

Gateway to Joint Digital Campus



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About EUPeace

EUPeace is the European University for Peace, Justice, and Inclusive Societies.

Our mission is to provide tomorrow's citizens with the skills, knowledge, and experience to cultivate Peace, Justice, and Inclusive Societies. We explicitly address all sciences and fields, from the humanities and social sciences to the natural and life sciences as well as engineering, and are inspired by the rebuilt bridge of Mostar

— the symbol in our logo — as a testament to how dialogue can overcome conflict.

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Executive Summary

The **Joint Digital Campus** is a mid- to long-term goal of the EUPeace Alliance, aimed at interconnecting the IT systems of partner universities to simplify the mobility experience for students and staff. It will ultimately enable seamless digital access to academic and administrative services across institutions, including the implementation of the **European Student Card**, a shared **e-learning community server**, and unified access to learning management systems via a common interface.

As a **first step toward this goal**, the **EUPeace Mobility Portal** has been developed as the **initial gateway** to the Joint Digital Campus. The Mobility Portal centralises and disseminates comprehensive information on international mobility opportunities within the Alliance and reflects the ambitions of task 4.2.1 of our EU-funded project: "Create shared gateway for mobility related information" to create a shared, target-group-specific digital space for mobility-related resources.

The Mobility Portal currently includes:

- Mobility Factsheets for each partner institution
- Detailed guidance on application processes, deadlines, and funding options
- Information on automatic credit recognition across the Alliance
- Virtual Campus Tours, including insights into student life and culture
- An **Incomer's Guide** for practical and non-academic information
- A Testimonials section showcasing mobility experiences
- Preparatory content for the upcoming Buddy System.

Moving forward, the Mobility Portal will integrate additional key components of the evolving Joint Digital Campus, including:

Course Repository

An important part of the Mobility Portal will be the **Course Repository**, detailed in task T4.2.2 "Implementing EUPeace Course Repository" which will help students engage in academic opportunities and choose suitable courses across the EUPeace Alliance. Embedded in the Mobility Portal, the Course Repository will act as a shared, user-friendly, and well-structured catalogue of courses offered by each partner university. It will help students find and enrol in learning opportunities that match their personal and professional goals.

The repository will include:

- Courses that are guaranteed to be recognised for credits across EUPeace institutions
- Modules related to the European Track, work-based learning, and internship placements
- Courses developed in cooperation with/by the EUPeace teams working on Curriculum Transformation and Internationalisation of Teacher Education.







The Course Repository is more than just a tool—it plays an important role in supporting digital academic mobility within the EUPeace Alliance. By being a part of the Mobility Portal, it will:

- Provide a central place where students can explore and compare courses offered by partner universities
- Offer clear, structured, and easy-to-search course information
- Support the long-term goal of building a Joint Digital Campus, where students can access learning opportunities across institutions without technical or administrative obstacles.

By connecting university systems and making academic content more accessible, the Course Repository strengthens the Mobility Portal's role as the gateway to the Joint Digital Campus. It is also a key step toward creating a more connected and student-focused European education space.

Buddy System

The EUPeace Buddy System will also be an important feature of the Mobility Portal, supporting incoming students and staff through a peer-to-peer model, as detailed in task T4.4 "Implement Buddy System to support mobility". The goal is to help them adapt to new academic, cultural, and social environments and improve their overall mobility experience. The system will launch in October 2025.

The Buddy System will match incoming students and staff with local student or staff buddies at their host university. It will be available through the shared gateway of the Mobility Portal, and each participant will have the option to choose a buddy for their stay.

The Buddy System will include both virtual and physical support, depending on the needs and preferences of each student or staff member. Every EUPeace university will offer either virtual, physical, or both types of support.

The main areas of support are:

- Help with academic and social integration
- Language support and learning basic local phrases
- Promoting diversity, inclusion, and student well-being
- Engagement in campus life and student activities.

Design Thinking for Mobility Development

As part of its innovative approach to mobility development, EUPeace is working on applying **Design** Thinking methods to co-create new forms of academic mobility and student engagement strategies. This process will actively involve students, staff, and other stakeholders in shaping the Joint Digital Campus and supporting institutional cooperation.







To support this goal, the **Design Thinking for Mobility Development** subgroup has been formed under task T4.2.3. The group is currently in the process of identifying a Design Thinking expert to consult or train the team in work package 4.

By integrating Design Thinking, EUPeace aims to co-develop mobility pathways that are flexible, inclusive, and aligned with student needs, supporting a forward-thinking vision for the **Joint Digital Campus**.







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Glossary & Abbreviations

Blended Intensive Programme, combining short-term physical mobility with

virtual learning components.

Buddy System A peer-support programme to assist students and staff during their mobility

experience.

Course Repository A centralised, user-friendly website within the EUPeace Mobility Portal

where students can browse and select courses of interest for their studies abroad, providing a transparent overview of available courses at each part-

ner institution.

ECTS European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, ensuring credit recogni-

tion between institutions.

European Union funding programme that supports international mobility and

cooperation in higher education.

Inter-institutional Agreement (IIA) A formal agreement between universities to facilitate student

and staff mobility.

KA1, KA2, KA3 Key Actions within Erasmus+, referring to learning mobility, cooperation for

innovation, and support for policy reform, respectively.

Mobility Portal A website designed to facilitate international mobility for students and staff.

Virtual Campus Tour An online feature allowing prospective mobility participants to explore part-

ner institutions.

WP Work package, referring to specific project components within the EU-funded

project of EUPeace.

UMR PHILIPPS UNIVERSITAET MARBURG, or Marburg University

JLU JUSTUS-LIEBIG-UNIVERSITAET GIESSEN, or Justus Liebig University Giessen

UNIVERSITE DE LIMOGES, or University of Limoges

UNIVERSITA DELLA CALABRIA, or University of Calabria

COMILLAS UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA COMILLAS, or Comillas Pontifical University

UWB ZAPADOCESKA UNIVERZITA V PLZNI, or University of West Bohemia in Pilsen







SUM University of Mostar

CU UNIVERSITY OF CUKUROVA, or Çukurova University

UNIVERZITET U SARAJEVU, or University of Sarajevo







1.Introduction

The **Gateway to the Joint Digital Campus** is a direct stepping stone for the mid- to long-term goal of a fully-fledged Joint Digital Campus of the EUPeace Alliance, and the **Mobility Portal** serves as the first functional step toward achieving it. The EUPeace Mobility Portal represents a foundational step toward the development of the Joint Digital Campus, a central goal of the EUPeace Alliance. This long-term initiative aims to interconnect the IT systems of partner universities, enabling seamless access to academic and administrative services across institutions. Developed under task 4.2.1 "Create shared gateway for mobility-related information", the Mobility Portal centralises essential information on international mobility and provides a user-friendly digital entry point for students, doctoral candidates, and staff.

Whether you are seeking guidance on how to apply for a mobility programme, looking for funding opportunities, or preparing for life at a host institution, the Mobility Portal offers clear and structured resources to help you make informed decisions. With nine partner universities in seven countries, the EUPeace Alliance provides a culturally rich and academically diverse environment in which to internationalise your education or career.

The EUPeace Mobility Portal is more than just a website – it is a dynamic, evolving gateway to the future of digital academic collaboration. By integrating new tools like the Course Repository, Buddy System, and Design Thinking-based development, the Mobility Portal will continue to expand its value as the core access point to the Joint Digital Campus. Its design prioritises transparency, inclusiveness, and long-term sustainability, ensuring that it remains a reliable and effective resource for the entire EUPeace community.

1.1. About EUPeace

Our Vision & Mission

Tragically, the values of peace, justice, and inclusive societies cannot simply be taken for granted. They must be continuously cultivated, studied, and shaped to define the road to an ambitious and challenging socio-political goal. In this, universities have a key role to play. They are at the heart of societies, providing the insights and techniques necessary to address the environmental, technical, political, and social challenges the next generation has to face. Through research and education, they connect people of all generations; they can be model places for protecting and strengthening the values of mutual respect, justice, and inclusion. As such, they are powerful instruments for building peaceful communities.

EUPeace's mission is to provide tomorrow's citizens with the skills, knowledge, and experience to cultivate Peace, Justice, and Inclusive Societies.







We explicitly address all sciences and fields, from the humanities and social sciences to the natural and life sciences as well as engineering, and are inspired by the rebuilt bridge of Mostar - the symbol in our logo – as a testament to how dialogue can overcome conflict.

Our Profile

The commitment to Peace, Justice, and Inclusive Societies is at the core of the European ideal and needs to be continuously cultivated. We argue that peace cannot flourish unless a set of enabling conditions are firmly in place: it goes hand in hand with a deep commitment to justice and inclusion.

EUPeace is comprised of 9 institutions that are similar in size, location and mission within their respective national ecosystems. We are a synergetic mix of universities, characterised by our territorial embeddedness, concern for impact and deep attention to the quality of student life within and beyond our campuses. We have come together, based on long-standing cooperation experiences as well as newly formed ties within the EUPeace universities. We are Marburg University (Germany), Justus Liebig University Giessen (Germany), University of Limoges (France), University of Calabria (Italy), Comillas Pontifical University (Spain), University of West Bohemia in Pilsen (Czechia), University of Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Çukurova University (Türkiye), University of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) as well as our associated partners in Europe and beyond.

We are embracing and fostering our unique geographic distribution and the implications these geographic roots bring to EUPeace: our institutions are located in regions with a lot of internal diversity and sometimes a still recent history of conflict.

Our Approach

EUPeace is about strengthening the enabling conditions for peace: understanding them better through research, nurturing them actively through education, and fostering them broadly through societal outreach and innovative practices.

We develop joint and innovative teaching and learning experiences in which students learn to understand ultimate as well as proximate causes of conflict situations – including aspects of technological and environmental interdependencies – gain experience in how to manage conflicts effectively, and how to implement solutions to conflicts.

We bring our entire academic communities together to generate knowledge, competence and innovative approaches to fostering peace, justice, and inclusive societies. All fields and sciences are required to grasp the conditions of conflict prevention, forecasting and resolution, in a world where material, technical and socio-political arrangements are intimately connected.

We come together with our partners from our local communities and international networks to coconstruct concrete practices and solutions to turn these competencies into impact beyond academia.







To achieve this, the exploration of innovative leverage points for impact, such as our focus on teacher training, is key.

1.2. **Context & Objectives**

In today's academic environment, it is very important for students to have easy access to international study opportunities and digital tools. The Joint Digital Campus aims to respond to this need by offering students and staff members an integrated, user-friendly digital environment that supports physical, blended, and virtual mobility. The Joint Digital Campus creates a shared digital space for the entire EUPeace community. As part of this vision, the Joint Digital Campus seeks to make the EU-Peace Alliance more accessible – academically, socially, and administratively, through a connected website, the Mobility Portal as a Gateway to the Joint Digital Campus, and additional tools like the Course Repository and the Buddy System, which simplify and enrich international experiences. These initiatives contribute to broader efforts to strengthen university cooperation, enhance digital learning accessibility, and promote student mobility across borders.

The Mobility Portal serves as a centralised website where students and staff from EUPeace partner institutions can access structured and up-to-date information about mobility programmes, including funding opportunities, application procedures, information about credit recognition, and integration into host institutions. The Mobility Portal aligns with European Commission objectives by supporting a more interconnected and inclusive higher education system through digital transformation, ensuring that international mobility is accessible, transparent, and efficient for all students.

The upcoming EUPeace Buddy System will be one of the key features of the Mobility Portal, designed to support incoming international students by connecting them with experienced peers at their host institution. This peer-to-peer approach helps new arrivals adjust to their academic, cultural, and social environments more easily. The Buddy System addresses common challenges such as language barriers, academic processes, and social isolation by offering guidance, companionship, and practical advice. As part of the digital infrastructure, the Buddy System not only improves the overall mobility experience but also fosters intercultural exchange and builds a stronger sense of community across the EUPeace Alliance.

The Course Repository will be another key component of the EUPeace digital ecosystem. Functioning as a gateway to academic learning opportunities, it will provide students with a structured database of available courses across EUPeace partner institutions, allowing them to explore and enrol in suitable learning offers based on their academic and professional goals. This Course Repository benefits both mobility participants and home university students seeking international learning experiences, including full-semester courses, short-term programmes, blended learning options, and specialised micro-credentials. By offering a transparent and centralised website, the Course Repository will streamline course selection for students seeking study options within the Alliance.







The development and implementation of the EUPeace Mobility Portal, Buddy System and Course Repository are guided by the following key objectives:

1. Enhancing Quantity and Quality of EUPeace Student and Staff Mobility

- Provide students with a user-friendly digital website that simplifies access to and information on mobility opportunities in the EUPeace Alliance.
- Ensure that students can easily navigate the administrative and academic requirements of studying abroad.
- Promote equitable access to mobility opportunities by offering clear and structured information on funding, eligibility, and support services.

2. Improving Access to Learning Opportunities

- A comprehensive Course Repository that enables students to explore and enrol in learning opportunities offered by EUPeace partner institutions.
- Ensure that students can access information on physical, blended, and virtual learning opportunities, aligning with modern educational needs.
- Support the recognition of academic credits across institutions, allowing students to seamlessly integrate their mobility experiences into their home university curricula by designing mobility opportunities that suit students' needs and study programmes.

3. Strengthening Digital Infrastructure for Higher Education

- Integrate digital tools such as the Course Repository, Virtual Campus Tours, and the Buddy System to enhance student engagement and accessibility.
- Ensure that the Mobility Portal remains sustainable and up-to-date through institutional collaboration and regular updates.
- Utilise data-driven insights to continuously improve the website based on student feedback and engagement analytics.

4. Fostering Institutional Collaboration and Inclusivity

- Strengthen partnerships between EUPeace universities by standardising mobility processes and eventually establish course recognition frameworks.
- Ensure that students from diverse backgrounds, including those with fewer opportunities, can benefit from international mobility through dedicated support mechanisms.
- Reinforce European cooperation in higher education by promoting inclusivity, accessibility, and innovation.

The EUPeace Mobility Portal, Buddy System and Course Repository will serve as key drivers, ensuring that international mobility and learning opportunities remain accessible, structured, and beneficial for all students within the EUPeace Alliance and beyond.

This initiative is a collaborative effort involving all institutions, UWB, CU, UMR, JLU, UNILIM, UNI-CAL, COMILLAS, SUM, and UNSA. By pooling their expertise and resources, these universities aim to







create a comprehensive and user-friendly Mobility Portal that will streamline mobility processes and foster stronger international ties within the EUPeace network.

1.3. **Approach & Methodology**

The development of the Gateway to the Joint Digital Campus was guided by a structured, collaborative, and user-focused approach. The methodological framework followed the structure of work package 4 "Facilitating Mobility" and its sub-tasks:

- **T4.2** Set-up Joint Digital Campus
- **T4.2.1** Shared Gateway for Mobility-related Information
- T4.2.2 Implementing EUPeace Course Repository
- T4.2.3 Design Thinking for Mobility Development
- **T4.4** Implement Buddy System to Support Mobility

A Proposal: Preliminary Plan for Course Application via the Joint Digital Campus

The diagram below was prepared for and discussed during the Autumn 2024 EUPeace Staff Week and illustrates the step-by-step process that a student could follow to attend a course through the EUPeace Joint Digital Campus, supported by the Course Repository and the Mobility Portal. The swim-lane format divides the responsibilities across five sections: the Mobility Portal, the Sending Higher Education Institution (HEI), the Course Repository, the Joint Digital Campus, and the Receiving HEI.







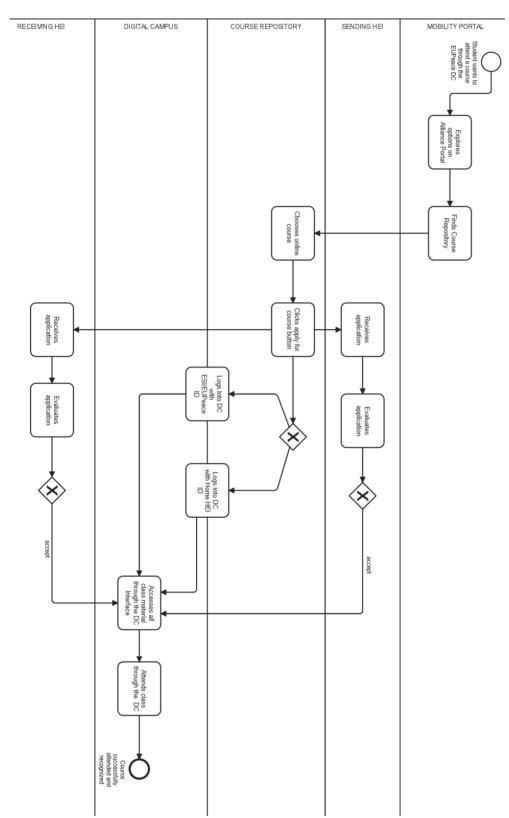


Figure 1: EUPeace Virtual Mobility BPMN Diagram. A BPMN diagram (Business Process Model and Notation diagram) is a visual representation of a business process, showing how tasks, decisions, and events flow between people, systems, and departments.





The process begins when a student expresses interest in attending a course within the EUProcess Overview:

1. Course Discovery (Mobility Portal):

Peace Alliance. The student explores available options through the Mobility Portal and finds the Course Repository.

2. Course Selection (Course Repository):

From the Course Repository, the student selects an online course and clicks the "Apply for Course" button.

3. Authentication (Joint Digital Campus):

The student is prompted to log into the Joint Digital Campus using either an ESI/EUPeace ID or their home institution ID. The work package 4 IT subgroup is currently working on possible solutions for a unified Student ID within the EUPeace Alliance.

4. Application Handling (HEIs):

- a. The Sending HEI receives and evaluates the student's application.
- b. Simultaneously, the Receiving HEI also receives the application and performs its own evaluation.
- c. If both institutions accept the application, the student gains access to the course materials through the Joint Digital Campus interface.

5. Course Participation (Joint Digital Campus):

Once accepted, the student accesses all class materials through the Joint Digital Campus interface and attends the course online.

6. Completion:

The process concludes when the student successfully attends and completes the course, which is then officially recognised.

Purpose and Benefits:

This process streamlines cross-institutional course registration and participation within the Alliance. By integrating standardised data flows and digital authentication methods, it ensures transparency, academic recognition, and an efficient student experience across partner universities. This diagram simplifies the process significantly, purposely excluding details for simplicity's sake, but can be used as a starting point for the IT group to tackle the various steps towards a Joint Digital Campus.

1. Mobility Portal

This initiative was developed under task 4.2.1 "Create shared gateway for mobility-related information", fulfilling the milestone 17 (M17) "Fully functioning EUPeace Mobility Portal", and responds to the need for a unified, accessible, and well-organised digital platform that facilitates international academic mobility for students and staff across the EUPeace Alliance.

A dedicated work package 4 subgroup (UMR, UWB, UNILIM) led the initial needs assessment, identifying key informational gaps and user requirements across the Alliance. Regular consultations with







students, staff, and mobility coordinators helped define the distinct needs of the two main target groups—students (including doctoral candidates) and staff. The content development phase focused on creating a clear, inclusive, and easy-to-navigate structure, divided by user group (Students, Doctoral Candidates, Staff, Internationalisation Officers).

The portal was developed as an integrated part of the EUPeace website to ensure seamless navigation and accessibility. Key features included responsive design, and user-friendly navigation. Additional digital tools, such as Virtual Campus Tours and a dedicated section on the Buddy System, enhance user engagement and practical usability.

Development Timeline:

- This subgroup was established at the kick-off meeting workshop at UWB, in January 2024.
- Starting in Spring 2024, the subgroup met online every 4-6 weeks to conceptualise and execute the steps towards developing the Mobility Portal.
- A pre-launch demonstration during the EUPeace International Staff Week in Marburg and Giessen (October 2024) provided valuable feedback, which was incorporated prior to the official launch in January 2025 at the work package 4 workshop in Pilsen. During the workshop, participants co-developed the Incomer's Guide, further enhancing user relevance. A pilot phase followed the launch, involving all EUPeace partners. Usability, clarity, and accessibility were tested, and feedback loops were established—particularly with mobility coordinators to ensure the portal remains dynamic and responsive. Updates are continuously implemented to improve user experience and keep pace with evolving needs.

2. Course Repository

Parallel to the development of the Mobility Portal, significant progress has been made regarding the EUPeace Course Repository under task 4.2.2. "Implementing EUPeace Course Repository". This repository will serve as a shared digital catalogue of academic courses across the Alliance, simplifying cross-institutional study planning and academic recognition.

Development Timeline:

- October 2024: Creating the IT subgroup during the EUPeace International Staff Week in Marburg and Giessen.
- November 2024 February 2025: Conceptual development of the Course Repository, including the architecture of the "middle point" system to collect course data.
- February 2025: Pilot phase for submitting course information to the "middle point".
- March 2025: Technical connection of additional partner universities to the system.
- March May 2025: Development of the user-facing website for the Course Repository; in parallel, exploration of potential synergies with the EduXchange platform.
- May June 2025: Pilot testing of the Course Repository with selected data and partners.







Next Steps:

- June July 2025: Public launch of the first version of the Course Repository across the EU-Peace network.
- From June 2025 onwards: Gradual expansion of course offerings, based on feedback and further collaboration with relevant work packages.
- September 2025: First in-person EUPeace IT Meeting (24–25 September in Pilsen), covering: Course Repository, Buddy System Package, European Student Card, Erasmus Without Paper (EWP), Nextcloud, Overall IT Roadmap.

As part of the broader digital infrastructure, the Course Repository complements the Mobility Portal by enhancing transparency and enabling students to access up-to-date academic offerings across institutions.

To support the Joint Digital Campus vision, work package 4 members and the work package 4 IT team are working closely on broader digital integration. Key initiatives include:

- Mapping existing technologies to support a shared student ID and student card system which is also a relevant topic for the team working on Campus and Student Life (work package 5)
- Planning the integration of systems such as the European Student Card, Erasmus Without Paper (EWP), and Nextcloud
- Ongoing discussions on the **IT Roadmap** of the Alliance.

These efforts will be further advanced during the first in-person **EUPeace IT Meeting**, scheduled for 24–25 September 2025 in Pilsen, as part of the larger EUPeace Autumn Meetings. The development of the Mobility Portal and Course Repository exemplifies the EUPeace Alliance's commitment to user-centred design, cross-institutional collaboration, and digital innovation. These tools lay the foundation for the Joint Digital Campus, enhancing mobility, academic cooperation, and a unified European learning space.

3. Buddy System

Work package 4 is currently developing the EUPeace Buddy System, which will become a key feature of the Mobility Portal. This initiative is part of task T4.2.1 "Create shared gateway for mobility-related information" and directly linked to task T4.4 "Implement Buddy System to support mobility". The system is designed to support incoming international students and staff across all partner universities and to create a more inclusive, welcoming, and supportive academic environment.

Development Timeline:

The official launch of the Buddy System is set for October 2025, when it will be fully integrated into the Mobility Portal, enabling incoming students and staff to request and be matched with local "Buddies".







- October 2024: A dedicated Buddy System subgroup was formed during the EUPeace International Staff Week in Marburg and Giessen, composed of representatives from partner institutions.
- January 2025: A working meeting at UWB in Pilsen focused specifically on the Buddy System. A student representative from ESN UWB Pilsen was invited to share practical insights and best practices.

Spring 2025:

- A handbook for internationalisation officers was created to support universities in establishing or improving their Buddy Systems. The handbook is included in the Annexes.
- The definition of the EUPeace Buddy System—including both student and staff buddies—was drafted and approved by the Steering Committee of EUPeace, making it valid across the alliance.
- A template website for the Buddy System was developed by an IT specialist at UWB and will be shared in July, after the team working on communication matters (work package 8) reviews it for branding and logo conformity, with all partner universities to ensure unified implementation.
- The Buddy System subgroup (UWB, UNILIM, CU) now meets monthly to coordinate development, collect feedback, and align efforts across institutions.

4. Design Thinking for Mobility Development

To ensure that the Joint Digital Campus remains adaptive, inclusive, and aligned with users' real needs, the EUPeace Alliance is applying **Design Thinking** principles to mobility development. This is spearheaded by the subgroup formed under task T4.2.3 "Design Thinking for Mobility Development", focusing on co-creating new forms of mobility and student engagement.

Development Timeline:

- October 2024: Creating the Design Thinking subgroup during the EUPeace International Staff Week in Marburg and Giessen
- January 2025: Identifying a Design Thinking expert to support and/or train work package 4 members
- February March 2025: Drafting a definition of mobility to guide format development
- March 2025: Developing a mobility survey targeting both students and staff to gather input on experiences and preferences
 - o A first draft has been shared within the subgroup (UNSA, SUM, UMR, JLU) refined based on work package 4 feedback
 - The survey has already been piloted at the University of Mostar
 - Results will be collected by **end of May 2025**, informing the next phase of design thinking







 The finalised survey has been presented at the April work package 4 meeting to the **Mobility Group.**

The Design Thinking approach will guide the Alliance in developing mobility pathways that are not only functional, but also flexible, inclusive, and user-driven—supporting EUPeace's long-term vision of a responsive and collaborative digital campus.

The coordinated development of the Mobility Portal, Course Repository, Buddy System, and Design Thinking processes illustrates the EUPeace Alliance's dedication to building an inclusive, user-oriented Joint Digital Campus. By combining strategic planning, collaborative task forces, and continuous feedback from students and staff, work package 4 ensures that digital tools not only support mobility but actively enhance the academic and social experiences of all users. These interconnected initiatives form a strong foundation for future innovation, cross-institutional integration, and the longterm sustainability of mobility services across the alliance.

Challenges

Throughout the development of the Gateway to the Joint Digital Campus, several challenges appeared that required teamwork and problem-solving. Several of these were:

- Work Package Intersections: Several of the work package 4 tasks involve cross-work package efforts, e.g. the involvement of work packages 2 and 3 for the Course Repository as well as significant guidance by the Digitisation Office and the formation of an IT group. The increased involvement of actors has led to more complex and intensive coordination, which, in turn, has necessitated a longer timeframe for the achievements of tasks.
- Digital/Technical Responsibilities: "Facilitating Mobility" in work package 4 can be divided in two main areas: firstly, mobility funding and support, but secondly the development of a technical infrastructure for an Alliance level of mobilities. Recruiting IT staff and determining responsibilities for the IT tasks has taken due time and remains a challenge at some partner universities. The objective is to create offers that are user-friendly (Mobility Group expertise) but based on sound digitalised structures (IT expertise).
- Definitions: The need for cohesive definitions of crucial terminology crystallised early. In response, work package 4 created comprehensive and clear definitions for mobility, the Buddy System, and the roles of student buddies and staff buddies. These definitions were approved by the Steering Committee and are now valid across the entire EUPeace Alliance.
- Academic Calendars: One continuous hurdle within mobility administration is the variety of institutional systems, academic calendars, and administrative processes at different partner universities. The figure below sketches the differing semester windows within which the EU-Peace Alliance functions.







Semester overlaps in the EUPeace Alliance:

Lecture Periods

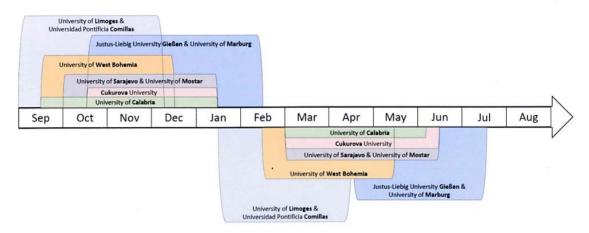


Figure 2: Semesters at the EUPeace partner universities. The graph shows EUPeace's members academic year including lecture seasons and off-seasons. Respective winter semesters are shown above the timeline, summer/spring semesters below.

Continuous communication and compromise within work package 4 were necessary to address these challenges of diverging expectations, different levels of digital readiness and to reach an agreement on shared terminology. Despite these challenges, the strong commitment of all partners and a user-focused approach helped the team turn complexity into opportunities for innovation and long-term cooperation.







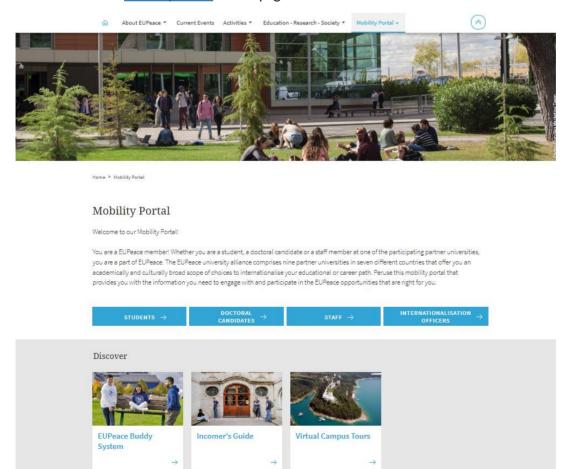


2. Mobility Portal as a Gateway to Learning Offers

The EUPeace Mobility Portal represents a transformative step in streamlining international academic mobility for students across partner institutions. This Mobility Portal serves as a centralised hub, simplifying access to essential resources such as application procedures, funding opportunities, credit recognition, and logistical guidance. The primary goal is to provide structured and transparent mobility experiences for students, ensuring they can navigate international exchanges seamlessly.

The Mobility Portal integrates tools such as Virtual Campus Tours and information about the Buddy System, enhancing user engagement and accessibility. By offering standardised Mobility Factsheets, it ensures consistency across universities and fosters inclusivity. The long-term sustainability of the portal is guaranteed through institutional commitments and continuous data-driven improvements, positioning it as a model for European university alliances and higher education mobility initiatives.

Screenshot of the Mobility Portal's main page:





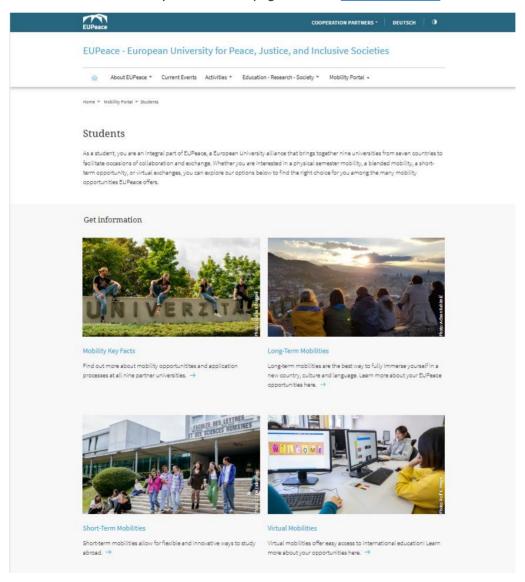


The Role of EUPeace in Student Mobility

EUPeace is dedicated to equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to cultivate peace, justice, and inclusive societies. By leveraging international mobility programmes, students gain exposure to diverse academic, social, and cultural environments that prepare them for global citizenship. The EUPeace network, comprised of nine universities across Europe, fosters strong institutional partnerships and ensures academic excellence through collaborative teaching and research.

The Mobility Portal functions as a digital gateway to the learning offers of all partners, enabling students to explore a broad range of international study opportunities.

Screenshot of the Mobility Portal's main page from the **Students section**:







The Mobility Portal facilitates structured mobility experiences by providing:

- A centralised database of exchange programmes across EUPeace universities.
- Detailed application guidance with deadlines and eligibility requirements.
- Information about credit recognition in the EUPeace Alliance.
- Virtual campus tours showcasing university environments and facilities.
- Information about support provided by the Buddy System to students for adapting to new cultural settings.

This initiative promotes equitable access to international learning by eliminating information barriers and streamlining administrative processes.

Key Features of the Mobility Portal for Students:

The Mobility Key Facts template standardises mobility-related information across all partner institutions. Students can easily compare exchange opportunities based on:

- Institutional profiles (location, Erasmus code, contact information).
- Faculty coordinators to assist with academic advising.
- Academic calendar with semester dates and examination periods.
- Available courses and their respective languages of instruction. The Mobility Portal also serves as a gateway to digital learning offers, particularly in English-taught courses.
- Up-to-date online course offers within the EUPeace network.
- Information about institutional collaboration in digital education initiatives.

These developments align with the broader goal of enhancing international academic engagement through digital transformation:

- Application requirements with deadlines and required documentation.
- Accommodation options to assist with housing arrangements.
- Student support services such as orientation programmes and counselling.

By offering this structured overview, the portal enhances transparency and facilitates student decision-making.

Incomer's Guide:

A key component of the Mobility Portal is the Incomer's Guide, providing essential non-academic information to incoming students. This guide covers:

- Cultural insights into the host country and university environment.
- Accommodation and housing options for international students.







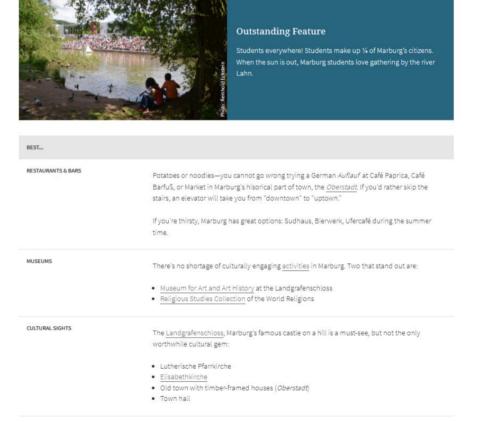
- Transportation guidance for navigating local transit systems.
- Administrative procedures such as residency registration and healthcare access.
- Social and extracurricular opportunities to foster cultural integration.

The guide serves as a comprehensive resource, ensuring students feel informed and supported upon arrival at their host institution.

Screenshot of the Mobility Portal from the Students section, Incomer's Guide:



Marburg at a Glance









Long-Term and Short-Term Mobility Programmes:

The portal outlines various mobility formats, ensuring that students can select programmes that align with their academic and personal goals. These include:

- Full-semester exchange programmes under the Erasmus+ framework.
- Blended mobility programmes combining online and in-person learning.
- Short-term study trips (5-30 days) through Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs).
- Virtual mobility options allowing students to enrol in online courses at partner institutions.

The structured framework of these programmes ensures that students can make informed choices regarding their international academic experiences.

Internships and Professional Development:

EUPeace recognises the importance of international internships as part of student career development. The portal provides:

- Listings of internship placements across Europe.
- Information on funding opportunities under the Erasmus+ internship programme.
- Guidelines on securing academic credits for international work experience.
- Support from faculty mentors and professional advisors.

By offering these resources, the Mobility Portal facilitates student employability and global career readiness.

Student Testimonials:

To inspire prospective participants, the Mobility Portal features a Student Testimonials section with first-hand accounts of exchange experiences. These testimonials highlight:

- Academic and cultural insights gained through mobility programmes.
- Challenges and rewards of studying abroad.
- Recommendations for future participants.

This resource provides a realistic perspective on international mobility, helping students prepare for their own experiences.







Template for student testimonials:









Screenshot of the Mobility Portal from the Students section, Student Testimonials:





From Cukurova University...

...to Marburg University

From the University of Limoges... ...to the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen









Virtual Campus Tours:

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Virtual Campus Tours (VCT) are an integral part of the Mobility Portal. To better understand the preferences of the intended audience, UWB conducted a short survey asking students and staff whether they would rather have short video clips or 360-degree campus tours. The results showed an even split between the two formats. Since several EUPeace universities already had 360-degree campus tours available, work package 4 opted to focus on producing short video clips — a format considered more engaging and accessible for students.

Each EUPeace partner university created its own short video following a shared script to strengthen the sense of a unified EUPeace community. These videos provide an introduction to both the university and its surrounding city, offering a warm and informative welcome to prospective students. Together, the existing 360-degree tours and the newly produced videos complement one another and are both accessible through the Mobility Portal.

To assist students in selecting their exchange destination, the portal includes Virtual Campus Tours showcasing university life. These tours provide:

- Overviews of campus facilities (libraries, dormitories, International Office).
- Insights into extracurricular activities such as student clubs and sports.
- Personalised walkthroughs from student ambassadors.

This feature allows students to explore potential host institutions before applying, ensuring they make informed decisions.

Screenshot of the EUPeace YouTube Channel with <u>Virtual Campus Tours</u> videos:







Funding and Accessibility:

To make mobility programmes accessible to all students, the Mobility Portal provides detailed information on funding opportunities, including:

- Erasmus+ grants covering travel and living expenses.
- Additional financial aid for students with fewer opportunities.
- Green travel incentives for environmentally friendly transportation choices.

The emphasis on financial accessibility ensures that all students, regardless of their economic background, can participate in international exchanges.

Staff Mobility within the EUPeace Alliance

The EUPeace Mobility Portal includes a dedicated section for academic and administrative staff, offering clear and accessible information to support professional growth and international cooperation. In collaboration with Erasmus+ (Key Action 1), EUPeace provides information about various staff mobility options such as teaching exchanges, job shadowing, training courses, and observation periods. These opportunities aim to enhance skills, share best practices, and contribute to the internationalisation goals of each institution. The Alliance's nine partner universities across seven countries work together to promote staff mobility as part of their shared commitment to fostering inclusive and globally connected academic environments.

Staff members are encouraged to contact their institution's international office or EUPeace coordinator for guidance on available programmes, application procedures, and funding options. Financial support for mobility is usually available through Erasmus+, covering travel and subsistence costs. Through streamlined access to mobility opportunities, the Mobility Portal empowers staff to build international experience, strengthen institutional partnerships, and advance both personal and professional development.







Screenshot of the Mobility Portal's main page from the **Staff section**:



Home > Mobility Portal > Staff

Staff

Participating in a staff mobility is a crucial way to enhance your university's internationalisation goals as well as your personal professional objectives. If you work for one of the nine EUPeace partner universities, you are a part of EUPeace and have many opportunities to participate in a mobility suited to your unique interests and needs.

With Erasmus+ training opportunities are available to staff working in education, both in teaching and non-teaching capacities.

Erasmus+ Key Action 1 – Learning Mobility of Individuals provides opportunities for higher education academic and nonacademic staff to engage in professional development activities abroad. It also allows professionals from various fields to teach and train students or staff at higher education institutions. These opportunities can include teaching assignments or training experience, such as job shadowing, observation periods, or participation in training courses.

To ensure high-quality mobility activities with maximum impact, the mobility activity must be related to the staff's profession and address their learning and personal development needs.

Staff teaching mobility in EUPeac

A teaching mobility abroad takes place at a partner higher education institution. The teaching period abroad enables any teaching staff member at a higher education institution or staff from enterprises to teach at a partner institution abroad. Staff mobility for teaching can occur in any study field. A teaching mobility lasts from 2 days to 2 months (programme countries) or a minimum of 5 days (partner countries) and the teacher commits to a minimum of 8 teaching hours per week. The staff member must be selected in advance within a selection process at their home institution.

Staff training mobility in EUPeace

A training mobility abroad takes place at a partner higher education institution. The training period abroad enables any staff at a higher education institution to take part in a training activity abroad that is relevant to their day-to-day work at the esteemed institution. This may include training events or job shadowing. The training mobility lasts from 2 days to 2 months (programme countries) or a minimum of 5 days (partner countries). The staff member must be selected in advance within a selection process at their home institution.

A period abroad may combine both teaching and training activities

For either Staff Training or Staff Teaching, it is recommended to use Erasmus+ funds from the participant's home institution. Travel and accommodation costs can be covered through Erasmus+ KA131 or KA171 funds. The University of Mostar and the University of Sarajevo use International Credit Mobility (KA 171) while other universities use Erasmus+ KA131 funding.

If you are interested in Staff Training or Staff Teaching, please contact the International Relations Office at your home institution.



Staff Trainin

Learn more about your mobility opportunities as staff at one of the EUPeace partner institutions here! \to



Staff Teaching

You are a teaching staff and interested in teaching at one of the EUPeace partner universities? Find more information here. \to



International Staff Weeks

Staff Weeks are a unique opportunity to learn, share your expertise and network all at the same time! \to



Staff Testimonia

Learn about the EUPeace partner institutions through personal staff mobility experiences. →







Sustaining the Mobility Portal:

The EUPeace Mobility Portal is designed for long-term sustainability with a focus on:

- Regular updates to ensure accurate and current mobility information.
- Institutional commitment from partner universities to maintain portal functionality.
- User feedback integration to continuously enhance the student experience.

By embedding continuous improvement mechanisms, EUPeace ensures that the Mobility Portal remains a dynamic and responsive resource for future students. By providing a comprehensive, structured, and user-friendly platform, it empowers students to navigate mobility programmes efficiently and confidently. The Mobility Portal not only streamlines administrative processes but also enhances the academic, social, and professional experiences of students across the EUPeace network. As a digital gateway to learning offers and international opportunities, the Mobility Portal represents a significant milestone in fostering a globally connected academic community.







3. The Buddy System

Work package 4 is currently developing the Buddy System for EUPeace, which will become a crucial feature of the Mobility Portal. The milestone for the Buddy System is set for October 2025. The system will facilitate the pairing of incoming students with local students - Buddies. In line with task T4.2.1, "Create shared gateway for student mobility-related information", and task T4.4, "Implement Buddy System to support mobility", each student should have the option to choose a buddy for their stay through the shared gateway. Work package 4 has defined the EUPeace Buddy System, including both student and staff buddies, and this definition has been approved by the Steering Committee, making it valid at the alliance level.

Since some EUPeace partner universities do not currently have a Buddy System, nor an ESN chapter or another similar student organisation, work package 4 has created a handbook for international officers to help them better understand the purpose of the Buddy System, who a buddy is, what they do, what events the Buddy System organises, and how they cooperate with international officers and universities. This document is enclosed in the Annexes.

Definition of the EUPeace Buddy System

The EUPeace Buddy System is a programme organised by students and staff from the receiving university. It plays a crucial role in helping incoming international students and staff adapt to new academic, social, and cultural environments. The programme enhances student and staff engagement, promotes well-being, and fosters an inclusive campus atmosphere in a peer-to-peer approach.

Within the EUPeace Alliance, we offer both virtual and physical student buddies and staff buddies for physical mobility. Each student and staff member can apply for either a virtual or physical buddy based on their needs and preferences. Each EUPeace university will offer virtual support, or physical support, or both to all incoming students and staff members.

Areas in which students and staff will receive support from the EUPeace Buddy System:

- Access to language learning opportunities
- Diversity and inclusion as the EUPeace values, especially for incoming students with fewer opportunities
- Getting involved in life on campus and in the student community.

Possible activities of EUPeace Buddy System:

- Intercultural events, such as country evenings, language nights, and seminars on current topics (social inclusion, intercultural dialogue); always with student participation
- Integration of students with special education needs
- Resolving emergency situations







Regular use of the EUPeace Student Campus Festival.

Who is a buddy?

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In the Alliance a **buddy** is a **student** or a **staff member** who helps exchange students and staff adapt to university life at the receiving EUPeace partner university through a peer-to-peer approach. A buddy's role is to provide guidance, support, and social integration to ensure a smooth transition into a new academic and cultural environment at the receiving EUPeace university.

Student buddy

1) Physical support – for physical mobilities

Minimum duties in person:

- Showing to the incoming students the location of the faculty/department where they will study and the dormitory – if there is no dormitory, helping/guiding with accommodation.
- Explaining to the students how the local public transportation system works and how to arrive to the university.
- Helping the students to learn basic words and sentences in the local language.
- Helping them with resolving emergency situations.

Optional/additional:

- Picking the students up at the bus or train station and accompanying them to the accommo-
- Help with organising intercultural and networking events for incoming students with participation of local students in cooperation with the EUPeace Buddy System (e.g. country evenings, language nights, discussions on current topics).

2) Virtual support – for physical mobilities

Minimum duties in person:

- Online support in giving advice where to find accommodation, to help with documents needed for the university or residence permit.
- Providing information to the incoming students about the location of the faculty/department where they will study and the dormitory.
- Explaining to the students how the local public transportation system works and how to arrive to the university.
- Helping the students to learn basic words and sentences in the local language.
- Helping incoming students with resolving emergency situations.







Staff buddy

Minimum duties in person: for physical mobilities

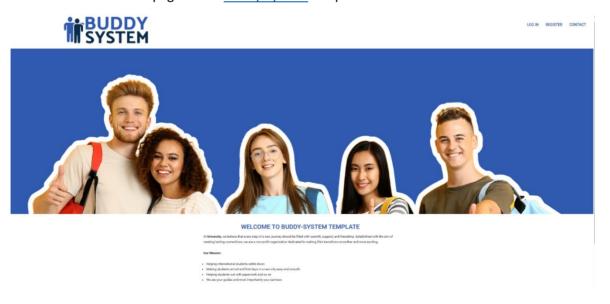
- Helping with the signing of the invitation letter/acceptance letter/mobility agreement.
- Providing basic information about the host university.
- Explaining how to arrive to the university.

Optional/additional:

- Putting the incoming staff member in contact with a representative of the similar faculty/department at the host university.
- Providing information where the receiving faculty/department is located at the host university.
- Offering assistance with finding accommodation and public transportation.
- Guiding the incoming staff member around the university campus and the city centre.
- Informing about events organised by the receiving university.

A UWB IT specialist has developed a template website for the EUPeace Buddy System, which will be shared with all partner universities in the Alliance so that each can implement its own pairing mechanism for incoming students and local student buddies. An incoming student can apply for one local buddy, while a student buddy can be matched with more than one incoming student, depending on their preferences. Students can use the Buddy System website for initial communication, as it also includes the option to send emails.

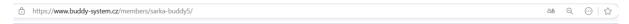
Screenshot of the main page of the Buddy System template:



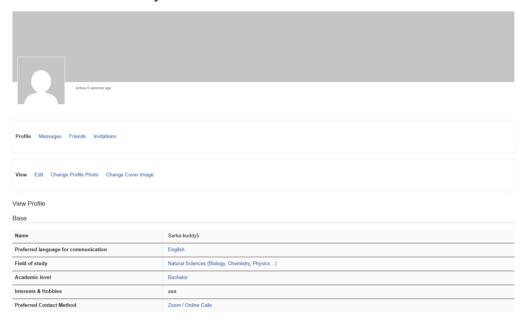




Screenshot of the buddy's profile:



Sarka-buddy5



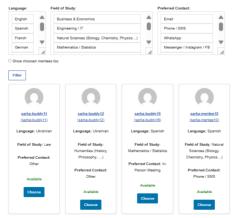
Screenshot of the mentees list with test incoming students:



PROFILE MENTEES LIST

Mentees list

Available mentees



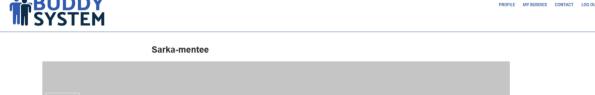








Screenshot of the profile of an incoming student/mentee:



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Academic level Other	Preferred language for communication	English			
	Field of study	Engineering / IT			
	Academic level	Other			
Interests & Hobbies aaaa	Interests & Hobbies	3333			
Preferred Contact Method WhatsApp	Preferred Contact Method	WhatiApp			

Screenshot of the page with information about your buddy:



PROFILE MY BUDDIES CONTACT LOG OUT

My buddies



If you don't have Buddy yet hang on, I'm sure you'll hear from her/him soon!







Screenshot of the page used for email communication:



PROFILE MY BUDDIES CONTACT LOG OUT

Sarka-mentee Profile Messages Frends Indiators Profile Messages Frends Indiators Frends Geri Compose Serial Gibbarrame Quant-budget Delignet Delignet

In the next phase, the Buddy System website will be shared in July/August 2025 with all partner universities to be adapted as needed and implemented at their locally responsible department. In the meantime, all universities are either setting up their own local Buddy Systems or working with existing ESN organisations to join the EUPeace Buddy System.







4. Course Repository

An important part of the Gateway to the Joint Digital Campus will be the Course Repository, facilitating academic engagement and course selection across the Alliance. The Course Repository will be integrated into the Mobility Portal, making it easily accessible to everyone. It will provide a structured and accessible catalogue of available courses at each partner institution, ensuring that students can efficiently identify and enrol in suitable learning opportunities. The Course Repository will serve as a shared digital catalogue of academic courses across the Alliance, simplifying cross-institutional study planning and academic recognition. Work packages 2 and 3 are responsible for the content of the Course Repository, while work package 4 delivers the technical framework.

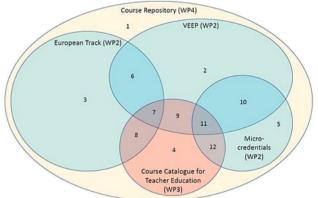
The EUPeace Course Repository will categorise, and structure course offers into distinct collections to ensure clarity and accessibility for students:

- 1 Collection of all EUPeace course offerings
- 2 Collection of all virtual EUPeace course offerings
- 3 Collection of all European Track courses
- 4 Collection of all EUPeace courses suitable for teacher education
- 5 Collection of all EUPeace micro-credential courses
- 6 Collection of all virtual European Track courses
- 7 Collection of all virtual European Track courses suitable for teacher education
- 8 Collection of all on-site European Track courses suitable for teacher education
- 9 Collection of all virtual EUPeace courses suitable for teacher education
- 10 Collection of all virtual EUPeace micro-credential courses
- 11 Collection of all virtual EUPeace micro-credential courses suitable for (in-service) teacher education
- 12 Collection of all on-site EUPeace micro-credential courses suitable for (in-service) teacher education

Figure 3: Depiction of the different EUPeace course offers and respective responsibilities to individual work packeges. The circles show different collections of courses offered to students and how these overlap with each other. This visualizes the resulting different subsets of courses and how these can be counted towards their overarching goals. The size of the individual circles as well as the area of the overlap does only roughly indicate the estimated number of courses. Only approximate quantitative information can be derived from this visualization.

Development Timeline:

- October 2024: Work package 4 created the IT subgroup during the EUPeace International Staff Week in Marburg and Giessen.
- November 2024 February 2025: Conceptual development of the Course Repository, including the architecture of the "middle point" system to collect course data.
- February 2025: Pilot phase for submitting course information to the middle point.
- March 2025: Technical connection of additional partner universities to the system.
- March May 2025: Development of the user-facing website for the Course Repository; in parallel, exploration of potential synergies with the EduXchange platform.
- May June 2025: Pilot testing of the Course Repository with selected data and partners.

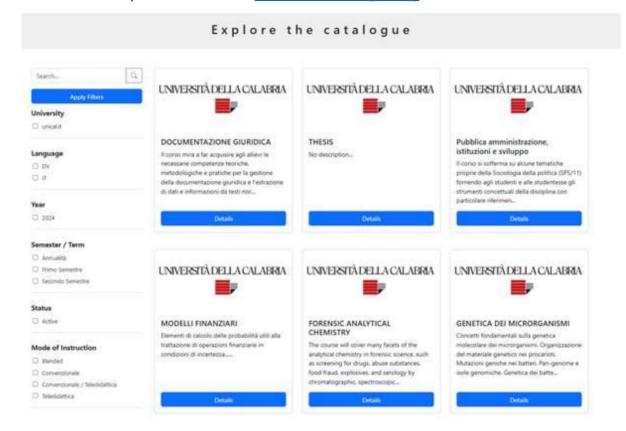








Screenshot of the pilot website for the EUPeace Course Repository:



Working Plan for the Course Repository:

- May/June 2025: Mapping and analysis of options will be presented to the governing bodies.
- June July 2025: Public launch of the first version of the Course Repository across the EU-Peace network.
- From June 2025 onwards: Gradual expansion of course offerings, based on feedback and further collaboration with relevant work packages.
- September 2025: First in-person EUPeace IT Meeting (24–25 September in Pilsen), covering: the Course Repository, Buddy System, European Student Card, Erasmus Without Paper (EWP), Nextcloud, Overall IT Roadmap.
- The Course Repository will be functional in its first version in the winter semester 2025/26.







Current Topics for Discussion in the IT Subgroup in May/June for Implementing the Course Repository:

Authentication

- UWB is considering **EDUGain** as a possible solution.
- Collecting ideas about any other identity providers that could be suitable within the Alliance.

"Enrol" Button Functionality

- Clarify where the system should **redirect the user** after clicking "Enrol".
- IT specialists from partner universities currently outline how students will be registered in their internal systems after enrolment.

Platform Decision – EduXchange/Agora/other

In parallel, external platforms like EduXchange or Agora are being researched by the respective IT and digitisation experts for potential future acquisition. Because the internally developed tool for the Course Repository is quite advanced, work package 4 recommends running a pilot phase in the winter semester 2025/26 with this tool before considering the acquisition of an external platform.

The diagram below outlines possible technical processes and data flows behind the EUPeace Course Repository and enrolment system, focusing on how course metadata is collected and displayed, and how students enrol in courses across partner universities. As part of the broader digital infrastructure, the Course Repository complements the Mobility Portal by enhancing transparency and enabling students to access up-to-date academic offers across institutions.







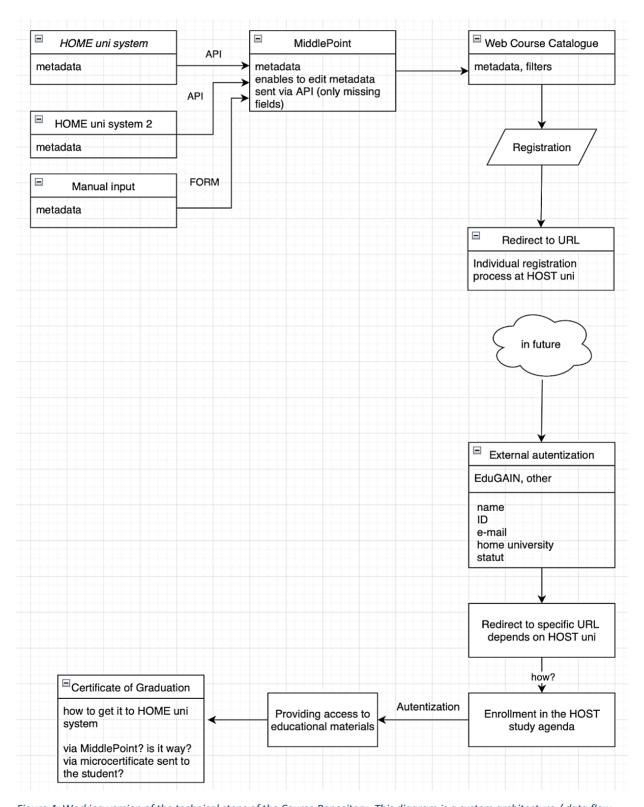


Figure 4: Working version of the technical steps of the Course Repository. This diagram is a system architecture / data flow diagram (DFD) — specifically, a high-level process integration diagram showing how metadata and authentication flow between systems.







To support the Joint Digital Campus vision, the work package 4 team is working closely on broader digital integration. Key initiatives include:

- Mapping existing technologies to support a shared student ID and student card system
- Planning the integration of systems such as the European Student Card, Erasmus Without
 Paper (EWP), and Nextcloud
- Ongoing discussions on the IT Roadmap of the Alliance

These efforts will be further advanced during the first in-person **EUPeace IT Meeting**, scheduled for **24–25 September 2025 in Pilsen**, as part of the broader EUPeace Autumn Meetings. The development of the Mobility Portal and Course Repository exemplifies the EUPeace Alliance's commitment to user-centred design, cross-institutional collaboration, and digital innovation. These tools lay the foundation for the Joint Digital Campus, enhancing mobility, academic cooperation, and a unified European learning space.







5. Conclusion

The Gateway to the Joint Digital Campus, consisting of the Mobility Portal, Course Repository, and Buddy System, represents a transformative step forward in enhancing academic mobility and learning opportunities across the EUPeace Alliance. The creation of the Mobility Portal as a centralised, user-friendly website aims to address key challenges faced by students and staff, such as access to clear mobility-related information, information about credit recognition, and financial support. The future integration of the Course Repository will significantly increase its impact by providing a comprehensive overview of academic offers across the Alliance. The Joint Digital Campus will enable students to easily explore and select courses that match their educational and professional goals, further improving their mobility experience.

A key strength of this initiative lies in its collaborative approach, bringing together 9 partner institutions to support the mobility processes, and increase mobility numbers in the EUPeace Alliance, align technical solutions, and build a sustainable digital infrastructure. The user-centred design ensures that the platform remains accessible, relevant, and engaging for both students and staff. The Buddy System, which offers both virtual and physical support for incoming students and staff, provides valuable peer-to-peer guidance, helping participants integrate socially and feel welcome. The Mobility Portal, together with the Course Repository and Buddy System, is central to creating an inclusive and dynamic academic environment across the EUPeace Alliance.

In addition, the Design Thinking approach to Mobility Development plays a crucial role in improving the overall experience for international students and staff. This includes continuous efforts to refine mobility processes, develop a shared digital space for mobility-related information, and promote international exchanges. The cooperation between the 9 institutions aims to simplify these processes and offer a smooth user experience, further strengthening the EUPeace Alliance's commitment to academic and cultural exchange.

Despite the challenges caused by institutional differences, outlined in Approach & Methodology, the EUPeace Alliance has shown resilience through flexible problem-solving and technological innovation. With continued institutional support and ongoing development, this initiative will play a key role in promoting international collaboration, accessibility, and student success within the European Higher Education Area. By using digital tools and encouraging a culture of mobility, EUPeace is committed to providing transformative international learning experiences for students and staff, preparing them for success in a globalised world.







6. Plan of Action

As the Gateway to the Joint Digital Campus is a conglomerate of various elements that allow students and staff to have access to the Joint Digital Campus, the plan of action involves various stakeholders and key players. As a mid- to long-term goal, the Joint Digital Campus aims to simplify the admission of and attending to student and staff mobilities. Transparent, user-oriented and sustained access to mobility-related information is the first step to facilitating mobilities within such a Joint Digital Campus. Digital tools, such as the Course Repository and the Buddy System tool, are next steps, that are currently being developed, to move towards realising a Joint Digital Campus.

Acting as a main component of the Gateway to the Joint Digital Campus, the Mobility Portal will continue to serve as an

- a) information website for essential mobility-related information, while also acting as the main platform hosting the digital tools, mainly the
- b) Course Repository and
- c) the Buddy System Tool.

a) Monthly reviews by the Mobility Portal Subgroup will ensure that all mobility-related information remains up-to-date. New concepts and formats will be discussed as needed in the bi-monthly Mobility Portal Subgroup meetings and incorporated into the Mobility Portal thereafter.

As the Alliance's central point for mobility information, the Mobility Portal will be actively used in key events such as collaborative information sessions for students from partner universities to promote mobility, including orientation sessions for prospective mobility participants, international staff weeks, summer and winter schools, and other formats relevant for the Alliance. The dissemination timeline is as follows:

September 2025	Online info session for EUPeace-affiliated staff to disseminate information about the Mobility Portal as a tool. Staff events may be promoted through internal channels as well as the EUPeace website.
October 2025	ISW at Çukurova University for work packages 2, 3 and 4 members. The Mobility Portal will be analysed collectively to optimise the Portal's potential to present and disseminate the results of the work packages on "Transforming Curricula" and the "Internationalisation of Teacher Education".
October/November 2025	Online info session for students: Introducing EUPeace and the Mobility Portal. Possibly in cooperation with the subgroup for "T4.5 – Increasing Mobility Circulation Numbers". Student events may be promoted through internal channels as well as the EUPeace website.







Every two months	The Mobility Portal subgroup will review the need for info sessions in 2026 and 2027 at every bi-monthly meeting and plan in accordance with the identified need.
Ongoing	The mobility experts who meet monthly within the work package 4 context will include EUPeace and the Mobility Portal in their university's regularly scheduled mobility info sessions as a gateway to an EUPeace mobility.
Ongoing	The Mobility Portal Subgroup will be mindful of key events in which the Mobility Portal and EUPeace mobility in general could be promoted. When an opportunity presents itself, the Subgroup will actively pursue the possibility. If requests to present the Mobility Portal reach work package 4, the Mobility Portal Subgroup will be available to present the Portal.

b) The Course Repository collects information on available EUPeace courses and offers from each partner university. Its main objective is to provide a comprehensive and easily accessible overview of EUPeace-related opportunities for students. A subgroup comprised of Digitisation Office staff, IT staff and members from several work packages currently collaborates to develop the Course Repository. The expected timeline is as follows:

May/June 2025	Pilot testing of the Course Repository	
June 2025 on- wards	Gradual expansion of the Course Repository, continuous running of Course Repository under supervision and revision by the dedicated subgroup	
September 2025	Physical IT and Digitisation Office staff meeting at UWB in Pilsen	
Winter Semester 2025/26	The Course Repository is integrated in the Mobility Portal and EUPeace students can access it	

c) The Buddy System Tool is a website that pairs students (buddies and mentees) to further reduce mobility hindrances by offering the expansive and peer-level mobility support of a buddy. UWB is finalising steps on a website template, based on the pairing tool UWB has been using in the past, to make available for all Alliance partners. If Alliance partners do not already have Buddy Systems in place, they will implement the website template at their university to best serve EUPeace students. The timeline for the Buddy System is as follows:

July/August 2025	The Buddy System website template is made available to all EUPeace partners	
July-September 2025	EUPeace partners adapt the website template as needed and implement the tool and services at their university	
Winter Semester 2025/26	EUPeace students have the possibility of choosing a buddy for their physical or virtual mobility	







Links to Other Work Packages

The Gateway to the Joint Digital Campus has laid and is in the continuous process of laying the foundation for increased and improved mobilities within the EUPeace Alliance. To function well, the Joint Digital Campus needs the listed components (Mobility Portal, Course Repository, Buddy System) as well as others (Connecting LMS, EUPeace Student ID), some of which are within the sphere of work package 4 tasks and some that will predominantly foreground the work of other work packages.

There are several examples of these intersections:

- T4.2.3 Design Thinking for Mobility, a task that will develop innovative mobility scenarios and alternative learning pathways to further serve EUPeace mobile students, for example, is closely intertwined with T1.8.
- The EUPeace Student ID is one of the tasks in work package 5 "Campus and Student Life" that will positively influence access to services and offers within the Joint Digital Campus.
- Actively involved IT staff is central to connecting Learning Management Systems, with the
 consultation of the Digitisation Office of the Alliance. This is a very complex endeavour and a
 long-term goal.

Outlook for 2026 and Beyond

Tasks and objectives that require the active involvement of cross-work package actors by default necessitate a longer timeframe. In close communication with work package 4 and the IT group, significant decisions regarding the desired level of interconnection of the partners' IT systems (e.g. connecting Learning Management Systems) will have to be made on the Governing Board and Steering Committee level in 2026. Respective decisions will influence the prioritisation of IT-related capacities. The events specified in the tables above, planned in the autumn of 2025, are crucial for the progress of work package 4 efforts, whether that is improving and sustaining the Mobility Portal (ISW at Çukurova University) or road-mapping and structuring the IT-centred objectives (IT Meeting at UWB).

Together, these efforts will contribute to an EUPeace Joint Digital Campus that offers easy access to educational and internationalisation opportunities and therewith contributes to the dissemination of peace, justice, and inclusive societies.

Status quo – beginning of October 2025

At the start of October 2025, the <u>Mobility Portal</u> has successfully migrated to the new EUPeace website and received a design refresh to improve accessibility and visibility. Testimonials and guidance materials are now more prominently displayed, with updates planned on a regular cycle. Beyond the technical migration, the Portal subgroup has begun implementing a dissemination strategy: an infosession series for students will launch in mid-October, with sessions highlighting EUPeace mobility opportunities, the European Track, and teacher education offers. Monitoring is embedded in this







process, as the Mobility Portal subgroup will evaluate participation and feedback after each session. The Portal is also scheduled to be showcased at the upcoming Staff Week at Çukurova University, where WP2 and WP3 colleagues will explore how to use it as a channel for disseminating their results.

The **Course Repository** has moved from pilot phase to operational use. As of 30 September, all nine partners have uploaded their initial selection of courses, covering offers in the European Track, VEEP, and Teacher Education. The repository is now online and accessible via the UNSA interface, with over 250 courses available to browse. The course repository will soon be available at a new URL within the EUPeace website. October will see the first structured student "test drive," whose feedback will guide refinements in usability and metadata presentation. Monitoring is currently twofold: the IT taskforce meets bi-weekly to check technical stability and partner input, and a student focus group is being convened to provide direct evidence of user experience. The repository is on track to support actual student sign-ups before the end of 2025.

The **Buddy System** has reached milestone level: 377 tandems were recorded across the alliance by September, well above the KPI of 200 for the first two years. Most partners now operate either the common WordPress tool, a local adaptation, or association-based structures. UWB, UNILIM, UNSA and UNICAL have working digital systems in place, while COMILLAS and SUM are integrating the shared template. Monitoring is ensured by a common reporting framework: each tandem is recorded in a shared Excel table, disaggregated by staff/student, institution, and term, which allows comparability despite different local models. Evaluation is also planned through feedback collection at campus level, and a design thinking methodology will be piloted in 2026 to strengthen student participation.

Overall, the three components are each operational in different stages. The Mobility Portal has entered its active dissemination phase, the Course Repository is accessible and entering user testing, and the Buddy System has surpassed initial targets with a functioning reporting framework. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are already foreseen: regular subgroup meetings (Portal, Repository), tandem reporting (Buddy System), student focus groups, and event-based feedback. Together, these steps ensure that by the time of the next reporting cycle, usage evidence and lessons learned will be available to demonstrate not just establishment but actual uptake.







Annexes

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Annex 1: EUPeace Buddy System - Handbook for WP4 Members

What is the EUPeace Buddy System?

In the EUPeace Alliance the Buddy System is a programme organised by a voluntary association of local students and staff that plays a crucial role in helping incoming international students and staff adapt to the new academic, social, and cultural environments while traveling abroad for studying at the EUPeace partner university or staff training/teaching. It enhances student engagement, promotes well-being, and fosters an inclusive campus atmosphere.

The buddy system can be implemented as a non-profit organisation or a student-led club to support students and staff at EUPeace partner universities.

This organisation will focus on:

- Organising welcome events, cultural trips, and networking sessions.
- Offering language support.
- Supporting international students with accommodation, paperwork, and cultural adaptation at the receiving EUPeace partner university.
- Facilitating mentorship opportunities between students, staff, and alumni.

One of the biggest student organisations which provides support for incoming students is the Erasmus Student Network (ESN). ESN operates across universities in Europe, helping incoming students integrate into their new environment through mentorship, social activities, and academic support. The EUPeace Buddy System can be set up by the local ESN organisation.

Who is a Buddy?

In the EUPeace Alliance a buddy is a student or a staff member who helps exchange students and staff adapt to university life at the receiving EUPeace partner university.

A buddy's role is to provide guidance, support, and social integration to ensure a smooth transition into a new academic and cultural environment at the receiving EUPeace university.







What Does a Buddy Do for Incoming Students and Staff at the University?

In the EUPeace Alliance, we have two types of buddies: Student Buddy and Staff Buddy, ensuring that everyone going on mobility to one of the EUPeace partner university abroad receives support.

Student Buddy

The EUPeace Buddy System creates pairs, where each international exchange student is assigned a local student – a buddy. The local buddy helps the international exchange student from the moment they arrive at the destination and even before with online support. A student buddy assists incoming students from EUPeace partner universities with settling into their new environment, helping with practical matters such as accommodation, campus navigation, and administrative tasks.

Contact Before Arrival

- Contact the students before their arrival, answer any questions, and confirm their arrival date and location.
- Be ready for students who may arrive five days or fewer before the start of Orientation Week, but some may arrive much earlier, so the buddy must be prepared.

Welcome

- Pick up the student from the airport, train station, or designated arrival point.
- Go with them to the dormitory or accommodation (dormitory accommodation is pre-arranged and available at any time, including weekends and late-night arrivals).

Accommodation/Dormitory Formalities

- Assist with signing the accommodation contract.
- Help with paying dormitory fees.
- Fill out the Foreign Police registration form if required. Accompany the student to the Foreign Police, if they are not staying in a dormitory (students in dorms are registered automatically - in the Czech Republic).

University Integration

- Accompany the student to the university and help with administrative formalities at the International Office or at other relevant department or office.
- Assist with registration, obtaining the student ID card, and explaining how the canteen, library, and computer systems work.

Public Transport Assistance

Explain how public transportation works and help obtain a public transport pass.







City Orientation & Daily Life

Provide basic information about navigating in the city, using public transport, etc. Assist with basic shopping, including essential items and groceries. Help them with medical issues.

Farewell

Help the student with moving out of the dormitory at the end of the semester.

How Much Time Do I Need to Dedicate to an International Student?

- That is entirely up to you!
- The **first week** is the most critical for international exchange students. They usually arrive one to two weeks before the semester starts, and this is the time when they need their buddy the most.
- The level of support depends on the agreement between the buddy and the student, but on average, it requires around three to five hours per week, with a gradual decrease over time.
- You can choose how involved you want to be—whether it's just helping with the basics like arrival, paperwork, and university orientation, or spending more time exploring the city, attending events together, and sharing experiences.
- The more time you invest, the more rewarding the experience will be. Many buddies stay in touch with their international students long after the programme ends, leading to lasting friendships and even opportunities to visit each other's countries!

Staff Buddy

A staff buddy provides guidance to incoming staff members from EUPeace universities. A staff buddy plays a crucial role in supporting university staff members who participate in international mobility programmes. Often, this person is from the home International Office or/and the receiving International Office (or Welcome Centre), ensuring that the mobility experience is smooth and well-organised.

Support from the Home International Office Staff Buddy

Before departure, the **staff buddy at your home university** assists with:

- **Signing all necessary documents** required for the mobility programme.
- Providing details about grant payment and financial support.
- Clarifying administrative procedures and deadlines to ensure everything is in order before departure.

Support from the Receiving International Office Staff Buddy

Before and after arrival, the staff buddy at the host EUPeace university provides both virtual and inperson assistance, including:







Pre-arrival virtual guidance

- Information on how to get to the city and university campus.
- Accommodation instructions: Advice on where to stay and how to access housing services.
- Public transportation guidance: Details about local transport options, ticketing, and commuting routes.
- Campus navigation: Directions to key university buildings, offices, and facilities.
- Ongoing support during the stay, ensuring a smooth adaptation to the new professional and cultural environment.

Physical Support Upon Arrival

- Campus Tour: Introduction to key university buildings, offices, libraries, and other essential
- City Tour: A guided exploration of the city, including key landmarks, services, shopping areas, and cultural sites.
- Workplace Integration: Introduction to colleagues, department structures, and work culture at the host institution.

Why Join the EUPeace Buddy Programme as a Volunteer?

Joining the EUPeace **Buddy Programme** is more than just volunteering—it's an opportunity to grow, have fun, and build lifelong connections. Don't miss out on this amazing experience! 🖋

- Make Lots of New Friends Help an international student feel at home at your university! Introduce them to your friends, practice the local language together, and show them the best of your culture.
- Experience a Foreign Culture First-hand Inform the EUPeace incoming international student about local traditions, customs, and culture at our cultural evenings, or help them pick up new words while playing sports or board games. Learn about incoming international student's culture, traditions and customs of their home country.
- Build Valuable International Connections By making new friendships, you'll have the chance to visit your buddies in their home countries. In other words, traveling becomes easier, and in return, they can help you with accommodation, local insights, and more. The buddy role goes both ways!
- **Improve Your Language Skills** Get the chance to practice speaking in a foreign language.
- Have Lots of Fun! Enjoy exciting experiences, make unforgettable memories, and be part of a great community.







What Can You Get for Being a EUPeace Buddy?

(The benefits may vary at each university)

- Priority for Exchange Programmes Students who actively participate in the EUPeace Buddy Programme receive priority consideration in the selection process for semester exchange programmes.
- Earn ECTS Credits In some universities, being a buddy can count as an official "voluntary" course, allowing you to gain ECTS credits for your engagement.
- Certificate of Participation Receive an official certificate recognising your volunteer work, which can be valuable for scholarships, study programmes, or future job applications.
- Boost Your CV & Career Prospects Employers appreciate teamwork, leadership, and volunteering experience. Being a buddy highlights your ability to work in diverse environments.
- Join Exciting Events & Trips Enjoy free or discounted access to city tours, cultural events, language cafés, and buddy programme trips.

How to Motivate New Students to Become a EUPeace Buddy?

Getting new students excited about joining the EUPeace Buddy Programme requires a mix of personal benefits, social experiences, and career advantages. Here are some effective ways to encourage participation:

- Priority for Exchange Programmes Many students dream of studying abroad. Emphasising that being a buddy increases their chances of being selected for an exchange programme can be a strong motivator.
- Earn ECTS Credits If your university offers ECTS credits for being a buddy, make sure they know. It's a great way to combine volunteering with academic progress.
- Boost Your Resume Employers value international experience, leadership, and teamwork. Being a buddy looks great on a CV and can help with future job applications.
- Certificate of Participation EUPeace universities will provide an official certificate, which might be useful for scholarships, internships, and career opportunities.
- Make Friends from Around the World Some students hesitate to join because they worry about the time commitment. Being a buddy is not just about responsibilities—it's about meeting new people and making lifelong friends.
- Use Student Testimonials Have past buddies share their positive experiences on social media, in orientation sessions, or through short video clips.
- Social Media Campaigns EUPeace will run an engaging campaign on the EUPeace Instagram & Facebook accounts, and EUPeace university platforms where reels, testimonials, and **interactive stories** will be posted about the benefits of being a EUPeace buddy.







Difference Between ESN and the EUPeace Buddy System

Key Differences

Feature	EUPeace Buddy System	Erasmus Student Network (ESN)
Scope	University-based, local	International, European-wide
Focus	One-on-one or small-group mentoring, support	Large-scale events, networking
Main Role	Helps students integrate personally	Organises social & cultural activities
Who runs it?	University International Offices in cooperation with student groups	Student volunteers under ESN structure
Events	Individual campus tours, city tour personal guidance, organising smaller events	Big welcome parties, cultural trips, networking events
Member- ship	No membership required	ESN membership & ESNcard for discounts

EUPeace Buddy System – As a Local University Support Programme

What it is:

• EUPeace university-based mentoring programme where local students (buddies) are paired with incoming international students from EUPeace partner universities to provide personal support and assistance during their stay.

Main Purpose:

- Helps incoming international students from EUPeace partner universities with practical matters such as arrival, paperwork, accommodation, helping with medical issues and university life.
- Provides a **one-on-one or small-group support system** for cultural integration.
- Focuses on personal connections and informal assistance rather than large-scale event organisation.

Who Runs It?

- Usually organised by EUPeace university together with an existing student association within the receiving university.
- Coordinated by **International Offices** or specific student-led initiatives.

Key Activities:

- **Arrival support** (airport pickup, dorm check-in).
- Helping with university paperwork and orientation.







Guiding students around campus & the city.

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) - An International Student Organisation

What it is:

ESN is a large, Europe-wide student organisation that supports international exchange students through events, networking, and advocacy. It operates in more than 40 countries and partners with universities to enhance student mobility programmes.

Main Purpose:

- Organises events and activities for international students at a larger scale.
- Promotes cultural exchange and international friendships.
- Provides discounts and benefits (ESNcard) for travel, entertainment, and services.
- Represents international students at the European level, advocating for better mobility programmes.

Who Runs It?

- Managed by volunteers, often students who have been on exchanges themselves.
- ESN operates locally at universities but follows a structured national and international hierarchy.

Key Activities:

- Welcome Week & Orientation Events (city tours, cultural evenings).
- Social and networking events (language tandems, pub nights, international food festivals).
- Trips & excursions to other cities or countries.
- ESNcard benefits (discounts for travel, restaurants, and cultural activities).
- Advocacy & workshops about student mobility and Erasmus+ opportunities.

Responsibilities of the EUPeace Partner University vs. the EUPeace Buddy System/ESN

The EUPeace partner university and the local International Office will handle formal, administrative, and academic matters, ensuring legal compliance and academic success. The EUPeace Buddy System focuses on student-to-student support, helping with social integration, practical everyday issues, and cultural adaptation.

EUPeace Partner University and local International Office Responsibilities

1. Administrative and Legal Support







- Processing student applications and visa-related paperwork
- Issuing necessary documents (e.g. letters of acceptance, proof of accommodation)
- Ensuring compliance with national and institutional regulations

2. Academic Support

- Organising orientation sessions and academic advising
- Providing information about courses, grading systems, and academic expectations
- Facilitating access to student services (libraries, IT support, etc.)

3. Housing and Welfare Services

- Assisting students in finding accommodation
- Providing guidance on insurance

4. Financial and Mobility Support

- Managing Erasmus+ and other exchange programme funding
- Providing scholarships and grants where applicable

5. Integration into University Life

- Ensuring international students are aware of university rules and student rights
- Coordinating partnerships with student organisations.

EUPeace Buddy System/ESN Responsibilities

1. Peer-to-Peer Support

- Pairing international students with local student mentors
- Answering informal questions about student life and daily matters

2. Pre-Arrival Support

- Helping international students understand practical aspects (e.g. transportation, housing)
- Assisting with initial preparations before arriving at the university

3. Cultural and Social Integration

- Organising social events, excursions, and activities to help students connect
- Encouraging participation in student clubs and local cultural experiences

4. Daily Life Assistance

- Helping students navigate the city, how to use public transport, and basic services
- Supporting students in dealing with dormitory-related challenges (roommates, facilities)

5. Language and Communication Support

Encouraging language exchange and informal learning opportunities







- Assisting with basic translations and explanations of local customs
- 6. Feedback and Mediation
- Reporting common challenges international students face to the International Office
- Suggesting improvements based on student experience.

How many EUPeace Buddies do you need for your university?

Example from the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen

We usually have about **180** incoming students for **1** semester (280-300 per academic year) and we have **30** Buddies for them.



