

I International Conference Cities and Universities

**Building a partnership
for social, cultural
and economic sustainable
development**

December 12 and 13, 2023

**Poblenou Campus, Barcelona (Spain)
Universitat Pompeu Fabra**

Presentation of the Conference

Cities and universities have often lived unaware of each other. Usually, their priorities, objectives, and dynamics have not merged. The few collaborations were based on a utilitarian and short-term perspective.

The advent of the knowledge society implies the need for much closer and more stable cooperation between the local and regional spheres and the academic sphere of research and innovation. At the same time, the broad social, economic, cultural, and technological transformations of the beginning of the 21st century require multistakeholder governance involving public institutions, businesses, civic society, and universities or knowledge hubs. The local and regional sphere is the critical space to implement specific policies and programmes to address the global challenges (those that appear in the 2030 Agenda as the Sustainable Development Goals). Social complexity means that science, innovation, and talent should be at the service of public policy and working hand in hand with local and regional institutions.

Thus, there are several areas of collaboration and interaction between cities and universities in topics as diverse as talent, ongoing training and learning; citizen science and responsible research; equity and social progress; innovation, entrepreneurship and business support; fostering a critical and engaged citizenship; cultural vitality; urban planning and community development; international partnerships and global challenges; and sustainable development.

That is the backdrop to the new Cities and Universities Programme of the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi). GUNi brings together 300 higher education institutions in 90 countries. It aims to create and advance a global strategic partnership between universities and cities embedded in the knowledge society. A partnership that will promote socioeconomic progress, by encouraging knowledge and tackling common issues to break new ground. A partnership that will advertise Barcelona and Catalonia to the world in the field of sustainable cooperation between cities and universities.

The I International Conference Cities and Universities aims to be the starting line of a rigorous debate to set the building blocks of the Cities and Universities Programme of GUNi.

Organisers and promoting institutions

The conference is organised by the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi) and the Catalan Association of Public Universities (ACUP). It receives direct support from the Catalan Government, the Barcelona City Council, the Barcelona Provincial Council, and the La Caixa Foundation in the framework of the world capital for higher education initiative.



Free registration by order of registration:
<https://forms.gle/tyXbNLHiGsx5wnVT7>

Programme

Day 1

Tuesday, 12 December 2023

9:30 - 9:45 am

Opening speech

- **Daniel Crespo**, President of the Catalan Association of Public Universities (ACUP) and Rector of the *Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya - Barcelona Tech* (UPC).

9:45 - 11:15 am

Main talks “How to build active and effective cooperation between cities and universities: a necessary partnership to ensure smart, sustainable and inclusive societies”

- **Willem van Winden**, Professor of Applied Sciences at the Amsterdam University and co-founder and advisor of EUniverCities.
- **Joan Subirats**, expert in public policy and former Minister of Universities of the Spanish Government.

11:15 - 11:45 am

Coffee break – Auditorium hall

11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Roundtables on building shared futures between cities and universities

Parallel sessions:

- **Cities and university campuses: active spaces for collaboration and innovation – Lecture room 52.323**

Speakers:

- **Carme Miralles**, Vice-rector for Campus, Sustainability and Territory of the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* (UAB).
- **Ramon Gras**, Urban Innovation Researcher at Harvard University and Co-Founder at Aretian.
- Moderation: **Agustí Fernández de Losada**, Senior Researcher and Director of the Global Cities Programme at CIDOB.

- **Technology and the new economy: local and global approaches – Lecture room 52.329**

Speakers:

- **Meritxell Vilaseca**, Professor of the *Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya - Barcelona Tech* (UPC).
- **Maria Galindo**, PBoard Member in Women in Tech.
- Moderation: **Pere Condom**, Director of the Strategic Analysis Area at the Directorate General of Industry of the Generalitat de Catalunya.
- **Challenges and social transformations in cities – Lecture room 52.327**
 - Speaker: **Mariela Iglesias**, Consultant in Urban Policies and Social Innovation and professor of the Master in City and Urbanism at the Open University of Catalonia (UOC).
 - Moderation: **Jesús Delgado**, Vice President of the Catalan Third Social Sector Platform.

1:30 - 2:30 pm

Standing lunch – Auditorium hall

3:00 - 5:00 pm

Visits and debates to local projects that showcase collaboration between cities and universities:

- **Visit and debate at the Social Digital Lab of Suara Cooperativa** with **Jordi Picas**, Director of Innovation at Suara Cooperativa, **Martí Quilez**, Communication Manager at the Independent Life Centre and **Mohamed al Amrani**, Innovation Manager at Suara Cooperativa (*meeting point: c/ de Sancho de Àvila, 52, 1r, 08018 Barcelona*).
- **Visit at the Deep Tech Node** with **Itziar Blasco**, Director of Entrepreneurship at Barcelona Activa (*meeting point: Sala Emprèn, Business Incubator Glòries, C/ Llacuna, 162*).

Day 2

Wednesday, 13 December 2023

9:30 - 11:30 am

Roundtables on building shared futures between cities and universities

Parallel sessions:

- **The democracy of knowledge: science at the service of society – Lecture room 52.327**
 - Speaker: **Ismael Ràfols**, UNESCO Chair on Diversity and Inclusion in Global Science. Centre for Science and Technology Studies, Leiden University.
 - Moderation: **Diana Escobar**, Project Manager of the Department of Science and Universities of the Barcelona City Council.
- **Human capital in the knowledge society – Lecture room 52.329**
 - Speaker: **Joan Guàrdia**, Rector of the *Universitat de Barcelona* (UB).
 - Moderation: **Xavier Ticó**, Project Manager of the Parc AgroBiotech Lleida and vice-president of the Agrifood Economy Commission of the Catalan Association of Economists.
- **Sustainability and climate change: how to accelerate a sustainable future – Lecture room 52.323**
 - Speaker: **Ana Romero**, Head of the Climate Emergency and Environmental Education Service at the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona.
 - Moderation: **Gemma Geis**, Vice Mayor and Councilor for Economic Promotion at the City Council of Girona and former Minister of Research and Universities of the Generalitat de Catalunya.

11:30 am - 12:00 pm

Coffee break – Auditorium hall

12:00 - 14:00 pm

Final session “Laying the foundations of a partnership between cities and universities for social, cultural and economic sustainable development”

Part 1: Main conclusions

Speakers:

- **Anna Bröll**, Head of the Department of Science and Universities at the Barcelona City Council.
- **Josep M. Vilalta**, Executive Secretary of ACUP and Director of GUNI.

Part 2: Roundtable

Speakers:

- **Sandra Guaita**, Mayor of Reus.
- **Miquel Rodríguez**, Economic Promotion Manager at the Barcelona City Council.
- **Gemma Geis**, Vice Mayor and Councilor for Economic Promotion at the City Council of Girona and former Minister of Research and Universities of the Generalitat de Catalunya.
- **Joan Guàrdia**, Rector of the *Universitat de Barcelona* (UB).

Moderation: **Miquel Molina**, journalist and Deputy Director of La Vanguardia.

2:00 pm

Closing speech

- **Helena Ramalhinho**, Vice-rector for Internationalization of *Universitat Pompeu Fabra* (UPF)
- **M. Victòria Girona**, General Director of Universities of the Catalan Government.

Contact:

Global University Network for Innovation

Avinguda Tibidabo, 39. 08035 Barcelona (Spain)

info@guninetwork.org

+34 93 581 70 99

With the support and collaboration: