

# EMUNI

Retrospective  
and the Horizons  
of Tomorrow

2024–2029





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## Table of Contents

EMUNI: Driving Innovation, Dialogue, and Sustainable Development in Higher Education · 5

Background · 9

Intercultural Dialog and Cooperation · 14

EMUNI Identity · 16

University Bodies · 20

Institutional Values · 24

Institutional Goals, Key Priorities · 26

Postgraduate Education · 29

Scholarship Fund · 33

Research, Development and Innovation · 34

Employee Policy · 38

Employees Role and Vision 2029 · 39

Multicultural Academic Community · 50

Euro-Mediterranean Chamber of Commerce · 52

*EMUNI: Retrospective and the Horizons  
of Tomorrow, 2024–2029*

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# EMUNI: Driving Innovation, Dialogue, and Sustainable Development in Higher Education

## **Beyond Tradition – A New Model for the 21st Century**

EMUNI is not a traditional university. We are a pioneering hub for research, advanced studies, and innovation, uniquely positioned at the crossroads of cultures in the Mediterranean. As a vibrant network of universities, we unite scholars, students, and professionals from diverse backgrounds to address the region's most pressing challenges and opportunities. Our guiding principles – scientific excellence, interdisciplinarity, social relevance, and sustainable, human-centered development – shape everything we do. At EMUNI, education is not just about acquiring knowledge; it's about making a meaningful impact.

## **Embracing Diversity, Driving Change**

Our programs are designed to reflect the dynamic realities of today's world. The Mediterranean, with its rich mosaic of languages, histories, and traditions, serves as both our inspiration and our laboratory.

*Business communication* is taught through real-world, multicultural scenarios, preparing graduates to thrive in global environments.

*Digital technologies* are critically examined for their transformative effects on communities and societies.

*Artificial intelligence* is explored as a tool for social good, emphasizing ethical, human-centered applications over profit-driven motives.

*Sustainability* is a thread that runs through all our disciplines – not only addressing environmental and climate issues but also examining the social and human implications of technology and the preservation of human dignity.

*Human movement and physical performance* are studied holistically, from health and rehabilitation to elite athletic achievement and resilience in extreme conditions.

Our specialized offerings – ranging from the blue economy and port management to Mediterranean geopolitics – are tailored to the region’s unique needs and global aspirations.

### **Empowering the Next Generation of Leaders**

At EMUNI, we believe that education should open doors. Alongside rigorous master’s and doctoral programs, we offer practical, *certified professional courses* in fields such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, business law, and management. Our goal is to equip young talents with the knowledge, skills, and entrepreneurial spirit needed to lead, innovate, and succeed in a rapidly changing world.

### **Building High Education Bridges: North-South Integration**

We are committed to bridging the gap between Northern and Southern Mediterranean higher education. Through double and joint degrees, long-term student and faculty exchanges, and inclusive admission policies, we foster a truly integrated academic community. *EMUNI warmly welcomes students* from across the Southern Mediterranean, supporting their academic journeys from start to finish.

### **Join Our Expanding Research Consortium**

Research is the foundation of our excellence. EMUNI is rapidly expanding its research footprint and deepening collaborations across our network. Our Knowledge Innovation Centers (EKIC), established in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia, are catalysts for ground-



breaking research and innovation. *We invite universities and research institutions to partner with us and shape the future together.*

### **A Platform for Dialogue and Diplomacy**

The EMUNI University Network is more than an academic alliance – it is a platform for Euro-Mediterranean dialogue, science diplomacy, and cultural exchange. We actively contribute to EU and Union for the Mediterranean initiatives, advocating for the expansion of *Erasmus, University Alliances, and Horizon programs into the Southern Mediterranean*. Our vision includes the progressive harmonization of higher education systems, inspired by the Bologna Process (EMHEA).

### **A Welcoming Academic Community**

We believe that collaboration drives progress. Our network brings together leading experts, professors, and researchers, integrating them into EMUNI's international projects and programs. If you are passionate about advancing higher education and research in the Mediterranean, *we invite you to join our vibrant academic community.*

### **Connecting Academia and Industry**

Innovation flourishes where academia and industry meet. *EMUNI's Euro-Mediterranean Business Clubs' Network* connects entrepreneurs, business leaders, and academics, fostering partnerships that drive economic growth and social progress. This network not only facilitates professional networking but also provides scholarships and career opportunities for our students.

### **Our Vision: A Bridgehead for Peace, Prosperity, and Progress**

EMUNI is more than an institution – it is a movement. Our vision for 2024–2029 is to become the leading bridgehead of Euro-Mediterranean cultures, advancing excellence in research, education, and intercultural understanding. By connecting students, scholars, and innovators from all shores of the Mediterranean, we are co-creating a future where *peace, prosperity, and opportunity* are within everyone's reach.

We are united by a shared belief in the power of education to transform lives and societies. EMUNI is committed to being a focal point for student-centered learning, a launchpad for young leaders, and a beacon of hope for a better world.

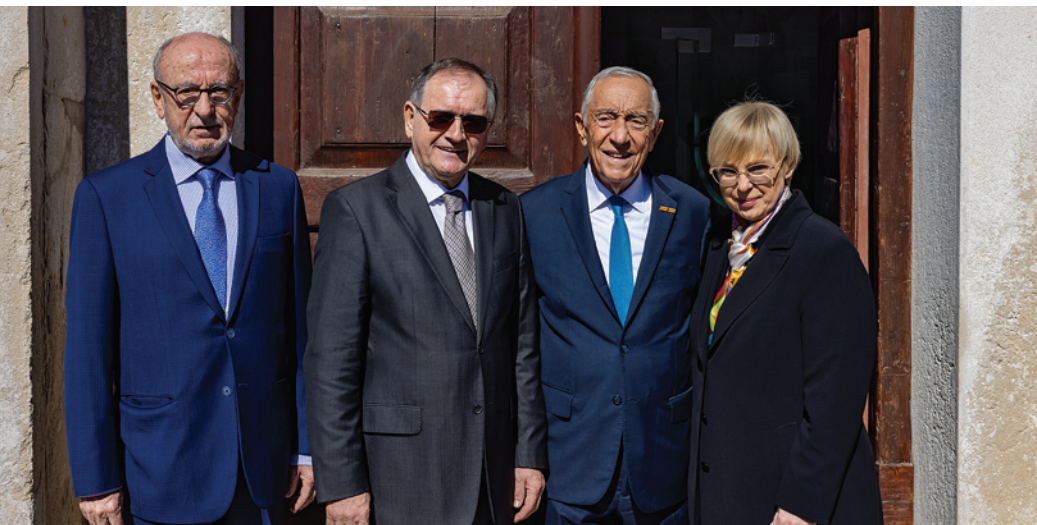
Dr. Rado Bohinc  
EMUNI President

By 2029, I envision EMUNI as a truly open, transformative, and transnational Euro-Mediterranean institution – one that stands at the forefront of academic excellence, innovation, and social engagement. Building on our legacy, EMUNI will be recognized for its strong autonomy, its capacity to make strategic choices, and its commitment to co-creating the university’s future with all members of our diverse community. Our mission will be to offer high-quality, interdisciplinary education and research that not only responds to regional priorities but also contributes to global knowledge and sustainable development.

EMUNI will continue to break down barriers – between disciplines, cultures, and sectors – by fostering inclusive dialogue, promoting lifelong learning, and strengthening civic engagement across the Mediterranean. We will be a hub where students, staff, and partners collaborate to address the most pressing challenges of our time, from digital transformation and human rights to environmental sustainability and intercultural understanding

As Chairman of the Management Board, my role will be more dynamic, strategic, and stakeholder-oriented than ever before. I will ensure that EMUNI’s vision is not only articulated but also embedded in every facet of our governance and operations.

**Mouin Hamzé**



## Political Background

EMUNI University is a direct product of the political evolution from the Barcelona Declaration (1995) and the Barcelona Process to the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean (2008). It embodies the region's commitment to peace, prosperity, and integration through knowledge, serving as both a symbol and a tool for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in higher education and research. Its creation is deeply rooted in the evolution of Euro-Mediterranean relations, particularly through the Barcelona Process, the Barcelona Declaration, and the subsequent Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

**New EU Agenda for the Mediterranean.** Since the launch of the new Agenda for the Mediterranean in 2021, the EU's role and impact in its Southern Neighbourhood have remained stable due to continuous funding, a consistent policy focus, and the absence of extraordinary initiatives or major setbacks. Through the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI – Global Europe), the EU has sustained its financial commitments, supporting economic development, governance reforms, migration management, and climate adaptation while working with international organizations, NGOs, and regional institutions. Despite global and regional crises, the EU has upheld its strategic focus on the region, reinforcing economic growth, digital transformation, and security cooperation through bilateral and multilateral agreements. While no groundbreaking new initiatives have significantly altered its engagement, the EU has also avoided major failures, ensuring steady involvement rather than drastic shifts. Even as the region faces new instabilities, including economic crises and political unrest, the EU continues to play its traditional role as a diplomatic and financial supporter, rather than a direct actor in conflict resolution. Consequently, its engagement remains a stabilizing force that ensures continuity rather than radical change.

### **Link to the Barcelona Declaration and Barcelona Process**

The Barcelona Declaration was adopted in 1995, launching the Barcelona Process – an ambitious partnership between the European Union (EU) and Southern Mediterranean countries. Its core objectives were to promote peace, stability, security, economic integration, and intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean basin. One of its key priorities was enhancing cooperation in education, science, and research, recognizing these as essential for long-term regional development and understanding. Over the following decade, the need for concrete institutions to realize these goals became apparent. The idea of a Euro-Mediterranean University emerged as a means to directly address the educational and research objectives of the Barcelona Declaration, aiming to create a unified higher education and research area in the region.

### **Evolution into the Union for the Mediterranean**

By 2008, the Barcelona Process had evolved into the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), an intergovernmental organization launched at the Paris Summit to reinvigorate and operationalize the goals of the Barcelona Declaration. The UfM sought to address previous shortcomings by emphasizing co-ownership, joint leadership, and practical regional projects.

EMUNI was inaugurated as a flagship project of the UfM, explicitly identified as a priority area in the Paris Summit Declaration of July



2008. Its founding was supported by the governments of Slovenia, the European Union, and the UfM, with 32 founding members and over 200 signatories to its cooperation agreement.

### Cultural Framework

Europe and the Mediterranean countries are bound together by deep and enduring ties of history, geography, and culture. For centuries, the Mediterranean has served as a crossroads of civilizations, a meeting point where ideas, traditions, and peoples have mingled and shaped one another. The shared heritage – reflected in language, art, philosophy, and commerce – forms a rich tapestry that continues to connect these regions in profound ways.

Yet, beyond these historical and cultural bonds, Europe and the Mediterranean nations are united by a forward-looking ambition: the collective desire to build a future rooted in peace, democracy, and prosperity. This vision extends beyond material well-being to encompass

**The best potential** that can be achieved through the partnership between the EU and its Southern Neighbourhood lies in geopolitical alliances and regional stability, particularly in the current global landscape where the traditional world order is being challenged. With the USA increasingly shifting its focus and reshaping global power dynamics, the EU is faced with the reality that it must take greater responsibility for its own security and stability. This is especially urgent in light of the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict and its broader impact on regional tensions, migration flows, and economic disruptions. Ensuring that the EU's immediate neighbourhood remains secure and cooperative is crucial for maintaining stability in both Europe and the Mediterranean. Strong partnerships with trusted actors in the region can provide diplomatic leverage, counterterrorism cooperation, and crisis management capacity, reinforcing the EU's role as a stabilizing force. At the same time, global powers like Russia, China, and the Gulf states are actively seeking to expand their influence in the region, making it essential for the EU to deepen its engagement and prevent a geopolitical vacuum that could lead to greater instability. Now is not the time for Europe to take a passive approach – the EU must take the lead in building resilient partnerships, strengthening security ties, and fostering regional cooperation to safeguard its interests and contribute to a more stable and predictable international order.

a genuine commitment to human dignity, social justice, and cultural understanding. It is a vision that recognizes diversity as a source of strength and seeks to foster mutual respect and dialogue among all peoples of the region.

Achieving these common objectives requires more than goodwill; it demands a renewed dynamism and a spirit of genuine partnership. Together, we must persist in the quest for peace and cooperation, addressing the complex challenges that face our societies – be they political, economic, environmental, or social. This means moving beyond



rhetoric to concrete action: establishing frameworks for dialogue, promoting inclusive economic growth, supporting democratic governance, and encouraging cultural and educational exchanges.

By exploring our shared challenges and opportunities with openness and determination, we can transform our aspirations into tangible progress. Through a revitalized partnership, grounded in mutual trust and shared responsibility, we can lay the foundations for a stable, prosperous, and harmonious Euro-Mediterranean region – one that serves as a beacon of hope and collaboration for future generations.

The Mediterranean region has always been at the center of international concerns and priorities as it represents the region which saw the major world events. Its past, present and future are considered of great significance to all nations. Everytime the world moves away from it, situations erupt and events occur to remind us of its centrality and bring our attention back to its concerns.

In this context and fully aware of the mission it carries for younger generations, EMUNI has a responsibility that goes beyond the subject matters it offers to students and must strive to become a reference in terms of quality education and a pioneer in preparing attendees for changes to come in society, in the job market and in global ethics. The fields of education it proposes will have to be in synch with the deep changes occurring in our societies and offer the appropriate training to enable students to look beyond the short term needs and understand the requirements that lay ahead at their lives' horizon. EMUNI represents the collective image of our region and our individual countries see themselves and their future in the farsighted understanding of developments to come and the anticipatory aptitude their students acquire in this prestigious institution to rise to the challenges all our countries will have to face by the end of the decade. As a second mandate member of the Management Board, I see the realization of this vision as the result of a collective effort from the entire EMUNI team and the members of its managing structures. A strong conviction in the institution capacity to reach these goals is a must from the start. It will then need a deep commitment to spread the message EMUNI is putting forward. Finally it requires a high standard of excellence as an education institution which seeks always the best results through the best means and the best programs. I beleive we all can and must be part of this endeavour.

**Hatem Atallah**

## Intercultural Dialog and Cooperation

The added value of EU cooperation in the Southern Neighbourhood compared to other actors such as Russia, China, the Gulf countries, the USA, and Turkey lies in both historical and practical dimensions. Given the region's geographical proximity, the EU has long-standing ties with the Southern Mediterranean, with cultures that have been intertwined for centuries, making it a more natural partner than most other external actors, except perhaps Turkey. Beyond historical connections, the EU's cooperation is characterized by reciprocity and respect, aiming to create mutually beneficial partnerships rather than purely strategic or transactional relationships. This approach has tangible benefits, particularly for European communities with strong ties to the Southern Mediterranean, fostering deeper social and economic integration. Additionally, geo-proximity allows the EU to respond swiftly to crises, whether in the form of humanitarian aid, disaster relief, or conflict mediation, while also addressing migration challenges through long-term solutions that support stability and opportunities in home countries. Unlike some other global actors, the EU is also deeply committed to promoting democratic values, equal opportunities, and rights-based approaches, which is reflected in its support for education, governance reforms, and inclusive societal development. With its liberal approach to society-building, the EU prioritizes sustainable and people-centered cooperation, making its engagement distinct from the more interest-driven or interventionist approaches of other global powers.

The EU should adopt an individual, country-specific approach rather than an all-encompassing regional strategy in its engagement with the Southern Mediterranean, as the region is marked by deep-seated tensions, rivalries, and diverse political realities that make a uniform approach ineffective. Conflicts between Algeria and Morocco, divisions over Libya, strained relations between Egypt and Turkey, and the broader Israeli-Palestinian crisis all illustrate the complexity of the region, where one-size-fits-all policies would fail to deliver results. While the EU should seek cooperation with all actors, it must recognize that

each country has distinct interests, governance models, and strategic priorities, requiring tailored engagement that reflects these specific dynamics.

At the same time, while synergies with other global players – such as the USA, Gulf States, or China – may be beneficial in certain areas, these partnerships must not come at the expense of the EU's own security, stability, and core principles. The EU must remain firm in upholding democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, ensuring that its engagement in the region is not driven solely by short-term economic or geopolitical gains, but by long-term stability and mutual responsibility. Balancing cooperation with strategic caution will allow the EU to maintain credibility, avoid external dependency, and ensure that its presence in the Southern Mediterranean is both principled and effective.

A complex world can't be explained by a simple vision or superficial look. The Mediterranean is a melting pot of cultures but also of conflicts; it brings together at a symbolic level a representation of economic, social and cultural realities. But above all it possesses the challenge and the treasure of demography. EMUNI must be a reference in the visibilization of the study of the realities of this Mediterranean cosmos where, in parallel to the problems, coexists a model of human life, of respect for diversity and celebration of joy. EMUNI must contribute to the valorization of the Mediterranean area, to the promotion of interchange between the two shores and to the marriage of academic life with practical research on the problems that affect the population and that can contribute to their solution. Being part of the great EMUNI family is above all an honor. My contribution is the conviction that today more than ever communication and international networking are at the basis of hope for a better future. Immersed in the digital world, we are now in full encounter with the applications derived from artificial intelligence. In this set of changes and adaptations, EMUNI can be a center of knowledge and research, two perspectives that require communication for their management. Finally, beyond technologies, the human encounter between people from different cultures and worlds is what makes the collective consciousness germinate, that feeling that together we can take steps. That is the atmosphere I wish for EMUNI.

**Lola Bañon Castellón**

## EMUNI Identity

### **Regional Collaboration, Fostering Academic Partnerships and Cultural Understanding**

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, EMUNI University stands as a role model for regional collaboration, fostering academic partnerships and cultural understanding in the Euro-Mediterranean region. As we embark on a journey of growth and evolution, it is imperative to delineate a comprehensive development strategy that not only consolidates our achievements but also propels us towards greater heights of success.

### **Ethos of Inclusivity, Sustainability, and Relevance**

EMUNI University's development strategy is intricately woven with the ethos of inclusivity, sustainability, and relevance. Our vision is not confined to the boundaries of academia but extends to the broader societal context, aiming to address the multifaceted challenges confronting the region and the world at large.



## A University Where Interdisciplinary Collaboration Flourishes

We envision a university where interdisciplinary collaboration flourishes, transcending conventional disciplinary silos to tackle complex global issues holistically. By nurturing a culture of curiosity and intellectual inquiry, we aim to empower our students and faculty to push the frontiers of knowledge and innovation.

## Promotion of Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue

Equally vital to our development strategy is the promotion of diversity and intercultural dialogue. The Euro-Mediterranean region is a melting pot of cultures, languages, and traditions, offering a rich tapestry of perspectives waiting to be explored. EMUNI University serves as a platform for fostering mutual understanding and cooperation among diverse communities, transcending borders and fostering a sense of global citizenship.

## Integrating Sustainability Principles

Moreover, sustainability lies at the core of our strategic agenda. As stewards of the environment and guardians of future generations, we recognize the imperative of integrating sustainability principles into

**Higher Education, Research, and Innovation.** One area that deserves significantly more attention in the context of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is higher education, research, and innovation. This domain holds transformative potential because it offers a soft-power pathway to building new alliances and reinforcing regional cooperation. Unlike formal political negotiations, which can often be constrained by diplomatic sensitivities or diverging national interests, academic and research collaboration provides a more flexible, inclusive, and resilient framework for dialogue, mutual understanding, and trust-building.

A key element of this strategy could be the concept of ‘transforming migration into education,’ which emphasizes the importance of creating legal pathways for student mobility from the Southern Mediterranean to Europe. By providing young people with opportunities to study and conduct research abroad, this would not only enhance their skills and future employability but also contribute to talent retention and brain circulation within the region. This approach ensures that education serves as a driver for regional stability, economic development, and societal resilience.

every facet of our operations. From blue and green economy initiatives to sustainable development research, we are committed to playing our part in creating a more equitable and resilient world.

### **Strategic Partnerships with Like-Minded Institutions**

As we chart our course forward, collaboration emerges as an essential prerequisite of our strategy. We recognize that no single institution can address the challenges facing our world today. Therefore, we



seek to forge strategic partnerships with like-minded institutions, governments, and organizations, harnessing the collective wisdom and resources to effect positive change.

### **A Vision of Academic Excellence, Cultural Understanding, Sustainability, and Collaboration**

In essence, EMUNI University's development strategy embodies a vision of academic excellence, cultural understanding, sustainability, and collaboration. Guided by these principles, we are poised to embark on a transformative journey, shaping the future of higher education in the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond.

By 2029, I hope to see EMUNI strengthened as an international university, offering high-quality study programmes and developing research activities that address key Euro-Mediterranean priorities. In particular, I would like to see EMUNI become a recognised academic hub for areas such as sustainable development, the blue economy, migration, intercultural dialogue, and related fields. As a member of the Management Board and a representative of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of Slovenia, my role is to support EMUNI's efforts to consolidate its academic profile, enhance its relevance for the region, and contribute meaningfully to broader Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in higher education and research.

**Jernej Širok**

# University Bodies

## General Assembly

The EMUNI General Assembly is convened, when necessary, in general once a year to discuss general policies and operational guidelines for the University. Each signatory of the Foundation Charter has one representative at the General Assembly.

### Chairing of the General Assembly

Year	(1)	(2)	Vice Chair 1	Vice Chair 2
2009	114	32	Prof. Hassan Nadir Kheirallah	Prof. Maurits Van Rooijen
2010	141	37	Prof. Giuseppe Giliberti	Prof. Ahmed Nouredine Helal
2011	206	42	—	—
2013	212	47	Prof. Hassan Nadir Kheirallah	Prof. Marko Pavliha
2013	206	41	Prof. Hassan Nadir Kheirallah	Prof. Marko Pavliha
2015	121	33	Prof. Hassan Nadir Kheirallah	Prof. Lučka Lorber
2016	128	32	Prof. Giuseppe Giliberti	—
2017	128	33	Prof. Hassan Nadir Kheirallah	Prof. Giuseppe Giliberti
2018	133	33	Prof. Giuseppe Giliberti	Prof. Hassan Nadir Kheirallah
2019	137	34	Prof. Dr. Dušan Lesjak	Prof. Dr. Alaa Abdelwahed Hassan Abdelbary
2020	135	34	—	—
2021	137	34	Prof. Dr. Ludvik Toplak	Prof. Dr. Abdelaziz Hassanein Mohamed Saad Konsowa
2022	141	34	Prof. Dr. Rouchdy Zahran	Prof. Dr. Giuseppe Cataldi
2023	149	34	Prof. Dr. Michele Gendreau-Massalou	Prof. Dr. Hassan Nadir Kheirallah
2024	150	35	Prof. Dr. Rouchdy Zahran	Prof. Dr. Nada Rožmanec Matičič

NOTES (1) number of partners, (2) number of countries.

## The Management Board

The management board is the University management body and operates in accordance with the provisions of the Statute of EMUNI, Articles 17, 18, 19. It is composed of 13 members.

Currently the MB of EMUNI is composed of:

- Prof. Mouïñ Hamzé, Lebanon (Chairperson)
- Prof. Maria Cristina Pedicchio, Italy (Co-Chairperson)
- Prof. Rado Pišot, Slovenia
- Ambassador Hatem Atallah, Tunisia
- Prof. Hassan Nadir Kheirallah, Egypt
- Prof. Maria Dolores Bañon Castellon, Spain
- Her Royal Highness Princess Rym Ali, Jordan (member of the international public figures of repute)
- Prof. Augusto Santos Silva, Portugal
- Prof. Moustapha Bousmina, Morocco (President of Euro-Med University of Fes)
- Petra Kežman (representative of the Union for the Mediterranean)
- Mr. Jernej Širok, Slovenia (representative of Slovenian Government)
- Ms. Lina Kaldana, Slovenia (representative of EMUNI employees)
- Mr. Ioannis Panagiotopoulos, Greece (representative of EMUNI students)

The Management Board appointed Prof. Mouïñ Hamzé, Lebanon, as Chairperson at its 68th session on 15 April 2024 online via zoom.

By ensuring the representatives of the partner institutions, in particular the Union for the Mediterranean, EMUNI University is pursuing its mission of a close alignment with the regional priorities.

### **President**

Prof. Dr. Rado Bohinc was appointed President during the 64th Management Board session in January 2024. His term began on April 2, 2024, and run until April 1, 2029. The President serves as both the representative of the management and expert bodies and the legal representative of EMUNI.

### **The Senate**

The Senate is the expert academic body, which is responsible for considering all the academic areas of work, study, and research of the EMUNI University. Members of the Senate, nominated on 5 April 2017 and 21 May 2019, Management Board's representatives in the Senate, nomi-

nated on 22 November 2019, and students' representatives in the Senate, nominated on 19 November 2023 are the following:

- Prof. Dr. Rado Bohinc, Slovenia – President of EMUNI University and Chair of EMUNI Senate
- Prof. Dr. Rouchdy Zahran, Alexandria University, Egypt
- Prof. Dr. Lotfi Ben Romdhane, University of Sousse, Tunisia
- Prof. Dr. Claudio Cressati, Italy
- Prof. Dr. Rosario Sinatra, Italy
- Prof. Dr. Dušan Lesjak, Slovenia
- Prof. Dr. Luigia Melillo, Italy
- Prof. Dr. Alaa Abdelbary, Egypt
- Prof. Dr. Aleksandra Porjazoska Kujundziski, International Balkan University, Macedonia
- Prof. Dr. Jaka Vadnjak, Slovenia
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Karim Moustaghfir, Morocco
- Prof. Dr. Rony Darazi, Lebanon
- Ambassador Hatem Atallah, Management Board representative, Tunisia

**EU Priority Areas in the Euro-Mediterranean Region.** The EU should focus on a limited number of priority areas that directly contribute to stability in the Euro-Mediterranean region, ensuring that its efforts are both strategic and impactful. One key area, is fostering talent and upskilling for job creation. Investing in education, vocational training, and skills development benefits both Southern Mediterranean countries – which can harness and retain skilled talent for their own economic growth – and the EU, as many young people from the region seek educational and professional opportunities in Europe. Moreover, prioritizing higher education, research, and professional training does more than just address employment challenges; it also fosters intercultural exchange and deeper connections between societies. This long-term people-to-people engagement builds trust, mutual understanding, and durable relationships, which can play a vital role in stabilizing the region by creating shared economic and social interests. By aligning its strategy with these core priorities, the EU can ensure that its engagement is not only about short-term cooperation but about building lasting partnerships that strengthen both regional stability and EU–Southern Mediterranean relations.

- Prof. Dr. Mouïin Hamzé, Management Board representative, Lebanon
- Dr. Maysoun Ibrahim, Management Board representative, Palestine
- Saleh Saleh (student), Palestine
- Elizaveta Byasova, EMUNI University (student), Russia
- Yara El-Turk, EMUNI University (student), Lebanon
- Emna Jbara, EMUNI University (student), Tunisia

The Senate operates in accordance with the provisions of the Statute of EMUNI, Articles 20, 21, 22 and 23.

### Student Council

On 19 November 2023, in compliance with the EMUNI Statute, all students enrolled in study programmes at EMUNI University elected five representatives to serve on the EMUNI Student Council for a term of one year or until the expiry of the student status.

The members of the Student Council are:

- Yara El-Turk Marwen (Chair of the Student Council), Lebanon
- Elizaveta Byasova (Vice-Chair of the Student Council), Russia
- Moses Chikuse, Italy
- Saleh Saleh, Palestine
- Saeed Hussien, Egypt

The Student Council nominated student's representatives for the Management Board and for the Senate and its Commissions on 19 December 2024 for the academic year 2024/2025:

- Management Board: Ibraheem Saleh, Palestine
- Senate: Moataz Samir Abdelhamid Elissawy, Egypt, Saleh A. S. Saleh, Palestine, Nicholas Okongo'o, Kenya and Ibraheem Saleh, Palestine
- Commission for Student and Study Affairs: Moses Stanley Chikuse (Chair), Italy
- Quality Assurance Commission: Moataz Samir Abdelhamid Elissawy, Egypt

## Institutional Values

EMUNI has well-defined values as an institution. These values have been categorised considering EMUNI as a whole and taking into account values that EMUNI employees should demonstrate as well:

At the level of employees, five core values have been identified:

- *Integrity/Respect (for each other and towards partners)*: Following moral and/or ethical convictions and doing the right thing in all circumstances, even if no one is supervising the work.
- *Responsibility (for one's own work and towards partners)*: Consciously make decisions, conduct behaviours that seek to improve oneself and/or help others. The need for the person to comply with the negative consequences of his or her actions.
- *Accountability (for one's own work and towards partners)*: The responsibility of individuals to complete the tasks they are assigned, to perform the duties required by their job, and to be present for their proper shifts in order to fulfil or further the goals of the organisation.
- *Competence/Professionalism (for work and toward partners)*: To perform daily work and to perform with stakeholders/partners using one's own competencies at his/her fullest, in a professional way with maintaining high reputation of the organisation and to maximise the outcomes of work.
- *Teamwork (fair and with good will)*: ability to partner and working together, where in teams we can find the solutions that work best for the organisation.

At the organisational level, five core values have been identified:

- *Autonomy*: The organisation's independence from political, financial and other influences.
- *Excellence*: To excel organisational needs to focus on all parts of the organisation, optimising the use and effectiveness of all of its resources.
- *Integrity*: Full alignment in what an organisation thinks, says and does with respect for ethical standards and legal compliance.

- *Diversity*: Of work, mindset, people, cultures – it means understanding that everyone is unique and embracing individual differences.
- *Sustainable Development*: Implementing strategies which provide economic and cultural benefits attained through environmental and organisational responsibility.
- *Regional Integration*: At the heart of the mission of EMUNI, including the strive to create and sustain a Euro-Med HE&R area.

EMUNI university is one of the manifestations of the resolve of the countries across the Mediterranean basin to promote the concept of common past, present and future of the people in this region. This endeavor can only be achieved through the better understanding of the cultural, societal, economical, religious, hopes and fears of the inhabitants of these countries. As a consequence of this is the transformation of the past history of conflicts into a future of peace and prosperity. EMUNI university has a role, through its education and research programs, in spreading among the youth of our region an ideology of mutual acceptance, better understanding, common interdependence with the concept of ‘no one should be left behind’ since any event taking place in one of the countries will have ramification on all other countries.

**Hassan Nadir Kheirallah**



## Institutional Goals, Key Priorities

The EMUNI Strategy for 2024–2029 focuses on six key priorities, including the development of quality educational programmes, based upon basic and applied research in related fields, strengthening the EMUNI network, fundraising, communication and promotion, enhancing project acquisition capacity, and promoting EMUNI's role as a platform for intercultural dialogue and science diplomacy.

- *Development of Quality Educational Programmes and Activities:* EMUNI aims to expand its offerings with new Master's, PhD, and professional training programmes, including an interactive online learning platform and partnerships for dual and joint degrees.

**Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education Area (EMHEA)** – by addressing critical challenges such as non-standardized academic systems, limited mobility, and insufficient financial support, this initiative would transform migration into education and open up new legal pathways for students from the Southern Mediterranean to access educational opportunities in Europe, contributing to areas where Europe faces challenges from demographic shifts in the coming years. Standardization and adaptation of systemic conditions of higher education and research based on the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) model are the backbone of better brain circulation, but they have to be underpinned by sufficient financial and robust legal mechanisms. The process would have to be implemented in the form of formal and informal dialogues among national and international stakeholders, including EU institutions, Union for the Mediterranean, and higher education networks like EUA and UNIMED, to ensure the success of the initiative. At the same time this would also strengthen South-South collaboration contributing to the overall dialogue in the Southern Mediterranean region, and its cohesiveness towards the EU.

- *Strengthening the EMUNI Network with full members:* The network will support collaborative research and educational projects, create scientific and innovation communities, and build institutional cooperation, especially with Southern Mediterranean countries.
- *Fundraising:* The goal is to increase EMUNI’s annual budget, establish a scholarship fund for students from the Southern Mediterranean, and attract a higher number of paying members.
- *Communication and Promotion:* EMUNI will develop a communication and marketing strategy to increase its visibility on social media and traditional media, aiming to boost engagement among students and other stakeholders.
- *Enhancing Research Project Acquisition Capacity:* This involves improving staff skills in project proposal writing and attending partnership-building events regularly.
- *Promoting Intercultural Dialogue and Science Diplomacy:* EMUNI plans to organise annual conferences and other events to foster dialogue and cooperation in science and technological innovation between the EU and Southern Mediterranean countries.

We will make a special effort to expand the unified Mediterranean Higher Education Area (MHEA).



EMUNI has established itself as a key international academic institution in fostering integration within the unique geopolitical and cultural space of the Mediterranean. Its mission, situated within this complex and dynamic region, presents both significant challenges and immense opportunities. The overarching goal of connecting Euro-Mediterranean countries through the creation of a common higher education and research area is a remarkable endeavour – one that promises lasting impact for future generations. I have followed EMUNI's development closely since its inception and have consistently recognized its exceptional potential. While its growth has passed through distinct phases, it is the consistent commitment to networking and collaboration that has defined its trajectory – and today, we can confidently say, has marked it with success.

The Science and Research Centre (ZRS) Koper has played an important role in this process. Through its collaboration with EMUNI, ZRS Koper identified a unique opportunity and has actively contributed to its realization. The Mediterranean is not only a rich source of research topics across natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences – it is also internationally recognized as a symbol of quality of life. This gives the Slovenian Mediterranean a unique capacity to attract individuals and institutions from across the region, and it is our responsibility to integrate and engage them meaningfully. As a long-standing member of EMUNI's Management Board and the Director of ZRS Koper, I see in EMUNI an unparalleled opportunity for building a vibrant academic network. With its niche study programmes, innovative projects, and strong international positioning, we can look forward to a new period of expansion and excellence.

The societal and geopolitical transformations of our time present us with new challenges and uncharted spaces for academic engagement – spaces we must thoughtfully explore and shape to serve emerging needs. The rapid growth of digital interconnectivity, the lifestyle shifts driven by unprecedented technological advancements, and the anthropological and ecological transformations arising from the interaction of evolutionary, social, cultural, economic, and technological factors – all without historical precedent – demand fresh academic responses. EMUNI's leadership and academic community have consistently demonstrated their capacity to meet such challenges. I am confident that, with continued vision and cooperation, EMUNI will further strengthen its position as a leading academic force in the Mediterranean and beyond.

**Rado Pišot**

# Postgraduate Education

## Developing Quality Educational Programmes & Activities

The aim is to prepare and accredit joint and double study programs with universities from the EMUNI network. In addition, EMUNI should demonstrate its value to Slovenian Universities and Higher Education, proving how useful it is as a window of internationalisation of Slovenian higher education, and further enhancing the positive image and regional role of Slovenia. To achieve the goal of becoming a multidisciplinary university recognized for excellence in knowledge transfer and fostering intercultural connections, EMUNI has outlined primary steps that will shape its development. These include:

- Expanding and enhancing academic offerings through new study programmes and new double-degree collaborations with universities from the network.
- Improving quality and excellence in higher education, based on quality assessment and on research in related fields.
- Adopting and developing a blended learning model tailored to student needs.



These initiatives underscore EMUNI's commitment to academic innovation, international cooperation, and its role as a leading Euro-Mediterranean institution.

Master's and doctoral programmes are available to students, as well as numerous professional courses and programmes aimed at acquiring additional knowledge and skills. The thematic focus of study programs reflects the current development challenges of the region and is linked to the university's core research areas:

- *Sustainable Blue Economy*. Topics: Marine governance, blue economy, port management.
- *Sustainable Development*. Topics: Corporate social responsibility, human rights, gender equity, social and solidarity economy.
- *Intercultural Studies*. Topics: Globalization, religions, multicultural pluralism, modern society, peace studies.
- *Leadership and Governance*. Topics: Management, sports management, design management, cultural management, digital transformation.
- *Law*. Topics: Business law, corporate law, international law, comparative corporate governance, European law.
- *Higher Education and Science*. Topics: Higher education systems, quality in higher education, leadership and governance in higher education, higher education policies.



The university continuously develops and accredits new programmes in cooperation with partner institutions from its international network, focusing on topics relevant to sustainable development, innovation, social responsibility, entrepreneurship, and improving the quality of life in the region.

In addition to regular study programmes, EMUNI also organises summer schools and other educational events that facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as the strengthening of skills for future challenges. All programmes are designed to promote interdisciplinarity, international cooperation, and the practical application of acquired knowledge.

The university plans to further expand its offer with new programmes that will enable students to gain up-to-date knowledge and competences necessary for successful engagement in the rapidly changing global environment of the Mediterranean.

**EU and Student Mobility.** Erasmus+ has already proven successful in enhancing educational exchanges, allowing students from both Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to study, train, and gain experience in diverse cultural and academic environments. However, to fully unlock the potential of these exchanges, it is essential to strengthen and expand existing mobility mechanisms. This includes not only increasing funding allocations for Erasmus+ to accommodate a greater number of participants from Mediterranean countries but also designing additional mobility schemes that are tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the region. This could involve short-term exchange programs, summer schools, professional internships, and collaborative research projects that address common challenges such as climate change, digital transformation, migration, and inclusive governance. Furthermore, enhancing student mobility also means simplifying administrative procedures, improving access to scholarships, and ensuring recognition of academic credits and qualifications across countries. Special attention should be paid to increasing opportunities for underrepresented groups, including women, disadvantaged youth, and students from remote areas, who often face significant barriers to participating in mobility programs. Finally, a special visa regime could be introduced for students from Southern Mediterranean region, so as to facilitate their mobilities and encourage them to take part in such schemes.

I see EMUNI as a key element of the academic field around the Mediterranean Sea. Both in training and in research, EMUNI will play an important role, as a facilitator of international cooperation in what regards the dialogue between the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea. It will provide solid postgraduate training, and organise regular scientific meetings and cultural events, implementing that cooperation. It will lead international research projects in key areas for cultural dialogue and sustainable development. It will be closer to other institutions affiliated to the Union for the Mediterranean.

I am full professor at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto, Portugal. As a sociologist, my research is focused on cultural studies, political affairs and international relations. I was several times Minister in the Portuguese Government (2000–2002, 2005–2011, and 2015–2022), and Speaker of the Portuguese Parliament (2022–2024). I am currently a member of the Management Board of EMUNI. I envisage to participate in EMUNI's activities in my current capacity, and also as a teacher and researcher.

**Augusto Santos Silva**



## Scholarship Fund

In 2024, EMUNI established a scholarship fund with the mission of supporting students from the Southern Mediterranean region in beginning their academic journey at EMUNI. The fund aims to promote greater access to education for students from underserved areas, fostering inclusivity and regional development. An internal EMUNI account, aimed to raise funds for students' scholarship was created. The founding session of the Scholarship Administrative Body was held on 19 December 2024 and first scholarship will be provided in the student year 2020/2026.

This scholarship fund is a testament to EMUNI's commitment to bridging educational gaps and empowering talented individuals from the Euro-Mediterranean region to pursue higher education and contribute to their communities.



## Research, Development and Innovation

To achieve excellence, foster knowledge transfer, and strengthen collaboration with Euro-Mediterranean partners, we are committed to evolving as a research-driven university. Our approach is rooted in transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary research, with a strong focus on the human dimension and a deep sense of responsibility towards the environment and society.

Our research priorities reflect urgent global and regional challenges, and are designed to empower individuals and communities to become agents of positive change. We place people, sustainability, and ethical leadership at the heart of our mission, actively seeking innovative solutions that benefit both society and the natural world.

Key research areas include:

- *Sustainable Blue Economy*: Advancing marine stewardship, responsible economic practices, and innovative port and coastal management to protect marine ecosystems while supporting local communities.
- *Sustainable Development*: Promoting social responsibility, human rights, gender equality, and inclusive economic models that foster resilience and social cohesion.
- *Intercultural Studies*: Exploring the dynamics of globalization, religious and cultural diversity, and pathways to peaceful coexistence in a rapidly evolving society.
- *Leadership and Governance*: Shaping future leaders in management, sports, design, and culture, with a special emphasis on digital transformation and ethical decision-making.
- *Law*: Investigating contemporary legal frameworks – including business, corporate, international, and European law – to support justice, transparency, and good governance.
- *Higher Education and Science*: Enhancing the quality, accessibility, and impact of higher education through research on educational systems, policy, and leadership.

Through these research initiatives, we aim to inspire responsible action, nurture innovation, and contribute to a more just, sustainable, and interconnected Mediterranean region.

In alignment with its strategic goals and commitment to excellence in research and development, EMUNI adopted the Regulation on Research and Development Activities in November, 2024. This regulation establishes clear procedures and responsibilities for the proposal, approval, management, and completion of research projects.

Key provisions include:

- A structured framework for project preparation and approval, ensuring alignment with EMUNI’s strategic priorities.
- Guidelines for effective project management, emphasizing planning, monitoring, and risk assessment.
- Transparent financial reporting and allocation of resources to support research objectives.
- Provisions for ethical research practices, data protection, intellectual property management, and conflict of interest resolution.
- Support for professional development and collaboration through research centers at EMUNI.

This regulation is a critical step in strengthening EMUNI’s capacity for impactful research, enhancing its role as a leading Euro-Mediterranean institution, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration across its network. It will guide the university’s efforts in 2025 and beyond to advance its mission of knowledge transfer and academic excellence.

### **Project Proposals & Trends (2023–2025)**



The number of project proposals has increased significantly over the years, this reflects growing research engagement and funding opportunities.

### **Key Research Topics & Focus Areas**

Project proposals have been developed in response to targeted calls across several priority areas, reflecting EMUNI’s commitment to advancing research, innovation, and societal impact in the Euro-Mediterranean region:

- In *Higher Education and Research*, multiple Erasmus+ projects have been proposed, including nine Capacity Building initiatives submitted in 2025. These focus on enhancing digital education, critical thinking, and academic management, aiming to modernize educational practices and leadership across partner institutions.
- For the *Blue Economy and Sustainability*, project proposals have been submitted to Interreg and CEI calls, targeting water conservation and the protection of marine ecosystems. These initiatives are designed to support sustainable development and environmental stewardship in coastal and marine contexts.
- Within *Technology and Digitalization*, projects have been proposed to the Slovenian Research Agency, emphasizing AI-driven research, digital transformation of workplaces, and the develop-

**Higher Education Cooperation.** Through strengthening dialogue among higher education institutions in the Euro-Mediterranean area, through a piloting of Euro-Mediterranean University Alliances modelled on the European University Alliances Initiative. These alliances would bring together universities from both EU Member States and Southern Mediterranean countries in long-term, structural partnerships that promote joint degrees, shared curricula, cross-border campuses, and integrated mobility opportunities for students, staff, and researchers. By pooling resources, expertise, and academic infrastructure, such alliances would not only raise the quality and competitiveness of higher education in the region but also create a sense of shared academic community and mutual responsibility for addressing regional challenges. Beyond academic cooperation, these alliances could serve as platforms for innovation and regional policy dialogue, contributing to the development of joint solutions in areas such as green transition, sustainable development, digital transformation, and inclusive governance. The creation of Euro-Mediterranean University Alliances would also symbolize a clear political and strategic commitment to the Mediterranean region, embedding intercultural understanding, shared values, and regional cohesion into the heart of academic cooperation. In doing so, higher education would become a driver not only of individual opportunity but of collective resilience and long-term regional stability.

ment of open educational resources. These efforts seek to accelerate digital innovation and increase accessibility to knowledge.

- In the area of *Social Innovation*, proposals focus on community development and governance, including projects related to public law and corporate governance. The aim is to strengthen institutional frameworks and promote inclusive, responsible leadership.
- For *Sports and Career Development*, Erasmus+ Sport initiatives have been put forward, such as Dual Career programs that support athletes in balancing their academic and sporting pursuits, and facilitate career transitions post-athletics.

These project proposals demonstrate EMUNI's active engagement in addressing regional priorities through concrete actions and partnerships, with a focus on sustainable development, digital transformation, social responsibility, and capacity building in higher education and research.



## Employee Policy

To achieve our vision of a vibrant, inclusive, and forward-thinking workplace, the employee policy is structured around three interconnected pillars: Inclusion and Diversity, Employee Development, and Gender Equality. Each pillar supports and reinforces the others, ensuring a holistic approach to staff well-being and institutional excellence. Our commitment to Inclusion and Diversity lays the foundation for a welcoming environment where every individual feels valued and respected. All staff, regardless of nationality, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or background, will have equal access to employment, promotion, and professional development opportunities. By fostering a culture that celebrates differences and ensures equal opportunity, we create the conditions necessary for all employees to reach their full potential.

Building on this inclusive foundation, our focus on Employee Development ensures that every member of our community has access to meaningful growth opportunities. We recognize that professional and personal development is not only vital for individual satisfaction but also essential for the university's ongoing success. All permanent and long-term staff will have equitable access to development opportunities, with special attention to under-represented groups. Equitable access to training and advancement empowers staff from all backgrounds to contribute their best work. Central to both inclusion and development is our unwavering dedication to Gender Equality. By embedding gender equity throughout all stages of the employment lifecycle, we address systemic barriers and promote fairness in recruitment, pay, and leadership. This commitment strengthens our efforts to build a truly diverse and high-performing workforce.

### Employees and Contractors (December 31, 2024)

Employees		16 (12.5 FTE)
Contractors		12 (part-time)

# Employees Role and Vision 2029

## **Roberto Biloslavo**

*Vice-President of EMUNI*

By 2029, EMUNI is poised to stand as the leading academic and research institution in the Euro-Mediterranean region, distinguished by its unwavering commitment to excellence, interdisciplinary collaboration, and meaningful societal impact. EMUNI will flourish as a vibrant crossroads where ideas, cultures, and innovation seamlessly intersect, enabling the university to address the region's most pressing challenges while embracing new opportunities.

The university's academic portfolio will be broader offering an extensive selection of master's, doctoral, and certified professional programs designed to meet the evolving needs of both the Mediterranean and the global community. These programs will draw distinguished scholars, researchers, and students from across the region and beyond, fostering a lively and diverse intellectual environment. EMUNI's research initiatives will achieve international recognition, advancing critical fields such as sustainability, migration, digital transformation, governance, health, higher education, and intercultural dialogue.



EMUNI will also serve as a beacon for intercultural understanding and inclusion, leveraging its unique geographical and cultural position to promote diversity, mutual respect, and peace. As a prominent forum for policy dialogue and societal engagement, EMUNI will regularly host high-profile conferences, expert panels, and public debates, shaping both regional and European policies on issues vital to the Euro-Mediterranean area. Its graduates will be recognized for their leadership, adaptability, and commitment to driving positive change, making a lasting impact across academia, industry, and civil society.

As Vice-President of the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) my role is both strategic and operational. I support the President and the Management Board in shaping and implementing EMUNI's long-term vision, organizational strategy, and development priorities. This includes active involvement in the design and execution of academic programs, research initiatives, and international partnerships that align with EMUNI's commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration and societal impact.

### **Lina Kaldana**

#### *Secretary General*

My name is Lina Kaldana, and I serve as the Secretary General of EMUNI University. With a diverse background spanning academia, financial management, and international consultancy, I support EMUNI's strategic development and ensure the university's smooth day-to-day functioning. Previously, I contributed as EMUNI's Financial Manager, and I bring extensive leadership experience from higher education and project coordination across borders.



At EMUNI, I am committed to aligning our administrative, financial, and academic systems with the university's evolving mission. I work closely with colleagues across departments to bridge strategy and execution – supporting a well-integrated academic environment that connects education, research, and international mobility.

Looking ahead to 2029, I see EMUNI as a recognised and respected institution in the Euro-Mediterranean region – one that combines academic quality with real-world impact. EMUNI will stand out for its relevance, transparency, and ability to unite people through knowledge, values, and purpose. My role is to create and sustain effective frameworks that enable our teams to thrive. I prioritise clarity, collaboration, and adaptability – ensuring that systems serve people and not the other way around. By strengthening both our internal capacities and external partnerships, I help translate our shared vision into meaningful outcomes.

It is a privilege to be part of an institution where strategy and hu-

manity meet – and where every process, every connection, contributes to a greater purpose.

### **Mounir Ghribi**

#### *Head of Research, Development Projects, and Innovation*

By 2029, I envision EMUNI having significantly reinforced its mission as a Euro-Mediterranean University that bridges the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean. EMUNI will stand as a distinguished reference institution, expanding the European Research Area into the broader Euro-Mediterranean region through high-quality education, impactful research, and dynamic regional cooperation.

EMUNI will be recognized as a leading academic institution in the Euro-Mediterranean landscape, known for excellence in research, innovation, and higher education – particularly in the fields of science diplomacy, sustainability, and the sustainable blue economy. It will serve as a critical platform for regional integration and knowledge exchange.

The Department for Research, Development Projects, and Innovation will experience significant growth, becoming a consolidated hub for multidisciplinary research. It will host numerous international projects, with enhanced institutional capacities and deeper collaborations across borders. The department will play a vital role in technology transfer, industry linkages, and resource mobilization. Importantly, it will also prioritize skills development – moving beyond traditional curriculum design to foster competencies aligned with emerging market and societal needs. EMUNI will act as a pivotal connector between academia, the productive sector, and society. Through its research, training, and innovation activities, it will contribute actively to shaping policy and practice across the region. Its strong international orientation will position EMUNI as a globally recognized institution, with potential affiliation or recognition by major international bodies such as the United Nations or the European Commission.

Within this forward-looking vision, I see myself as an engaged professor and strategic advisor to EMUNI's leadership, dedicated to the University's continued success and regional impact. As Director of the



Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Blue Economy, I will lead the development and implementation of innovative projects and strategic activities within the sector.

Leveraging my expertise in environmental engineering, circular economy, sustainability, blue economy, blue skills, international cooperation, and science diplomacy, I will actively support EMUNI in building robust partnerships and integrating into globally recognized academic and research networks. I will work alongside EMUNI's leadership to strengthen its role in fostering research, innovation, and education across the Euro-Mediterranean region, facilitating talent circulation and promoting international mobility.

Together, we will ensure EMUNI's transformation into a dynamic, globally respected institution that drives positive change and fosters sustainable development across the Mediterranean and beyond.

### **Karen Gladović**

*Education Department*



In 2029, I envision EMUNI as a recognized and respected Mediterranean academic institution – a unique crossroads of cultures, disciplines, and ideas. It will be a university that doesn't simply follow trends but sets them, by rethinking how education, research, and regional cooperation can work hand in hand to respond to the challenges of our time. I see EMUNI as a dynamic hub where knowledge is not only transferred but co-created – a place where students from different shores come together to exchange perspectives, build mutual understanding, and leave with more than a degree: with purpose, with networks, and with the tools to make an impact.

By 2029, I believe EMUNI will have grown both in reputation and in depth – offering innovative interdisciplinary study programs that speak to regional needs and global questions, strengthening its research profile, and building meaningful partnerships across sectors. It will be a place where diversity is not managed, but celebrated; where dialogue flourishes; and where the Mediterranean identity is lived through academic practice, cultural exchange, and collaborative action.

As Head of Education department, I see my role as one of stewardship and vision. I am committed to shaping academic strategies that are ambitious yet grounded, future-focused yet responsive to our evolving context. Alongside this, I continue to contribute as a law lecturer and researcher, particularly in the areas of intellectual property, innovation law, and technology transfer – domains that are increasingly vital as we bridge knowledge production with real-world application. I see EMUNI as a space where research and teaching are not separate silos, but interconnected forces that inspire students, influence policy, and strengthen regional development.

Beyond roles and titles, EMUNI holds a very personal place for me. It's where professional ambition meets something deeper – a sense of shared purpose and belonging. I've seen EMUNI evolve over the years, and I've grown with it. The people, the place, and the mission have become part of my story. So, when I think of EMUNI in 2029, I don't just see an institution with potential – I see a community that has matured, connected, and left a mark on the Mediterranean and beyond.

The future is not something we wait for – it's something we shape together. And I'm proud to be part of shaping EMUNI's.

### Špela Majcen Marušić

#### *Network Department*

By 2029, I envision EMUNI as a dynamic hub for Mediterranean cooperation, known for its interdisciplinary research, impactful partnerships, and tangible contributions to regional integration and sustainable development. EMUNI will be at the forefront of knowledge diplomacy – supporting international institutions such as the European Union and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) in their missions across the Euro-Mediterranean region. It will emerge as one of the key players with both the expertise and capacity to serve as a policy analysis hub or think tank for the region, working alongside institutions such as IEMed. Through this role, EMUNI will help shape evidence-based policy discussions, foster intercultural dialogue, and empower the next generation of Mediterranean leaders.

I am actively involved in EMUNI's public affairs and relations with international organizations and actors in the region. My work focuses on setting up and maintaining relationships with key decision-makers and opinion leaders at the EU level, while also working closely with the representatives of the Union for the Mediterranean and national gov-

ernment stakeholders. With my background in external affairs of the European Union and experience working with Brussels systems, institutions and stakeholders, I am well positioned to support EMUNI in its efforts to become the central focus point for key decision-makers at the EU level when it comes to seeking data, analysis, information or advice.

**Polona Oblak**

*Network Department*



My name is Polona Oblak and I am the Head of the EMUNI Network. I coordinate and support collaboration among our member institutions across the Euro-Mediterranean region, with a focus on fostering academic partnerships, and joint initiatives.

By 2029, I envision EMUNI as a leading reference point for academic cooperation in the Mediterranean, recognized for its role in bridging regional divides, promoting intercultural dialogue, and advancing inclusive internationalization. I see our network expanding, with even deeper engagement from both shores of the Mediterranean, offering joint degrees, impactful research collaborations, and transformative mobility opportunities that empower students and institutions alike. EMUNI will play an increasingly impactful role in contributing to the development of a common Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education Area, where knowledge, people, and ideas circulate freely and equitably.

My role will continue to be one of facilitator, connector, and advocate – working closely with departments of EMUNI and network partners to build sustainable projects, strengthen regional dialogue, and ensure EMUNI’s vision becomes a shared reality.

**Maja Pucelj**

*Head of Research*

By 2029, I envision EMUNI as a world-renowned academic institution – an interdisciplinary international organisation rooted in the Mediter-

anean but outward-looking and influential on a global scale. EMUNI will be a place of convergence for scholars, students, policy makers and civil society actors who together strive for knowledge that not only informs but also transforms. It will address the great challenges of our time – climate vulnerability, the erosion of democracy and human rights, digital exclusion and educational inequality – through a model of engaged research and inclusive learning.

What sets EMUNI apart from other universities is its ability to connect across boundaries – geographical, cultural and disciplinary. As someone whose academic and professional career has focused on protecting human rights and promoting social and legal responsibility, I see EMUNI in 2029 as an international institution committed to the vision of a more peaceful, just and inclusive future – one in which knowledge serves as a bridge between people, disciplines and regions, and in which academic work makes a meaningful contribution to social change. It will be a bold and principled voice in addressing pressing societal tensions. These include the human cost of migration, the ethical dilemmas of artificial intelligence and the growing need for civic trust and digital resilience in a rapidly changing world.

In my role as Head of Research, I advocate for a forward-looking research environment that embeds civic values across all disciplines – from human rights, technological innovation to science diplomacy and peacebuilding. My work will remain focused on enabling cross-sector collaboration, securing European funding to support socially impactful initiatives and promoting a research culture that values both scientific integrity and ethical responsibility.

To achieve this, EMUNI's research infrastructure will be further developed through the establishment of a dedicated project management hub and the promotion of open science practices. This will not only support project implementation and transparency, but also provide a basis for mentoring early career researchers. One of my main priorities is to create structured support systems to help young scientists navigate ethical complexity, engage with societal relevance and grow



into confident, principled scientists. Likewise, I hope that EMUNI will continue to cultivate an internal culture that reflects its values to the outside world. I envision a workplace where employees enjoy a healthy work-life balance, have meaningful opportunities for professional development and are truly recognised for their contributions. The success of the institution must not only be based on intellectual achievement, but also on the wellbeing and empowerment of the people who make it possible.

Ultimately, EMUNI's legacy is defined not just by rankings or results, but by its commitment to people, ideas and impact. As a Head of research and Assistant Professor, I am proud to contribute to a university that combines academic excellence with social responsibility. I am convinced that by 2029, EMUNI will not only be an role model of European university of the future, but will also actively shape what a democratic, inclusive and socially responsible future looks like.

### **Diana Rico**

*Department for Research, Development Projects, and Innovation*



By 2029, I envision EMUNI University as a leading institution in the Euro-Mediterranean region, recognized for its excellence in research, particularly in the field of sustainable blue economy. I see the research department significantly expanded, with strengthened capacities, increased international collaboration, and a key role in building knowledge and skills that support sustainable development in the blue economy sectors in the region. The university will be a central actor in shaping policies and practices through impactful research, training, and innovation.

Within this vision, I see myself as an active researcher contributing to the growth and success of the Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Blue Economy. Based on my background in marine sciences, sustainability, blue economy, and blue skills, I aim to support the development of research, capacity-building initiatives, and partnerships related to these topics. My role will focus on translating knowledge into practical solutions that foster resilient, inclusive, and sustainable blue growth across the Mediterranean.

## **Petra Robnik Verdnik**

*Project Manager & Researcher*

EMUNI is not a traditional university, but a centre of excellence for master's, doctoral, and certificate specialisation courses, a vibrant research institute, and a network connecting renowned Euro-Mediterranean universities. Through our Research Department, we enhance the practical application of science, driving societal impact.

By 2029, I envision EMUNI as a leading international platform for applied research, multicultural collaboration, and educational innovation, shaping solutions for emerging societal challenges across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

My role will be to expand our research and project impact, especially in higher education mechanisms, sport management, and dual careers for athletes. I aim to lead interdisciplinary initiatives, foster new academic and professional partnerships, and mentor future leaders aligned with EMUNI's mission. Through these contributions, I aspire to help EMUNI grow as a dynamic, socially responsive institution that transforms knowledge into real-world change.



## **Jaka Vadnjal**

*Head of Academic Affairs*

I see EMUNI University in ten years as a thriving, significant centre for intercultural communication, academic excellence, and innovation in the Euro-Mediterranean area. North and South, East and West, will continue to be connected not only geographically but also via significant collaboration in entrepreneurship, research, and education.

The main Mediterranean issues of migration, economic inequality, climate change, digital transformation, and sustainability will all be addressed by EMUNI by 2035. To create a really cosmopolitan atmosphere that captures the essence of this special location, we will welcome a varied student body and faculty from all over the Mediterranean.

In my role as Head of Academic Affairs, I work to keep our programs applied, interdisciplinary, and forward-thinking. In addition to

strengthening our relationships with academic institutions, research facilities, and global organisations, we will also increase our interaction with the business community.



Through the development of start-ups, innovation support, and technology transfer, EMUNI will act as a platform for the co-creation of solutions between university and industry, benefiting communities on both sides.

We will keep publishing influential, policy-relevant research through the International Journal of Euro-Mediterranean Studies, establishing EMUNI as a leading voice in regional discourse. In addition to training the next generation of leaders, our university will influence the stories of collaboration, harmony, and advancement in the Mediterranean. EMUNI's fu-

ture is rooted in inclusivity, relevance, and action – and in ten years, we will stand as a model of how higher education can drive regional transformation.

### **Tatjana Trebec**

*Education Department*

EMUNI in 2029 is a prestigious university that offers quality education to students in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It is a reference university that understands the knowledge needs and objectives of society, taking into account the diversity of the members of its networks.



The University has a clear vision and strategy to serve the students and the academic community of its network members. The involvement and active participation of network members has resulted in the provision of accredited degree and certified programmes that are contemporary, relevant and of paramount importance to the labour markets in the region and the career development of employees.

In order to realise the university's vision and strategy, an excellent organisation of the university and its units as well as highly motivated

professionals are crucial. As one of the professionals in the Education Department, I see my role and contribution in building and organising the department to serve the students and the academic community and to successfully implement the University's vision and strategy. As the University is expected to grow rapidly, the number of staff in the department needs to grow in order to successfully serve the stakeholders. My role is to pass on my knowledge and experience of 30 years in the higher education sector to ensure that the Education Department runs smoothly and delivers excellent work before my retirement in 2027.

### **Daša Zvonar**

#### *Education Department*

I am Daša and I have a varied role at EMUNI combining several key areas: I take care of Erasmus mobility, Erasmus project applications and the organisation of Staff Week. I am also actively involved in the work of the Academic Affairs Office, where I work with professors and students to ensure the smooth running of study programmes – from preparing timetables to organising exam dates.

My vision for EMUNI in 2029 is for it to become a recognised and respected university, renowned for its quality study programmes and for its students who come from all over the world. I believe that the growth in the number of study programmes and students will encourage even more mobility – for students, lecturers and other staff – and further strengthen the international dimension of our community.

My work brings together different people and processes so that EMUNI can function as an open and well-coordinated community. By organising mobilities, projects and study activities, I contribute to making EMUNI a place where different cultures, knowledge and experiences intersect daily – a place where the future is built on the foundations of cooperation, understanding and intercultural dialogue.



## Multicultural Academic Community

In 2024, EMUNI established the Academic Friends Community, an initiative aimed at fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among scholars, researchers, and educators from across the Euro-Mediterranean region. This program reflects EMUNI's dedication to supporting academic excellence through cooperative efforts and shared expertise.

The Academic Friends Community will serve as a platform for members to engage in co-publishing opportunities, apply for international grants, and participate in discussions designed to address contemporary academic and societal challenges. The initiative seeks to establish a robust network where professionals can connect, collaborate, and explore synergies in research, teaching, and project development.

Leveraging its extensive network of multidisciplinary experts, EMUNI invites participation from both existing affiliates and new members. The initiative aims to provide members with access to a valuable resource base, supporting their academic pursuits and facilitating partnerships in research and funding.

This initiative represents a significant step in EMUNI's mission to strengthen academic ties and advance shared knowledge across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

### **EMUNI Ambassadors**

In 2025, the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) will continue to advance the role of EMUNI Ambassadors, who are instrumental in fostering cooperation and dialogue within the Euro-Mediterranean region. The EMUNI Ambassadors are appointed to represent the university and promote its mission of enhancing academic collaboration, intercultural dialogue, peace, and prosperity.

By recognizing the contributions of individuals – academics, researchers, artists and sportsmen, who have demonstrated outstanding achievements in their fields we aim to strengthen the international presence and influence of EMUNI in the fields of scientific research,

art, sports and higher education. The development of the EMUNI Ambassadors program will not only celebrate individual excellence but also reinforce our commitment to cooperation and dialogue across the region.

### **EMUNI Newsletter**

To enhance communication and engagement among EMUNI members and stakeholders through a quarterly newsletter that highlights key developments, opportunities, and events within the network.

Content Overview:

- *Featured News from EMUNI.* Announce new initiatives aimed at fostering collaboration among member institutions, focusing on innovative teaching methods and research practices.
- *Featured News from Paying Members.* Highlight significant projects or research initiatives undertaken by paying members, showcasing contributions to sustainable development and other relevant fields.
- *Focus Brussels: Updates and Developments.* Provide insights into educational funding and policy reforms occurring in Brussels, including potential impacts on member institutions and upcoming funding opportunities.
- *Open Calls for Proposals.* Compile and disseminate a list of relevant open calls for proposals that align with EMUNI's mission, encouraging active participation from members in securing research funding
- *Upcoming Events.* Outline a schedule of EMUNI and paying network events, including workshops, webinars, and conferences, aimed at fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among members.

The EMUNI newsletter is published quarterly, with the first issue set for January 2025 and subsequent editions in April, July, and October 2025. Contributions from members will be actively encouraged to promote a sense of community and collaboration.

This newsletter strategy is integral to EMUNI's commitment to keeping our network informed and engaged throughout 2025. By highlighting news, opportunities, and events, we aim to strengthen connections among members and enhance the overall impact of our collective efforts.

## Euro-Mediterranean Chamber of Commerce

The Euro-Mediterranean Chamber of Commerce, established by EMUNI University in partnership with Slovene companies and businesses from across the Mediterranean, represents a significant step toward deepening economic integration and cooperation in the region. Officially launched alongside the EMUNI Knowledge and Innovation Centre (EKIC), the Chamber is designed to serve as a dynamic platform for fostering business partnerships, facilitating trade, and supporting joint ventures between companies from Slovenia and other Mediterranean countries. Its establishment was marked by the participation of prominent figures from academia, diplomacy, and business, underscoring its strategic importance and the shared commitment to unlocking the economic potential of the Euro-Mediterranean area.

The Chamber aims to provide practical support to companies by offering market analysis, partner matchmaking, and assistance in navigating logistical and regulatory challenges specific to Southern Mediterranean markets. By leveraging EMUNI's extensive network and expertise, the Chamber will organize business events, delegations, and training sessions, enabling companies to access new opportunities and build robust cross-border collaborations. The inclusion of leading Southern Mediterranean companies, such as SEKEM, as founding members signals the Chamber's inclusive approach and its ambition to become a central hub for economic dialogue and innovation, ultimately contributing to sustainable growth and prosperity across the region.





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