

Participants:

Title	Name	First Name	Function	Organisation
Ms.	Hatfield	Victoria	Economy & Enterprise Manager	City of Exeter
Cllr	Denham	Rosie	Councilor City Transformation, Energy & Transport	City of Exeter
Ms.	Evans	Chris	Assitant Director - Regional Impact and Innovation	University of Exeter
Mr.	Nåbo	Niklas	Vice Mayor and Vice Chairman of the City Council	City of Linköping
Mrs.	Brissman	Astrid	Second Deputy Mayor	City of Linköping
Dr.	Axelsson	Jan	Director of Valorization	Linkoping University
Mr.	Johansson	Päivi	Vice Mayor	City of Norrköping
Mr.	Bosi	Marco	Deputy mayor	City of Parma
Prof.	Valenti	Simonetta Anna	Vice Rector for International Relations	University of Parma
Prof.	Philippe	Déborah	Vice Rector	University of Lausanne
Prof. Dr.	Fügenschuh	Bernhard	Vice Rector for Student Affairs and Teaching	University of Innsbruck
Prof. Dr.	van Winden	Willem	Lead Expert EUniverCities, moderator	URBAN IQ
Mrs.	Decruynaere	Elke	Deputy Mayor	City of Ghent
Prof. Dr.	Van Herreweghe	Mieke	Vice-rector	Ghent University
Mr.	De Wilde	Pieter	Cabinet Vice Mayor Decruynaere	City of Ghent
Mr.	Coucke	Gijs	Policy adviser international relations - EUCN Coordinator, rapporteur	Ghent University

Rapporteur: Gijs Goucke, Ghent University

Moderator: Willem van Winden, UrbanIQ/Amsterdam University of applied Sciences

Aim of the meeting:

Aim of the meeting is to learn from each other, to reflect on how the network functions, to discuss the future focus, key topics and methods of the network, to inform and inspire the secretariat and the members.

Perceived added value of the network

The members mention a number of positives regarding the network:

- It is a great network to exchange experiences, best practices; the peer review methodology is valued
- It is useful to see inspiring examples, good practices, concrete initiatives - also on the strategic level – from other cities & universities; It helps to sharpen your own vision on complex city-university collaboration.
- It creates “eye-openers”: the network helps to discover that cities have similar problems, but also entirely different situations - that puts the own “home” situation in a different perspective

- Working in an international network helps to have a more relaxed collaboration than on the national or local level: there is less rivalry and a more open attitude also to expose vulnerabilities and weaker points
- The network creates time to think (outside the daily job context) and space to discuss; it is fruitful to have teams traveling, spend time together and come home with good ideas and connections.
- The networks' unique scope and focused composition (medium-sized cities, not too many members) are appreciated
- The network helps to build meaningful relations with other cities/universities

Potential themes for learning and exchange in the future:

Several representatives (from Ghent, Linköping and Norrköping) mention the *emerging shortage of teachers* in primary and secondary education, especially in some fields like STEM; the profession seems to be undervalued. Also, there is a need to have a *more diverse corps of teachers*, in line with changing demographic composition. Working on this issue could be a joint effort of cities and universities.

Many cities have *segregated areas or even no-go zones* where problems are concentrated. These problems are very hard to tackle. International collaboration could help, to learn from each other, to get inspired by successful projects. Comparative action research by network partners would be appreciated.

The societal impact of science is changing, it seems that growing numbers of people do not trust science or are influenced easily by fake news. It is important that *academics leave the ivory tower* and work more with society to counter fake news and misleading information and rebuild trust. This requires better science communication (not just writing academic papers), and a reward system for academics that also appreciates/stimulates local or public commitment, not only scientific rankings.

The relation between university and wider region needs attention; how can the university reach out successfully to wider (rural) areas? Magdeburg has some good examples how to promote students thesis work with firms in the region.

Cities face enormous challenges regarding *climate change and environmental sustainability*. Many of them set ambitious goals to become CO2 neutral, or make their economy circular. For these major challenges, a deep collaboration between city, university and many other stakeholders is needed. The network should pay attention to this and facilitate mutual learning in this respect.

Concerning challenges, a link with the *UN Sustainable Development Goals*¹ be considered; these are the goals that the world community has set itself, and in which cities&universities can play a major role together.

Other topics mentioned are:

- How can cities deal effectively with technological changes
- Approaches towards the (growing numbers of) international students in the city
- A general, comparative study on the major impact of university decisions on the city as a whole
- Student participation (in university and city), and citizen participation in the university
- Policies and courses towards life-long learning of people and employees

¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

- How to engage business in your civic/city life
- How to arrive at a more inclusive city and university in different dimensions and respects (e.g. refugees, minorities, ... people who do not enter university in general)
- The use of data: big data against populism (use knowledge in universities for rational decision-making), and more science/data backed decision making. A bottleneck is the lack in skills in data analytics.

Methodologies of learning and exchange

Several conclusions and recommendations were made concerning the methods of learning and exchange in the network:

- EUniverCities could develop as a platform and resource for comparative research on relevant topics, to have systematic analysis of common issues/challenges, conducted by teams for researchers from the partners
- EUniverCities could consider to go beyond the exchange of knowledge and idea, towards joint implementation of new projects; Together, cities can start “frontrunner projects”
- EUniverCities can consider a more reflective methodology: rather than quick learning doing site visits, doing more in-depth or longitudinal studies on city-university collaboration
- EUniverCities could try to involve more students (or student ambassadors) in its exchanges
- EUniverCities could improve the communication of its findings and results, through a shared platform, or other dissemination methods.
- The Flower Model has worked fine but it needs a rethink, it should include a variety of new topics discussed above
- New partners from member states are welcome (France being the biggest country without partner in the network)
- It is worthwhile to think about expansion of the network in another way: by actively bringing outside examples into the network. Guest presentations by good practice cases?

A consideration: Many of the politicians/decision makers present at the meeting are not that familiar with the network; they know it, they appreciate it, but have not been really part of its operations. The network could think about ways to involve them more actively in the regular activities.