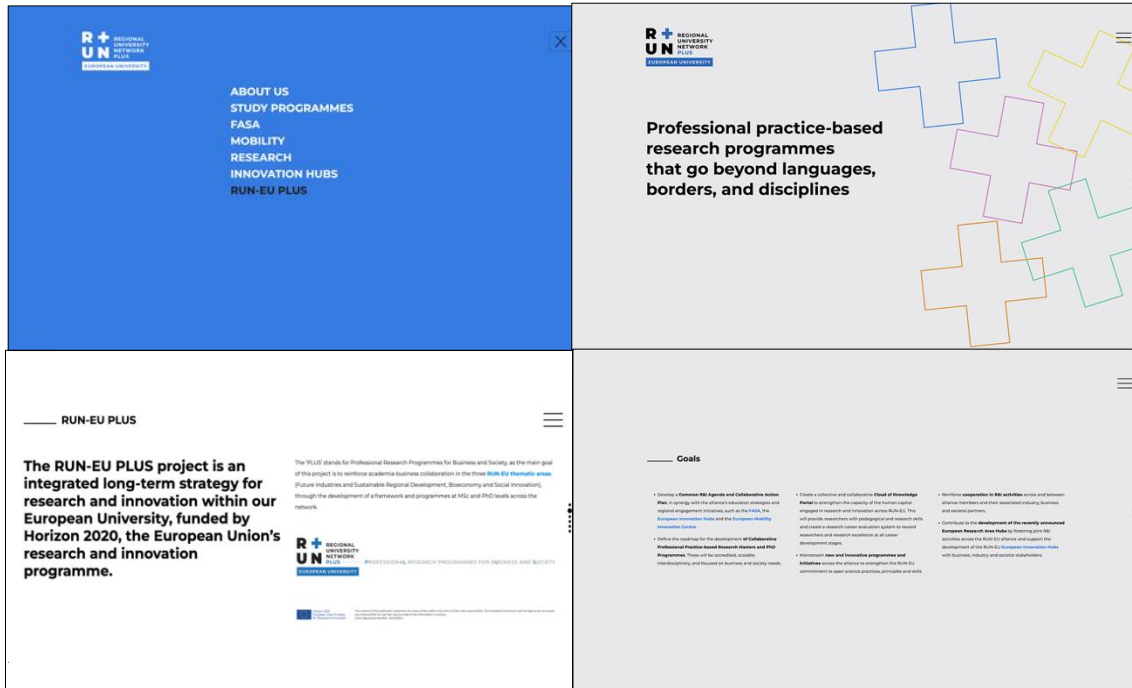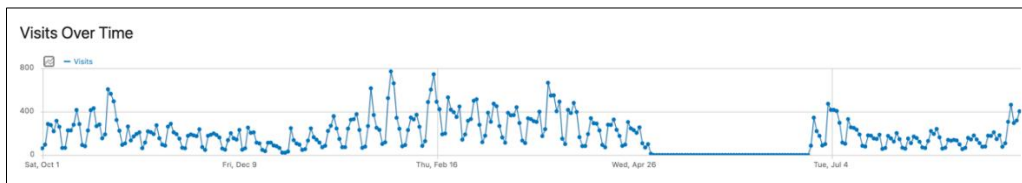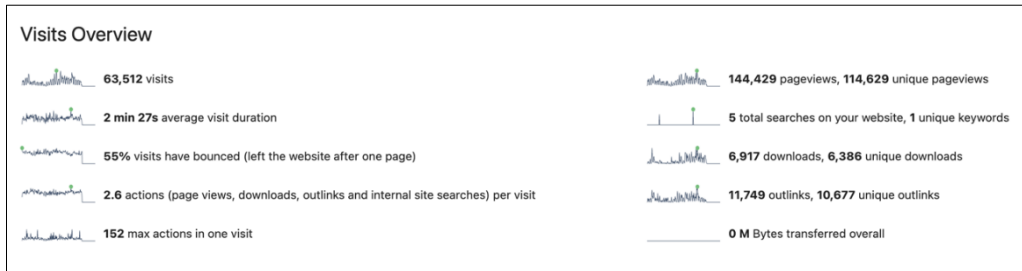
Figure 10 – Website (desktop view)

From October 2022 to September 2023, 12 articles were posted which were focused on the achievement of milestones, delivery of results, as well as events announcement and coverage.

The website usage and access are monitored with Matomo. This allows the recording of important data, such as website visitors, traffic sources, most viewed content, etc. This is a helpful means to identify opportunities for improvement, increase communication efficiency and evaluate the website's impact and effectiveness.

Between 1 October 2022 and 8 September 2023, it has been visited **144,429** times with **114,629** unique pageviews reached. The average website visit duration is 2min 27s. The average number of actions (page views, site searches, downloads or outlinks) that were performed during the visits was 2.6 actions. During the reported time, the website has been accessed by **63,512 new visitors** and has performed as seen in **Figure 11**.

Visits Overview

63,512 visits	144,429 pageviews, 114,629 unique pageviews
2 min 27s average visit duration	5 total searches on your website, 1 unique keywords
55% visits have bounced (left the website after one page)	6,917 downloads, 6,386 unique downloads
2.6 actions (page views, downloads, outlinks and internal site searches) per visit	11,749 outlinks, 10,677 unique outlinks
152 max actions in one visit	0 M Bytes transferred overall

Visits Over Time

Entry pages

ENTRY PAGE URL	ENTRANCES	BOUNCES	BOUNCE RATE	AVG. PAGE LOAD TIME
⊞ wp-content	51	27	53%	2.24s
⊞ up-content	1	-	0%	0.67s
⊞ tag	54	17	31%	1.1s
⊞ study-programms	5	-	0%	0.62s
⊞ study-programmes	4,590	2,090	46%	1.89s
⊞ sitemap	1	1	100%	0.85s
⊞ run-eu-plus	643	379	59%	4.91s
⊞ research	646	468	72%	2.54s

Figure 11 – Matomo Website Statistics
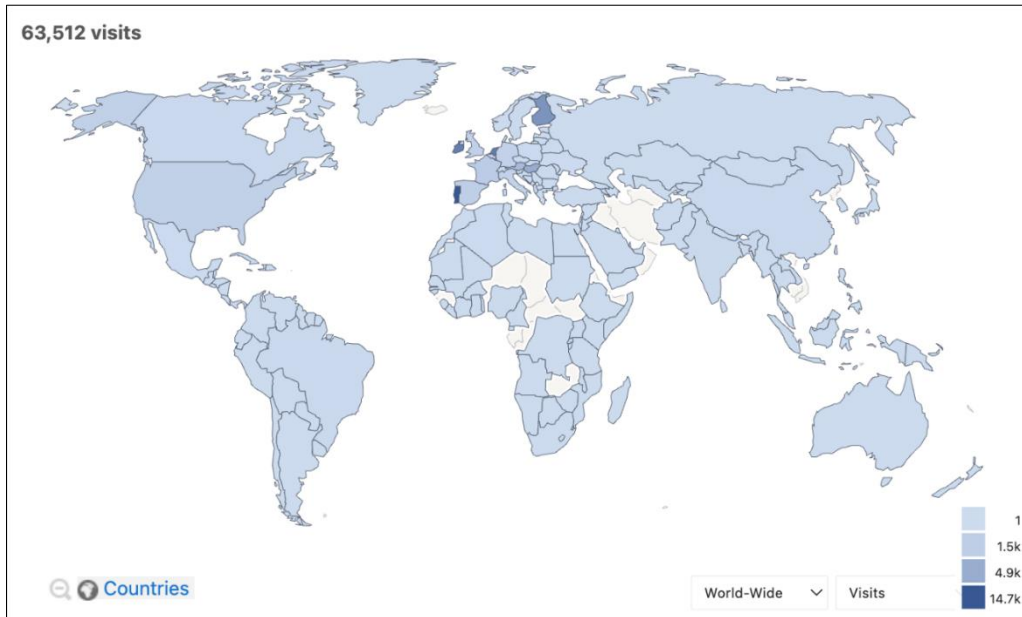
COUNTRY	▼ VISITS
Portugal	14,671
Netherlands	10,251
Ireland	10,126
Finland	7,775
Hungary	4,946
Austria	3,334
France	1,527
Spain	1,260
United States	1,188
United Kingdom	1,035

Figure 12: Website viewer countries

Overall, the website performance is very good. Other sources, such as social media and the members' institutional websites, generate fewer visitors to the RUN-EU PLUS website.

All RUN-EU PLUS members have at least one reference to the project on their institutional websites linking to the RUN-EU PLUS webpage, which helps increase website traffic.

There is also a news and events section to share the project progress and achievements with the stakeholders; a results section to present the public key results produced over time, to raise awareness of the dimension and potential of RUN-EU PLUS as a European University; a download area to present the promotional materials developed, such as brochures, leaflets, and e-newsletters; and a contact section aiming to encourage stakeholders to be in contact with the alliance and to join the project (a contact form will be available to register the stakeholders' interest in the RUN-EU PLUS results and activities).

The homepage also includes links to the project's social media channels.

4.2.5 Social Media

To avoid confusion, the diffusion of RUN-EU PLUS activities will be made also via RUN-EU social media accounts. RUN-EU social media will keep target groups informed about the RUN-EU PLUS project progress and the possible involvement followers can have, by participating in the events, piloting activities, and providing their feedback and recommendations.

Regular information on the RUN-EU PLUS project is posted on the following RUN-EU social channels:

- **Facebook**: https://www.facebook.com/run.europeanuniversity
- **Instagram**: https://www.instagram.com/run_europeanuniversity/
- **Twitter**: https://twitter.com/run_euniversity
- **LinkedIn**: https://www.linkedin.com/company/run-european-university
- **YouTube**: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6vtPNyQ2YSu2KQro0yoyCA

These channels contributed to an outreach of **59,243 online views** on the progression of the project.

RUN-EU social media has been regularly updated with posts about the RUN-EU PLUS project activities, achievements, and results, to inform followers about the project progress and how they can get involved (such as in events, training workshops, feedback, and recommendations activities).

4.2.6 Hashtags mentioned in posts:

- #run_eu_plus
- #Horizon2020
- #run_eu
- #erasmus
- #erasmusplus
- #europeanuniversities
- #europeanunion

4.2.7 Facebook Metrics

The RUN-EU PLUS Facebook-related page currently has 766 likes and 877 followers, up from

651 and 695 respectively as of the D7.2 report.

From October 2022 to September 2023, 21 posts were published.
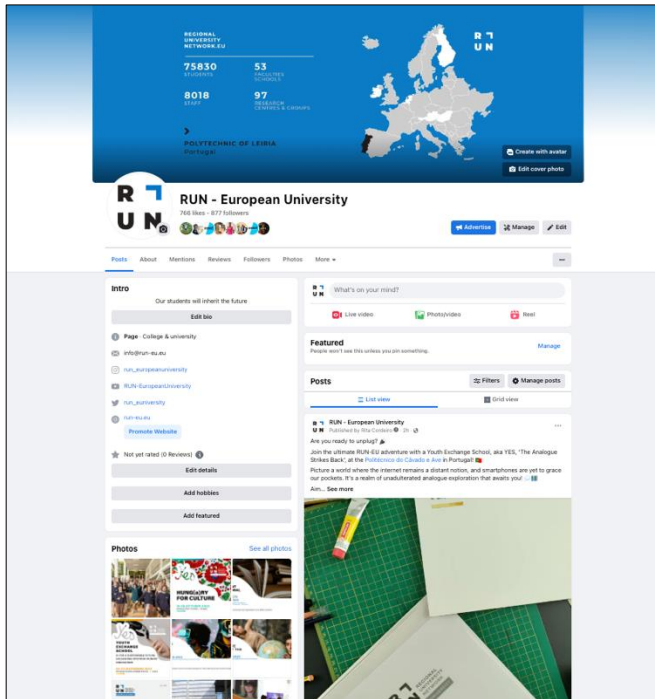
Figure 13 – Facebook Page Likes and Followers
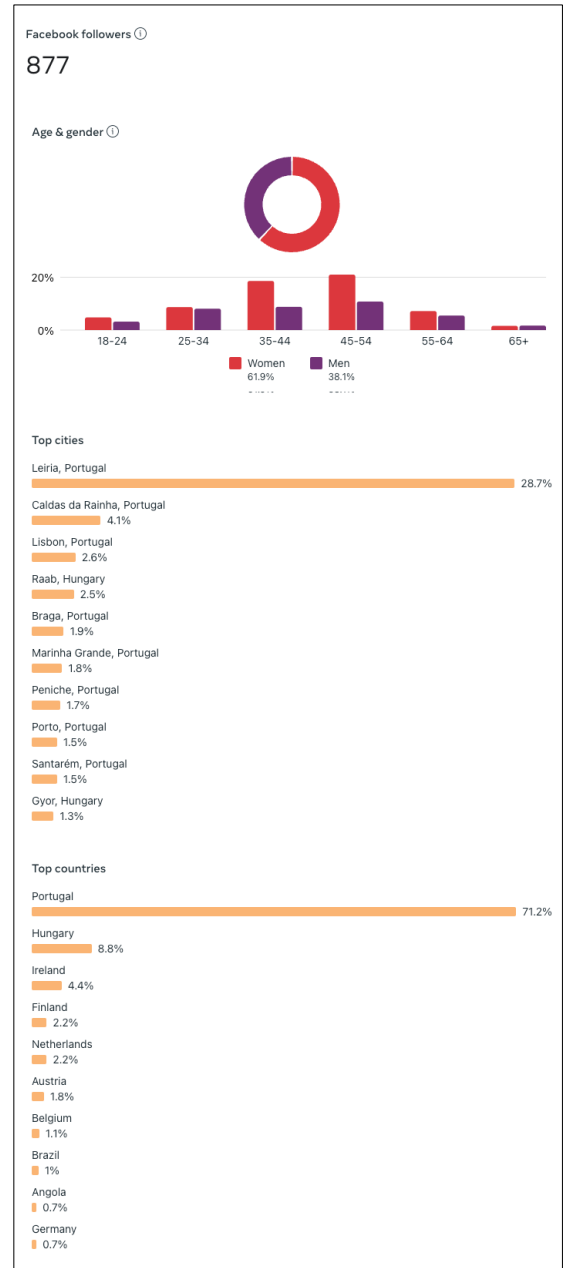
The RUN-EU Facebook page reached 55,129 people, was visited 5,643 times and has 91 likes, as shown in **Figure 14**.
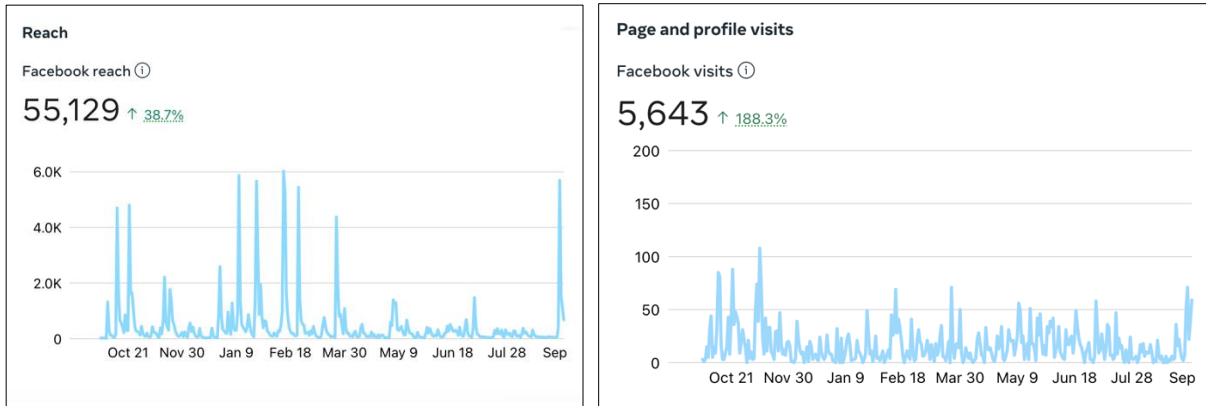

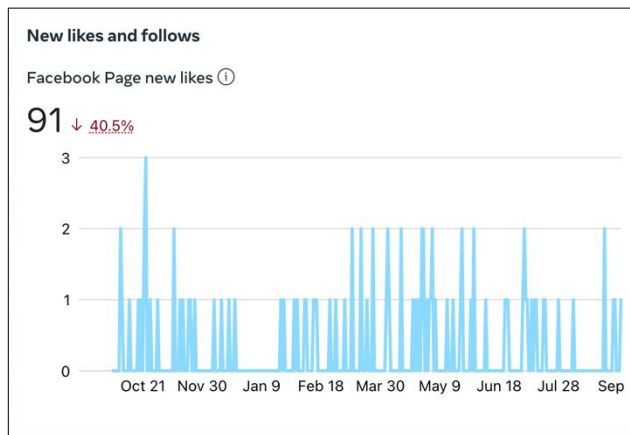**Figure 10 – Facebook Page Reach and Visits (Oct 2022 – Sep 2023)**

Figure 14 – New Likes and Followers (Oct 2022 – Sep 2023)

4.2.8 Instagram Metrics

RUN-EU's Instagram profile has 1668 followers, up from 650 in **D7.2**.

From October 2022 to September 2023, 21 posts and 21 stories were published about RUN-EU PLUS.
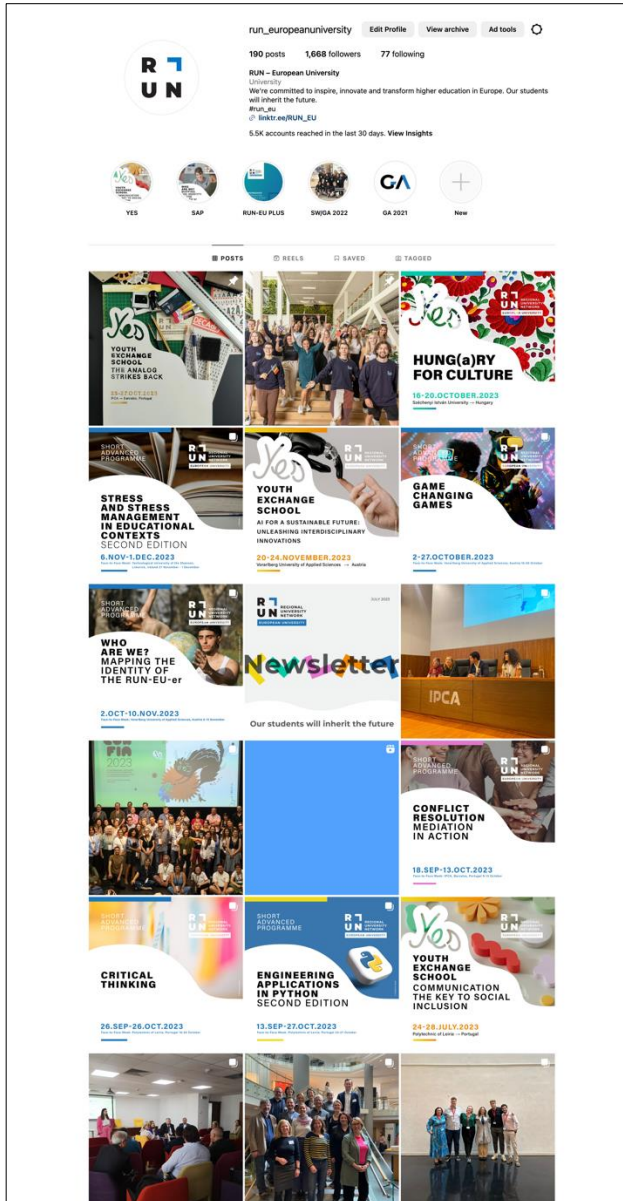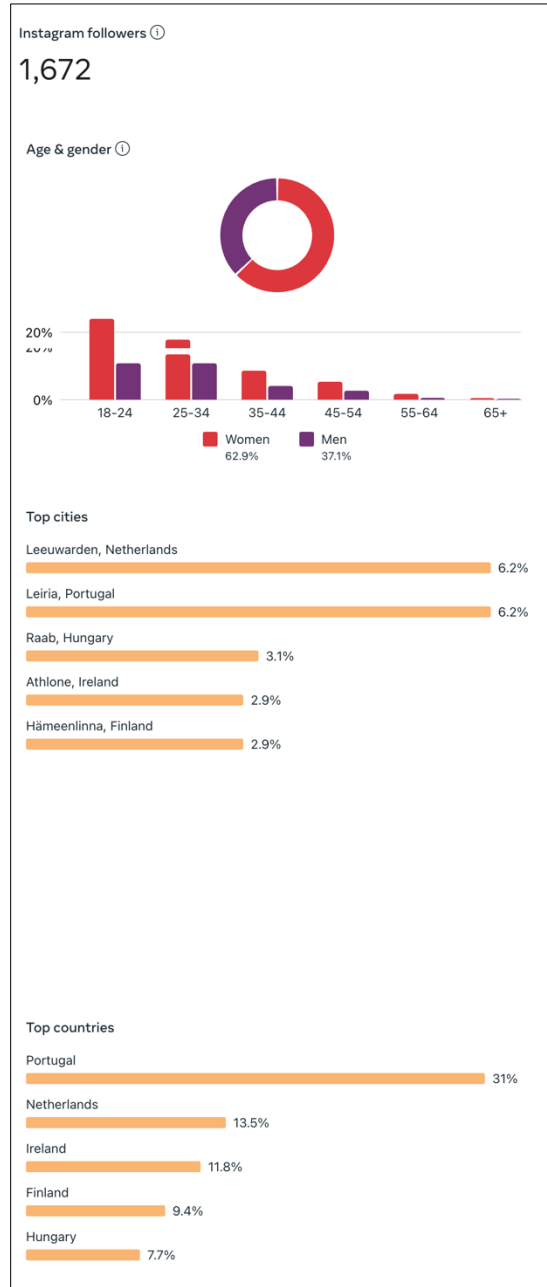

Figure 15 – Instagram Profile Followers

The RUN-EU Instagram profile was visited 13,057 times and has 994 new followers, as shown in the analytics below.
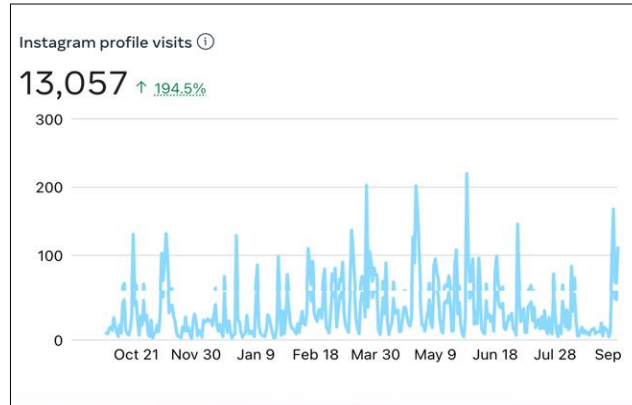

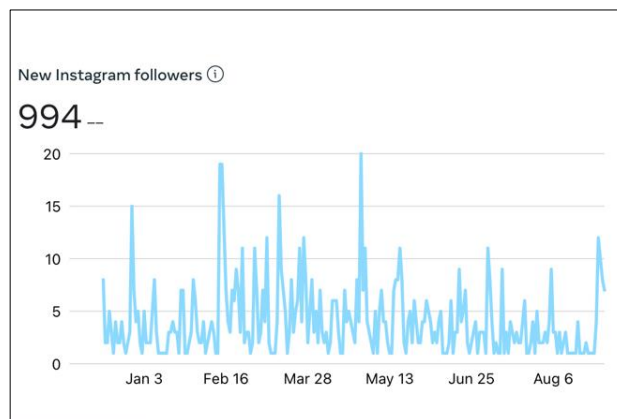**Figure 16 – Instagram Profile Visits (Oct 2022 – Sep 2023)**

Figure 17 – Instagram New Followers

4.2.9 LinkedIn Metrics

RUN-EU LinkedIn counted 961 followers by its publication of **D7.2**. By September 2023, this number had more than doubled to 2,093, with excellent post-engagement.

From October 2022 to September 2023, 21 posts about RUN-EU PLUS were published with 23,212 views. The RUN-EU LinkedIn page reached 103,801 people.
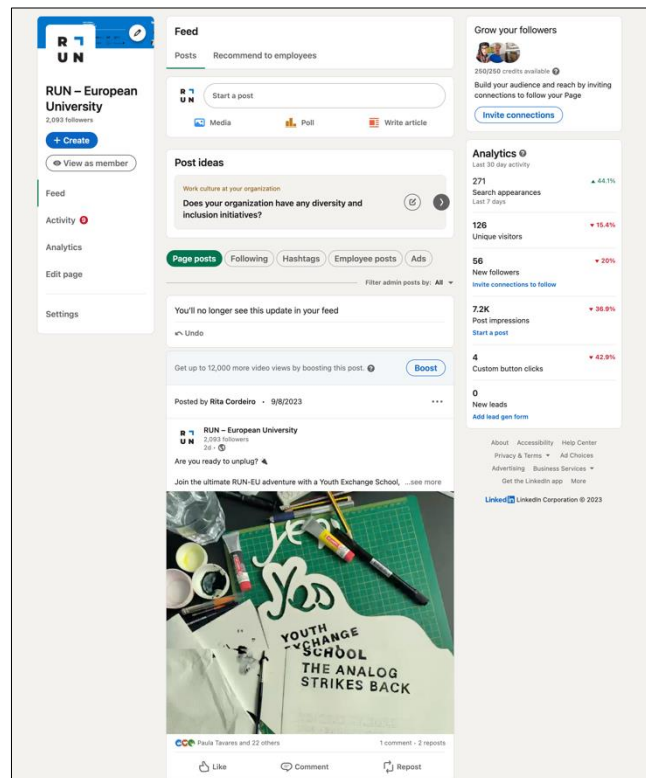

Figure 18 – LinkedIn Page Followers

4.2.10 YouTube Metrics

RUN-EU YouTube channel currently has 128 subscribers (up from 113 reported in **D7.2**) and acts as a repository of audio-visual content produced during the project events, workshops, and presentations outputs.
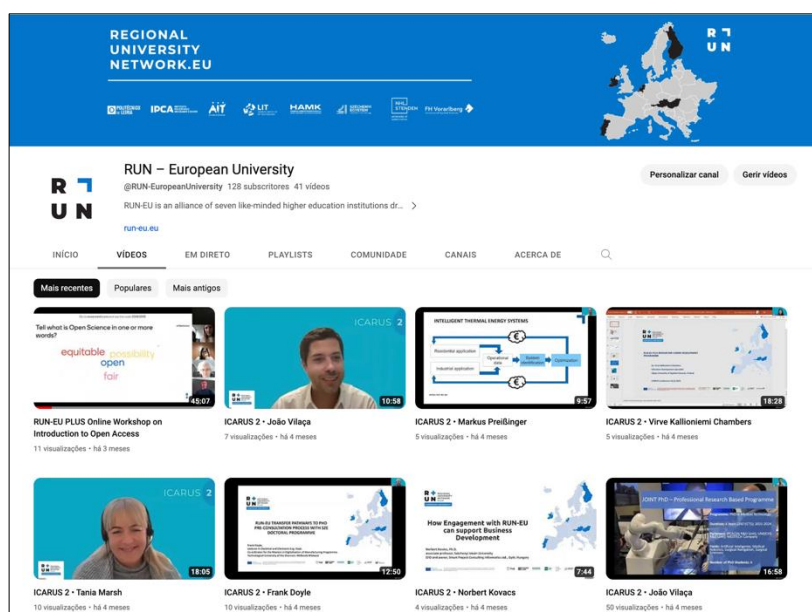

Figure 19 – YouTube Channel Subscribers

An e-zine for publication on the RUN-EU PLUS webpage and in hard copy is currently in the design stage and will be available for the RUN-EU General Assembly in 2023 in HAMK. This e-zine focuses on informing external associated partners on all aspects of RUN-EU PLUS activities and the impacts it can generate in the development of higher-level skills, and transformation of research and innovation outputs to enterprise-generating products.

5. Conclusion on Best Practice in Communications and Outreach

Reviewing the evidence illustrated through the key performance indicators of engagement across all the social media platforms and the webpage the following recommended best practice approach is proposed:

- Strategic positioning of RUN-EU PLUS and its Exploitation at the highest level within each Alliance member organisation.

- Continuous and open communication to all alliance members and associated partners.

- Continuous Shared Good Practice as digital marketing evolves and provides design support across all partners – scheduled meetings and communications workshops essential to ensure alignment to changing regional and European environments.

- Training for all users to be provided on the correct use and implementation of the strategies.

- Common Media Templates and Strategies to be agreed upon and implemented with a Sustainable approach to media use and merchandise production including supply chain and material composition.
  - Adapt templates to work on each platform.
  - Diverse physical media for events essential pre, during and post-event.

- Target group selection is essential for successful communication of activities.
  - Personal connectivity is essential for inclusion – making the audience feel that the activity will positively impact their personal and professional development needs to be the overall goal of the communications medium.
  - Corporate accounts can only be used due to strict privacy policies – essential to disseminate these accounts to ensure usage by target audiences outside of work accounts.

- A clear timeline of events with a minimum notice of 12 weeks to allow for design and content preparation.
  - Dynamic infographics, videos, and design images through a clear branding strategy to be agreed upon and implemented.

- o Clear and strong message to be communicated – less is more!
- Gather and archive all evidence of an event in real-time.
    - o The utilisation of testimonials of experience (Feedback Surveys) for later exploitation.
    - o Trackable means of communication and impact measurement are essential for an evidence-based approach.
- Publish / Report Key Performance Indicators for continuous review and quality improvement of communication and dissemination practice.

WE ARE ONE
WE ARE RUN

+