

## Project S3UNICA “Smart Specialisation in UNliversity Campus”

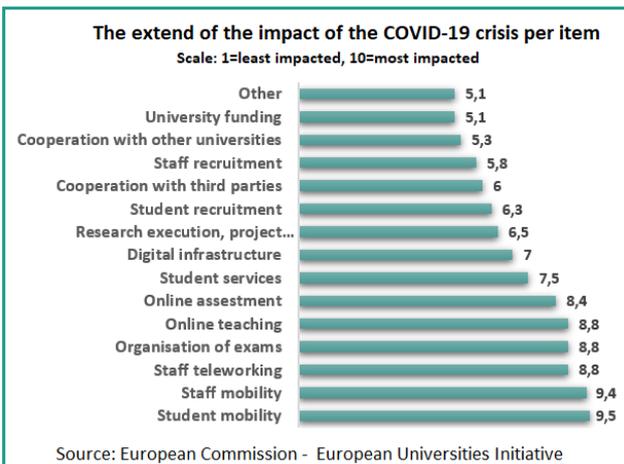
### 3<sup>rd</sup> S3UNICA Newsletter – January 2021

The Covid-19 emergency and S3UNICA

Low-carbon economy

This introduction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of the Newsletter should be titled “the Covid-19 emergency and S3UNICA – 2<sup>nd</sup> Part”. In fact, the premise of the previous issue (July 2020) posed some questions: how long could the pandemic emergency last? Which and how many Countries could become Covid-Free? What could be the possible further consequences on the “life” of university campuses? Unfortunately, we have already received the answers by consulting the media every day. In fact, it should be remembered that, already in the summer of 2020 the international scientific community had raised the alarm on the fact that during the autumn/winter period there would be an extension of the 1<sup>st</sup> pandemic wave of the Countries affected later

than others (e.g., Spain) or a 2<sup>nd</sup> wave even much more incisive (e.g., Italy). In fact towards the end of 2020 the level of infections, hospitalizations in intensive care and deaths reached and/or exceeded the intensity recorded in the spring period. Due to the prolongation/worsening of the pandemic, the “University system” of the S3UNICA Partner Countries (as well as the European and global one) has gone through an interlocutory phase. Indeed, in the absence of guidelines from the European Commission (EC), each Country has made its choices and the individual Regions and/or even the individual universities within a Region have acted autonomously (e.g. lectures



and exams remotely or in partial attendance, total or partial access to research laboratories, partial or total smart-working for staff, etc.). As an example of this situation, at the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year, in the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (PP1 - LP), the University of Udine (PP2) decided to abandon face-to-face teaching. From November 2020 also the graduation sessions and, with some exceptions, the exams, take place remotely. Only teachings that require physical presence, such as seminars, were excluded.

#### The Partnership of S3UNICA

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

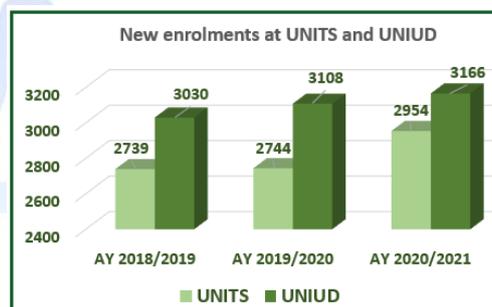
Otherwise, the University of Trieste (PP3) has decided to continue “live” lessons but limited to students enrolled in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of studies. From the above, it is difficult to define the direct effects on the activity of individual academic institutions. However, the “Survey on the impact of COVID-19 on European Universities”, conducted by the European Universities Initiative - EC (which involve 114 higher education institutions in total, from 25 Countries) provides a fairly comprehensive picture (see the graph above on the left). In particular, the survey highlighted for each of the elements considered the extent to which they were influenced by the COVID-19 crisis with an evaluation scale

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from 1 (least impacted) to 10 (most impacted). In short, as expected, the elements that recorded the most significant impacts were the student and staff mobility, the staff teleworking, the organization of exams and the online teaching and assessment. University funding is one of the least penalized elements. This data is particularly encouraging as in many European Countries there was fear of a decline in new enrolments for the academic year 2020-2021 due to the restrictions imposed

by the pandemic (e.g., the Italian Ministry of University and Research estimated a drop in enrolments close to at 20%). This eventuality would have led to a decrease in University income deriving from the payment of University fees (the main source of funding for Universities, together with state contributions) with a whole series of consequences (e.g., reduction of the educational offer, blocking hiring, reduction of scholarships), including slowing down future or already planned work to improve energy efficiency in Universities campuses buildings. Fortunately, thanks to the decision to ensure mixed lessons (attendance/distance) in the majority of Universities at least for the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, the feared drop in new registrations occurred only minimally. For example, in the specific case of Italy, according to the most recent data released by the Ministry of University and Research, new registrations for the academic year 2020-2021 dropped by only 2.5% (provisional figure). However, this aggregate figure at national level hides very different situations at regional/local level (as well as in other European Countries/Regions). In fact, the Universities of Trieste and Udine recorded an increase in new enrolments equal to 7.1% and 1.8% respectively.



However, even if the decline in tax revenues seems not to have occurred, it must be taken into the account that many Universities have had to incur expenses to upgrade the IT infrastructure in order to guarantee online services for students and staff. For example, starting from the second half of 2020 the University of Trieste has invested a first tranche of the total funding of 2.5 million euros for the upgrading of the wi-fi network, setting up of videoconferencing systems, purchase of fixed PCs and notebooks, etc. In conclusion, the consequences of the pandemic on the activity of academic institutions are not yet fully quantifiable. However, the slowdown in face-to-face teaching activities and unexpected but necessary investments to upgrade IT infrastructures risk causing a slowdown in energy efficiency improvement work on university campuses.

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### 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester of S3UNICA activity: a brief overview of the main outputs

5 online Regional Stakeholders Meeting (RSM) were held during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester: LP, PP2, PP3 on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, PP4 on 30<sup>th</sup> June, PP5 and PP6 on 8<sup>th</sup> July, PP7 and PP8 on 31<sup>st</sup> March and PP9 on 30<sup>th</sup> July. During those meetings, the Partners shared S3UNICA Project progress and experiences related to the implementation of energy related to policies, discussed about collected good practices and illustrated the SAT elaborated by Universities of Trieste and Udine. All the PPs participated to the 1<sup>st</sup> Exchange of Experience meeting (EE) organised by the South Karelia region on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (for more details, see Newsletter n. 2 and the social channels of S3UNICA).

*“A new Energy Model for a sustainable and inclusive regional growth”*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Exchange of Experience meeting

On-line event - 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Organizers:

- Andalusian Energy Agency - AEA
- Andalusian Institute of Home Automation and Energy Efficiency of the University of Malaga – IDEE



On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the on-line Exchange of Experience (EE) event of the S3UNICA was organised by the Spanish Partners. It is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time that S3 UNICA Partners meet online, after the 1<sup>st</sup> EE on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 held by the Finnish Partners of the Project – PP7 and PP8 (more information on the S3 Unica Web page and on the Newsletter n.2). The meeting has been organized by the **Andalusian Energy Agency – AEA** (PP5) with the collaboration of the **Andalusian Institute of Home Automation and Energy Efficiency of the University of Malaga – IDEE**

(PP6) and attended by more than 40 European experts. The event benefited from RSM organised by AEA last 19<sup>th</sup> January counting with 22 Andalusian public and private partners, university energy management experts,

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as well as public and private experts in the field of energy management, and the management of public funds and the management of knowledge and innovation, together with consumer and user associations and experts from companies in the sustainable construction sector. After the welcome addresses, AEA together with the LP explained the objective of the Project, the improvement of energy efficiency and the promotion of renewable energies on university campuses, as well as the promotion of networks smart. During the meeting, the international experts were made aware of the energy situation in Andalusia, the actions carried out in collaboration with 9 universities within the framework of the Redeja Program (Energy Management Network of the Andalusian Government that manages nearly 5,000 installations of all the public buildings of the Andalusian Government) were also explained (e.g., implementation of capacitor's bank at the University "Pablo de Olavide" – Seville, implementation of capacitor's bank for reactive energy compensation at the El Carmen Campus, University of Huelva, etc.).

The Malaga City Council presented the "Smart Malaga" Technological Innovation Master Plan, which includes, for example, the concession of public property for electric vehicle charging points, 43 photovoltaic installations, and the study of a Solar Park for Self-consumption (10 -30MW). The "Smart Costa del Sol" project financed with State funds through Red.es was also presented, which includes intelligent lighting, energy management in irrigation, and energy efficiency in buildings. The "Intelligent Pilot Buildings" Initiative was also presented to the attendees, 218 buildings, 8 of them from the University of Malaga, with local defibrillator points, the reduction of energy consumption in buildings, and the control of pollution and also the air quality.

The Smart Campus project of the University of Malaga was also presented. In short, the project involves the construction and improvement of the School of Engineering building, specifically the implementation of intelligent ventilation, as well as solar energy with a production of nearly 1.3 million kWh/year. The campuses also have photovoltaic devices in the Sports Complex of the campus, used for self-consumption and for the production of sanitary hot water in the buildings in the center and for heating the water in the complex's swimming pool. Finally, an ambitious Smart Campus project was presented with a planned investment of 2.7 million € in the next 5 years to promote renewable energy in buildings already built and in new ones to be built.

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A brief overview on the State of the Art of S3UNICA and explanation of the main results/outputs already achieved and/or to be achieved by the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester and therefore submitted with the next Progress Report. It is important to underline that due to the pandemic crisis the calendar of events and the realization/publication of the outputs will undergo substantial changes.

2<sup>nd</sup> Exchange of Experience (EE2) event in Andalusia (Spain)

1 Campus Technical Meeting (CTM) in Andalusia (Spain)

5 Regional Stakeholder Meetings (RSM) – 1 for each Partner Country

1 Steering Group (SG) Meeting hosted by Andalusia Region

5 RSM reports

1 EE2 event report

1 CTM report

1 Campus Technical solution publication (prepared by Universities partners)

1 SG report: minutes and participants list

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3 articles on the institutional website of event hosting Partner Project website and social media updates

5 appearances in media

1 video on EE2

attend Sustainable Building Partnership event in Brussels

2<sup>nd</sup> Progress report to Joint Secretariat (JS)

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