

PRESS RELEASE

Burgos hosts the Kick-off Meeting of Social Innovation & Democratic Education (EU SIDE) Project

Burgos, 11 April 2025

The partners of the EU SIDE project, which is committed to social innovation and democratic education among teachers, met in Burgos on 9 and 10 April.

On 9 and 10 April, the [University of Burgos](#), as the coordinator, within the RUN-EU alliance, became the meeting point for the partners in the Teacher Academies project, 80% co-financed by the European Commission, and entitled “European Social Innovation & Democratic Education (EU SIDE)”. This project was one of the 14% proposals selected by the European Commission.

The Erasmus+ Teacher Academies aims to improve teacher training, preparing educators to face current challenges inside and outside the classroom. This project reinforces initiatives related to sustainability, multilingualism, interculturality, digitalisation or lifelong learning, among other fundamental aspects for the teachers of the 21st century, objectives that are achieved through internationalization, mobility and collaboration at the European level. These values align with those of RUN-EU, which seeks to foster sustainable progress by promoting innovation and service to society. In addition, this project is a great catalyst for improving the development and competitiveness of the regions of the consortium, which will benefit from social innovation, entrepreneurship and the development of new talents, that will build an economy and a society resilient to future threats. The University of Burgos will position itself as a reference in internationalisation and democratic education, improving its reputation and visibility and attracting students, researchers and new funding opportunities.

This event, in which 26 researchers took part, brought together partners from the 8 partners that form the consortium and who have come from Finland ([HAMK](#)), the Netherlands ([NHL Stenden](#)), Belgium ([Howest](#)), Ireland ([TUS](#)), Portugal ([IPLeiria](#) and [IPCA](#)) and Spain ([UBU](#) and CFIE Burgos). It marked the official start of a project that will be developed over the next three years and aims to promote social innovation and democratic education among teachers at different levels of education, from primary to secondary education and vocational training.

During the Kick-off Meeting members of the different partners met in person, shared their expectations and established the collaboration that will take place throughout the duration of the project. This first meeting was an opportunity to present the project's approach and methodology and settle the specific goals for each phase of the project.

In a world marked by challenges such as sustainability, digitalisation and social inclusion, social innovation is key to transforming education and improving society. The project will develop a Teacher Academy to train teachers to innovate in their daily practices, helping in the development of more free, democratic and inclusive societies.

At the Kick-off Meeting in Burgos, the partners were able to demonstrate their commitment to these values by exchanging ideas, proposals and practices that can be implemented in their respective educational contexts. In addition, participants had the opportunity to tour the facilities of the University of Burgos, which plays a key role in coordinating the project, as well as the Centro de Formación del Profesorado e Innovación Educativa (CFIE), a benchmark for lifelong teacher education.

On the 10th, the group went to Estación de la Ciencia y la Tecnología for a workshop in which social innovation and its possibilities in education were discussed, training partners in the development of innovative skills and democratic values that they will be able to develop in their respective contexts.

In a more relaxed note, the meeting served to promote cultural exchange between the partners. The members of the project have been able to enjoy the rich cultural offer of Burgos, visiting the Museum of Human Evolution and strolling through some of the city's—candidate for European Capital of Culture 2030—most iconic landmarks.





Editor's Note

The [Regional University Network – European University](#) (RUN-EU) is an alliance of eight like-minded higher education institutions drawn from all regions of Europe and established in 2020 under the [European Universities Initiative](#). It works collaboratively across languages and national frontiers to secure the sustainable economic, social, cultural, and environmental progress of our regions and stakeholders through education.

The eight higher education institutions that compose the alliance are the Technological University of the Shannon (Ireland), the Polytechnic University of Leiria (Portugal), the Polytechnic University of Cávado and Ave (Portugal), the Häme University of Applied Sciences HAMK (Finland), the NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands), the Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences (Austria), the University of Burgos (Spain), and the Howest University of Applied Sciences (Belgium). Overall, RUN-EU comprises a student population of almost 100,000 students and more than 100 Research Institutes, Centres and Groups spread across Europe.

RUN-EU's mission is to deliver future and advanced skills that will help students, researchers, academics, and partners successfully meet the challenges of the future, engage in societal transformation, and promote active citizenship, thereby leading to the creation of a new type of multinational interregional alliance, a European Zone for Interregional Development.

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