

Project S3UNICA “Smart Specialisation in UNliversity Campus”

4th S3UNICA Newsletter – July 2021

The Covid-19 emergency and S3UNICA
Low-carbon economy

Given the pandemic situation, the introduction of the previous issues of the S3UNICA Newsletter posed some questions (i.e., how long will the pandemic last? What are and will be the impacts on university campus activities?). As a matter of fact is that Covid-19 crisis has challenged higher education institutions in many new and unexpected ways (see the table on page # 1 of the Newsletter # 3) and that the academic and social life on campuses were suspended with a wide range of academic activities conducted remotely. However, at the time of writing this newsletter, there are still no univocal answers for these and other questions. In fact, as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO), despite the Covid-19 infections and hospitalisations are falling fast across Europe, the risk of an autumn resurgence, or, in the period of reopening of academic

Covid-19 vaccination campaign in S3UNICA PPs

(as of 20/07/ 2021)		1 st vaccine dose	2 nd vaccine dose	18-24 age group (2 doses)
Population 18+	Italy	71.8	51.7	21.2
	Spain	73.6	55.9	7.6
	Finland	76,7	30.4	3.8
	Romania	30.8	29.7	22.4
	Poland	57.5	52.6	34.1
	TOTAL EU	68.5	56.0	22.4

Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (COVID-19 Vaccine Tracker)

activity, remains high as societies open up and the more transmissible Delta variant advances, with the real risk of a return to the situation recorded in the last months of 2020. On the other hand, the vaccination campaign, after a slow start, is proceeding, albeit at different rates depending on the Country considered. But, with 68.5% of people having received at least one dose and 56.0% fully vaccinated, coverage is still far

from sufficient to protect the European Countries from a resurgence and many among vulnerable populations above the age of 60 remain unprotected. The result of the intersection of these factors is that for the academic year 2021-2022, universities must prepare for various teaching scenarios: remotely, face-to-face or in hybrid mode. However, beyond these considerations, the pandemic has not implied a decline in funding for the academic world, but rather a reorientation towards supply of digital learning devices, financial support to students and funds for safety and cleaning equipment. Even the feared drop in registrations did not occur and consequently the projects to improve the energy efficiency of university campus buildings were able to

continue. However, a very important fact has occurred in recent months: the approval by the European Commission of National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRP) by EU MS. These Plans set out the reforms and public investment projects that each MS plans to implement with the support of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the key instrument at the heart of NextGenerationEU, the EU's plan for emerging stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic. NRRPs are based on a set of criteria that considers the Country-specific recommendations and, among others, the effective

- The Partnership of S3UNICA**
- PP1 (LP)** – Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (ITALY)
 - PP2** – University of Udine (ITALY)
 - PP3** – University of Trieste (ITALY)
 - PP4** – Alba Local energy Agency – ALEA (ROMANIA)
 - PP5** – Andalusian Energy Agency – AEA (SPAIN)
 - PP6** – Institute of Domotic and Energy Efficiency IDEE – University of Malaga (SPAIN)
 - PP7** - Regional Council of South Karelia (FINLAND)
 - PP8** - LUT University (FINLAND)
 - PP9** – Association of Municipalities Polish Network “Energie Cités” – (POLAND)

NEWSLETTER n. 4 – July 2021

contribution to green and digital transitions (precisely, the extent to which each national plan contains 37% green and 20% digital objectives). 22 Countries have submitted national plans for their share of the EU's pandemic Recovery Fund, with a number looking for financial resources to modernise university campuses, reducing the energy footprint and cutting maintenance costs. The money needs to be spent over the next 4 years, meaning universities that have already drawn up improvement plans which fit these priorities stand to benefit the most from the 800 Bln. € Recovery and Resilience Facility. On 19th July the European Commission welcomed the Council's approval of its assessments on the NRRPs of the first 12 MS, or: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain. The Council's approval paves the way for the payment of up to 13% of the total allocated amount for each of these MS in pre-financing. The Commission aims to disburse the first pre-financing after the signing of the bilateral financing agreements. The Commission will then authorise further disbursements based on the satisfactory fulfilment of the targets outlined in each of the Council Implementing Decisions, reflecting progress on the implementation of the investments/reforms covered in the plans. Unfortunately, at the time of the closing of this issue of the newsletter, only 2 of the 5 Countries partner of S3UNICA (Italy and Spain – see below) will be able to benefit from this pre-financing.



The NRRP of Italy

Key measures relating S3UNICA objectives

Green transition (37% of the Plan's total allocation for reforms and investments supports climate objectives):

Energy efficiency and redevelopment buildings: 15.36 Bln. €

Of which:

- Energy efficiency public buildings: 1.21 Bln. €
- Energy and seismic efficiency private and public residential building: 13.95 Bln. €
- District heating systems: 200 Mln. €



The NRRP of Spain

Key measures relating S3UNICA objectives

Green transition (40% of the Plan's total allocation for reforms and investments supports climate objectives):

- Innovative renewable energy sources: 3.90 Bln. €
- Energy efficiency residential renovations: 3.40 Bln. €

NEWSLETTER n. 4 – July 2021

4th Semester of S3UNICA activity: a brief overview of the main events/outputs

5 on-line Regional Stakeholders Meeting (RSM) were held during the 4th semester: LP, PP2, PP3 on 23rd April, PP4 on 5th July, PP5 and PP6 on 13th July, PP7 and PP8 on 11th June and PP9 on May 2021. During those meetings, the Partners shared an overview on the current status of the S3UNICA project, the presentation of the survey concerning the Self Assessment Tool (SAT) and the next activities of the Project. Several Campus Technical Meetings, (CTM), Project Partner Meetings (PPM) and exchange of experience Meetings (EEM) was also organised in on-line mode.

S3UNICA in the European society of sustainable buildings and energy transition



On 5th February 2021 the Andalusian Energy Agency (PP5) presented S3UNICA during the Steering Committee Sustainable Buildings. The S3 Partnership on Sustainable Buildings is an alliance between European regions to boost new markets and take advantage of regional opportunities for specialisation. The partnership is led by Andalusia, and North-Croatia. Many other European regions are currently participating (among the S3UNICA regions: FVG Autonomous Region, Alba County and South Karelia). The main topics for this collaboration are: eco-construction, bioclimatism and insulation of buildings; renewable energy integration in buildings; systems of maximum energy efficiency in buildings. The partners have created working groups for each topic and are working on the mapping of the capacities, resources available, relevant actors in the participating regions, and establishment of synergies and interregional collaborations for the implementation of concrete pilot projects and actions.

Webinar: Jobs and skills for the energy transition

Policy Learning Platform



APR
29
2021

On 29th April 2021, under the umbrella of INTERREG Europe, was organized the Webinar on “Jobs and skills for the energy transition”. The aim of the event was to put the spotlight on the job creation and skill development potential of energy efficiency and renewables. The Webinar highlighted the complementarity of different training solutions to guarantee that energy skills are improved across the board and along all value chains. Among the speakers from Croatia (North-West Croatia Regional Energy Agency) and Brussels (Association of European Renewable Energy Research Centers - EUREC), the Andalusian Energy Agency (PP5) and the non-profit renewable energy company ECOOO illustrated a training scheme for solar photovoltaic installers designed for people at risk of social exclusion.

NEWSLETTER n. 4 – July 2021

The main events of S3UNICA



On 21st May 2021, the **1st Campus Technical Meeting - CTM** was organised by the Spanish Partners with the participation of 23 attendants in on-line mode. A 1st session was opened by the IDEE with the description of the actions that the Institute is carrying out on the University of Málaga following the guidelines of S3UNICA. Then, the Andalusian Energy Agency presented the Regional Energy Strategy for next period, as well as presented latest development under the S3UNICA project, including Best Practices from Andalusian stakeholders and from other partners regions. The following technical session started

with the Virtual Visit to Smart Campuses of University of Málaga. the virtual visit was followed by two presentations: the details collected by the SAT, its application in the SRI and carried out activities for knowledge diffusion of the innovative solutions from IDEE. The following intervention was dedicated to the main research projects and the different devices developed on the last years in microchips, energy efficiency, managing buildings and health research. The last speech focused on the new energy strategy of the AEA. The meeting concluded with a session dedicated to comments and considerations.



On 24th and 25th June, the LP Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, University of Udine and University of Trieste, (PP2 and PP3), realized three important events attended by more than 50 participants from all over Europe and from different sectors (public administration, universities, companies, associations, etc.). The morning session of June 24th (PPM) was opened with the discussion about the activities done so far (partners roundtable, communication activities, good practice database) and the ones planned for next months (Joint Secretariat follow up on the 3rd Progress Report, Action Plan and SRI, budget topics and next steps). In the afternoon session, the EEM “Innovative solutions in FVG” focused on the presentation of the Project, the goals and results achieved in the last months and of the stakeholder group,

composed by different regional excellences in public and private sectors: *Agenzia Per l'Energia del Friuli-Venezia Giulia - APE FVG, Bluenergy Group S.p.A., OverIT S.p.A., Acegas Aps Amga, Hera Group, I.S.I.S. “Arturo*

NEWSLETTER n. 4 – July 2021



Malignani”, Associazione Italiana di Elettrotecnica, Elettronica, Automazione, Informatica e Telecomunicazioni - AEIT and Elettra – Sincrotrone Trieste S.C.p.A (for a presentation of the FVG stakeholders, see the Newsletter #1). The next day, the CTM was held by the Universities of Trieste and Udine (PP3 and PP2) that presented the innovative and technological solutions in their campuses, in particular the platform for real-

time monitoring of power demand in a campus microgrid by adopting electrical energy measurements, electronic devices and ICT infrastructure developed by the University of Trieste and the smart multi-energy system, created and implemented by the University of Udine, that represents one of the most remarkable examples of the innovative potential deriving from the use of new, more modern public-private contractual schemes. The LP presented the Regional Energy Plan and its measures (reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and regional energy consumption, increase of energy efficiency, at least 20% of energy consumption requirement provided by renewable sources).

NEWSLETTER n. 4 – July 2021

A brief overview on the main results/outputs to be achieved by the 5th semester and therefore submitted with the next Progress Report. It is important to underline that, due to possible worsening of the pandemic crisis in autumn, the calendar of events and the realization/publication of the outputs may will undergo substantial changes.

- 1 Exchange of Experience (EE) Event in Romania
- 5 Regional Stakeholder Meetings (RSM)
- 1 Steering Group (SG) Meeting
- 5 RSM reports
- 1 EE event report
- 1 SG report: minutes and participants list
- 5th newsletter
- 4 regional self-assessment and post evaluation stakeholder meetings/first completed evaluations
- Website and social media updates
- 2 articles on the institutional website of event hosting partners
- 2 press releases
- 4 appearances in media
- 1 video on EE
- 4th Progress report to JS
- Contribution to and exchange with the IE policy learning platform, priority axis 1

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