

2022



## ANNUAL REPORT



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# FOREWORD

A key challenge when educating young people for sustainability is to make them aware of the urgency to act, while at the same time conveying hope, soothing eco-anxiety and transmitting keys for engagement and action. In 2024, the reasons for hope were often overshadowed by “bad news”: The end of the war between Russia and Ukraine was still not in sight and the destruction of Gaza continued. The number of migrants who died while trying to join Europe by crossing the Mediterranean Sea was once again alarming. 2024 was the hottest year ever registered, many regions were devastated by fires, drought, storms, etc., catastrophes linked to global warming... but a climate sceptic candidate won the US elections, and returned to the White House. Once more, we must admit that in such a tense and complex geopolitical situation, Agenda 2030 is not on the top of the agendas of world leaders. UNESCO had adopted a new holistic recommendation in November 2023 – the [Recommendation on Education for Peace and Human Rights, International Understanding, Cooperation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development](#) – but this inspiring update of the original UNESCO Recommendation of 1974 did not make the media headlines in 2024.

More than ever, the COPERNICUS Alliance must play a catalytic role in our members’ efforts to foster and strengthen transformative learning for sustainability in higher education. And to reach out to the wider community whose members read our newsletters, attended our fascinating Higher Education Summit (HES) on the whole-institution approach to sustainability in September in the historic buildings of the University of Padua (where Galileo had taught... and where we found a sculpture of Copernicus, who studied medicine in Padua between 1501 and 1503) and joined us for our new webinar series “CA Exchange” which started in November.

A warm welcome to our two new institutional members! They are particularly precious, because they are our two first Student Organization members: oikos International and SOS International. In the wake of the Higher Education Summit “Student Takeover” in 2023, reinforcing our collaboration with students appeared central, and we also invited a student member to the CA Advisory Board. Indeed, we need all stakeholders on board to get closer to this truly transformative learning for sustainability the COPERNICUS Alliance stands for. As we are all learners when facing the problems of tomorrow, we’ll opt for another collaborative HES in 2025: an online event (which facilitates student participation), co-organized with student organizations in November 2025 – we hope to meet you there... and elsewhere!



**Asst. Prof. Elisabeth Hofmann**  
Co-President

**Assoc. Prof. Tom Kuppens**  
Co-President

**Prof. Eglė Staniškienė**  
Co-President

# 1. OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

## Vision

*“The COPERNICUS Alliance will be the leading European network helping people and institutions in a higher education environment to creatively address the challenges of tomorrow in a collaborative way, to jointly build the knowledge and competences needed for global sustainable development, and to actively engage with policy-makers and community stakeholders.”*

## Mission

The COPERNICUS Alliance (CA) aims to enable European higher education institutions and their partners to jointly identify challenges in higher education for sustainable development (HESD) and spearhead development of processes, tools, and knowledge to address these challenges from a whole-institution perspective. The CA provides a platform and organizes events where its current and future members can share resources and co-develop innovative education for sustainable development initiatives. It provides “Cooperation Funds” for members’ networking efforts and supports joint HESD proposals through advice and alliances. The CA also promotes engagement with policy-makers and community stakeholders at the European and global levels and regularly celebrates members’ ambassador activities. The CA resolutely commits to reducing the ecological footprint of its activities.



## Values

Respect, commitment, and collaboration are deemed the highest values of the CA.

- **Respect** underpins members’ interactions and collaboration. Our members greatly appreciate the diversity of the CA community and the inspiration they get from exchanging.
- **CA members commit to walk the talk**, guided by a holistic perspective of HESD and the Agenda 2030. This commitment is supported by the possibility of exchanging with other people and institutions, and engaging in common activities.
- **Collaboration** is the mode of work of the CA community, who shares knowledge and resources, seeks to increase the impact of their work together, and find common solutions and funding for projects.

# 2. MANAGEMENT

## 2.1. Leadership Team

The CA is coordinated by an elected **Leadership Team**. Since 1 January 2022, it is composed by three Co-Presidents: **Asst. Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Hofmann** (Université Bordeaux Montaigne), **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tom Kuppens** (Hasselt University & Vrije Universiteit Brussel), and **Prof. Dr. Eglė Staniškienė** (Kaunas University of Technology). They are supported by the **Network Manager, Mario Diethart**, and an **Advisory Board**. The Leadership Team and Advisory Board members are volunteering positions. The Leadership Team is elected by the CA members for a period of two years.



## 2.2. Advisory Board

The Advisory Board members are elected for a period of four years by the CA members. They can be *member representatives*, *student representatives* or assume an *extended Advisory Board role*. The current members are:

- ✦ **Prof. Matthias Barth** Member representative  
President, Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development, Germany
- ✦ **Prof. Kim Ceulemans, PhD** Extended Advisory Board Role  
Assistant Professor, Department of Control, Accounting and Auditing at Toulouse Business School, France
- ✦ **Dr. Jana Dlouhá** Member representative  
Researcher at Charles University Environment Centre and former CA Vice-President, Czech Republic
- ✦ **Prof. Dr. Rebeka Kovačič Lukman** Member representative  
Professor of Environmental Sciences at University of Maribor, Slovenia
- ✦ **Dr. Clemens Mader** Extended Advisory Board Role  
Co-Director at RCE Zurich and Scientist at Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland

- ✦ **Asst. Prof. Dr. Ingrid Mulà** Member representative  
Assistant Professor at University of Girona, Spain
- ✦ **Dr. Estibaliz Saez de Camara Oleaga** Member representative  
Director of Sustainability at University of the Basque Country, Spain
- ✦ **Dr. Anne Zimmermann** Extended Advisory Board Role  
Associate Senior Research Scientist, Centre for Development and Environment, University of Bern, Switzerland

## 3. ACTIVITIES & INITIATIVES

Goals for CA activities have always been the result of a bottom-up process, with members contributing in a substantial way on different occasions. **Five priorities** have been identified which characterize the CA's unique strengths and important areas of action. The first two are thematic priorities (Goals 1 and 2), the third epitomizes the CA's mode of operation and commitment to sharing resources and learning (Goal 3), the fourth confirms the CA's involvement in European and global policy work (Goal 4), and the fifth characterizes the CA's operational needs as a learning organization (Goal 5):



For each of the **five strategic goals**, activities and initiatives were organized in relation to the above-mentioned goals throughout the year 2024. We report on them below.

### 3.1. HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT 2024



- Goals 1, 2, 3, 5
- 8-10 September 2024
- Padua, Italy
- ~110 participants
- 26 countries

The 2024 Higher Education Summit "Co-creating change for sustainability" was co-organized by the University of Padua and the COPERNICUS Alliance. From 8-10 September 2024, over 100 participants from 26 countries met at University of Padua to foster dialogue and collaboration among educators and stakeholders in higher education. They enjoyed a rich program including workshops, network corners, teaching and learning labs, excursions, social events, and great keynote speakers such as Marco Frey, Enrico Giovannini, Juanita Johnson-Bailey, Isabel Rimanoczy, Umesh Sharma and Arjen Wals. Photos and conference proceedings are available on the conference website. [Read more](#)

### 3.2. CA Cooperation Funds



- Goal 5
- 1 initiatives supported
- 2 member institutions involved
- 2,000.00 €

The CA aims to invest in members' activities by putting part of its annual budget aside to fund members' initiatives. Activities that contribute to the overall CA ambition to build capacity in higher education for sustainable development through collaboration can be supported with up to 2,000 EUR. In 2024, one initiative was supported through a CA Cooperation Fund (a second initiative is running until 2025):



#### SOS International Summit

14-16 March 2024

Participating CA members: SOS International, University of Hasselt, oikos

The SOS International Summit took place at the University of Twente under the theme "Travelling from crisis to perspective: A holistic journey for sustainability". More than 100 students, academics, university staff and education charities from over 40 organizations across Europe, Africa and the

Pacific joined in-person and online. Various topics were covered, such as climate justice, event management, and effective student campaigning. [Read more](#)

### 3.3. CA Publications



 Goals 2, 3, 4

 1 publication

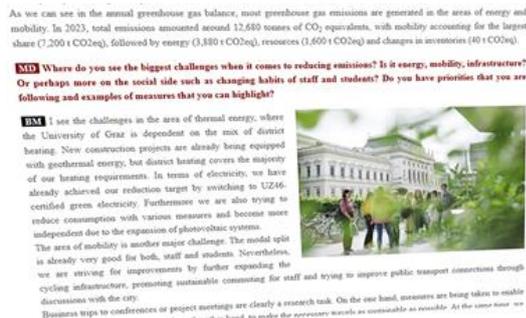
The CA seeks to contribute to the scientific discourse by sharing experiences and knowledge from its network. Following our strategic goals, we publish in selected channels, also involving members as co-authors.



**Conference Proceedings:**  
**2024 Higher Education Summit – Co-Creating Change for Sustainability**  
 Fedeli, M., Tino, C., Liotino, M. & Araneta, M.G.Z.

The conference proceedings capture the invaluable insights, research, and discussions shared during the 2024 Higher Education Summit, serving as a resource to explore contributions from various speakers and participants and stimulate new research and practices. [Read more](#)

### 3.4. CA Conversations



 Goals 1, 3, 5

 2 interviews

In our series "A conversation with..." we put CA members and their activities in the spotlight. In 2024, we published two interviews.



**Theodoros Xanthos (University of West Attica, Greece)**, Professor at School of Health Sciences and Vice-Rector of International Affairs and Extroversion at University of West Attica

*"UNIWA recognizes that genuine advancements in sustainability demand collective effort and cooperation among institutions to magnify the impact of sustainability initiatives and foster positive transformations on a broader scale."*

[Read more](#)



Barbara Motschiunig (University of Graz, Austria), EMAS coordinator at University of Graz

*"Together we are stronger and more motivated which is a great value of networks and collaborations. At the same time, we learn from each other."*

[Read more](#)

### 3.5. CA Exchange



Goal 1, 3, 5

1 session

Through the new webinar series "CA Exchange" the CA highlights activities in the network and fosters interaction and exchange between colleagues from different member institutions and beyond. CA

members can host a CA Exchange, e.g. to share project results (dissemination), present new publications, get feedback on ongoing research, find project partners, or host an interactive workshop. 2025):



**"ATTUNE – Activate the University for Climate Change"**

26 November 2024

Colleagues from the project "ATTUNE – Activate the University for Climate Change" presented project outcomes and outlined how universities can use these to address climate change at their universities. They introduced different tools, which are adaptable and specifically designed to support universities and other institutions in implementing sustainability strategies. [Read more](#)

### 3.6. CA Website, Newsletter and LinkedIn



Goal 5

26 website news entries

5 newsletters

445 newsletter recipients (+31)

Through the [CA website](#), the [CA newsletter](#) and our [LinkedIn channel](#) we provide and distribute information about the network and promote members' activities. The CA newsletter informs over 400 subscribers about CA initiatives, members' activities, events, publications, as well as ongoing developments in the field of HESD.

In the ["Resources"](#) section on the CA website we provide **open access** to materials from past conferences, webinars, as well as a selection of publications. In the ["Partners"](#) section we highlight organizations that we collaborate with.

### 3.7. Building opportunities for members



 Goals 2, 5

 1 project

The CA has developed a profile that has made our non-profit network an attractive partner for European projects: In 2024, the CA was actively involved in one Erasmus+ project. The idea is to generate funding and other opportunities thanks to which CA members can engage in tangible projects that help to advance the CA's goals.



#### **SDG-iLevel – Leveraging Individual SDG Contributions by University Staff**

EU Erasmus+ project, 02/2022-02/2025, 6 partners from 4 countries

*SDG-iLevel* is an Erasmus+ project led by the University of Girona. The project creates approaches, methods, and tools aimed at uncovering, harnessing, and strengthening the individual contributions of higher education employees to the SDGs in order to improve their mental well-being, job satisfaction, productivity, and teamwork and to promote further SDG contributions. Outcomes of the project are an Online Visibility Booster, a Self-Nudging Online Toolkit, a MOOC on "Empowering University Staff to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals", Policy and Implementation Guidelines, and Departmental Roadmaps. [Read more](#)

## 3.8. Outreach activities



Goals 4, 5



Participation in 7 national or international events and committees

Together with [DG HochN \(German Society for Sustainability at HEIs\)](#) the CA facilitates an exchange between higher education networks in Europe. Four online meetings took place with representatives from numerous networks. The goal was to share good practices and learn from each other, e.g. on issues such as communication or students involvement.

From 12-14 February 2024, Bordeaux Montaigne University convened the other universities of South-Western France to an **Interactive Workshop “Is sustainable development just another course? University's role for a more sustainable future”** with CA member **Anne Snick**. Anne also animated a workshop with the students from the Institute of Urban Planning and Tourism (IATU) and she was a keynote speaker for the event celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IATU, pledging for student-led transformative education for sustainable development.

The CA was a promotional partner for the [Sustainability Education Forum](#) hosted by the **Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)**. The virtual event took place from 6-7 June 2024 across multiple time zones and countries.

The CA was also represented in the **International Conference “Training for the world of tomorrow - Education for sustainability: what training in the Francophonie?”**, which took place from 6-7 July 2024 simultaneously in Clermont Ferrand in France, and in universities in Cameroun, Ivory Coast and Algeria. CA Co-President **Elisabeth Hofmann** and CA Advisory Board member **Anne Zimmermann** presented a communication entitled “Evaluating and grading transformative education for sustainable development – questions, challenges and pathways”.

From 4-6 December 2024, CA Co-President **Tom Kuppens** co-organized a hackathon on green entrepreneurship within the Erasmus project [ECoGREEN](#). In this capacity building project in higher education for sustainability, lecturers from six Indonesian universities and two European universities (including CA member Hasselt University) co-created transformative learning environments, including a hackathon. Over 60 students collaborated in finding solutions to sustainability challenges offered to them by local Indonesian SMEs during a 3-day hackathon. Some of the workshops in the hackathon were based on the [method toolbox of Transformation Hosts International](#), which was developed during the [TRACCskills project](#) in which the COPERNICUS Alliance was involved.

The CA is represented in the **Ubuntu Committee of Peers** for the **Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs)** by **Jana Dlouhá**, CA Advisory Board member. The global network of RCEs is coordinated by the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS Tokyo). UNU-IAS has

contributed to the effective implementation of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development by mobilizing actors, experiences, and expertise worldwide. Over 190 RCEs in the global network contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Through CA Advisory Board member **Anne Zimmermann**, the CA is represented on the **Advisory Board** of [Legacy17](#), an international cooperative of leading-edge practitioners of the 'people skills' needed to work effectively with transformative, regenerative processes in education, leadership, and community development, in the spirit of the SDGs.

# 4. MEMBERSHIP

## Members in 2024 according to membership type and change to 2023

Institutional Members	Trial Members	HE NGOs, Associations & Agencies	Student Organizations	Observers & Individual Members
 20      -1	 0      -1	 2      -1	 2      +2	 4      ±0

## Members in 2024

			
Vienna University of Economics and Business	Austria	Institutional Member	2010
University of Graz	Austria	Institutional Member	2010
Leuphana University of Lüneburg	Germany	Institutional Member	2010
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna	Austria	Institutional Member	2012
Charles University Environment Centre	Czech Republic	Institutional Member	2012
CRUE (Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities)	Spain	NGO	2012
University of Basque Country	Spain	Institutional Member	2013
The University of Warsaw	Poland	Institutional Member	2014
Flemish Ministry of Environment, Nature and Energy	Belgium	Governmental Agency	2014
University of Zurich	Switzerland	Institutional Member	2015
University of Maribor	Slovenia	Institutional Member	2016
University of Bern	Switzerland	Institutional Member	2016
Kaunas University of Technology	Lithuania	Institutional Member	2019
Hasselt University	Belgium	Institutional Member	2020
PH Zurich (Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich)	Switzerland	Institutional Member	2021
Université Bordeaux Montaigne	France	Institutional Member	2021

Hochschule für nachhaltige Entwicklung Eberswalde	Germany	Institutional Member	2021
University of West Attica	Greece	Institutional Member	2022
Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Belgium	Institutional Member	2022
University of Padua	Italy	Institutional Member	2022
Ala-Too International University	Kyrgyz Republic	International Observer	2022
UC Leuven-Limburg	Belgium	Institutional Member	2023
Bern University of Applied Sciences	Switzerland	Institutional Member	2023
Students Organising for Sustainability International	(UK)	Student Organization	2024
oikos International	(Switzerland)	Student Organization	2024
Individual Researchers	2 Belgium 1 Ireland 1 Canada	Individual Members	

### Location of Institutional Members in 2024



# 5. FINANCES

The CA is officially acknowledged as an NGO under German law. Its finances and accounting are assessed on a regular basis by the tax authority of Lüneburg, Germany. They approve the status of CA as a Non-Profit Organization serving society with a research and science purpose.

## Income

The figure below provides an overview of the CA's finances. The CA's income consists exclusively of membership fees. In 2024, the membership fees contributed € 21,900.00 (from 28 member institutions/members) to the annual budget. Funding from EU projects is not included in this report.

## Expenditures

Expenditures relate to staff (Network Manager), events, Cooperation Funds, communications, administration, and profile and representation (includes memberships (e.g. IAU), travel, subsistence and fees to participate in important events where the CA profiles its work and activities).

The 2024 Higher Education Summit was co-organized with the University of Padua. The CA covered € 2,790.00 of the costs for the conference. One Cooperation Fund was granted to foster collaboration between members.

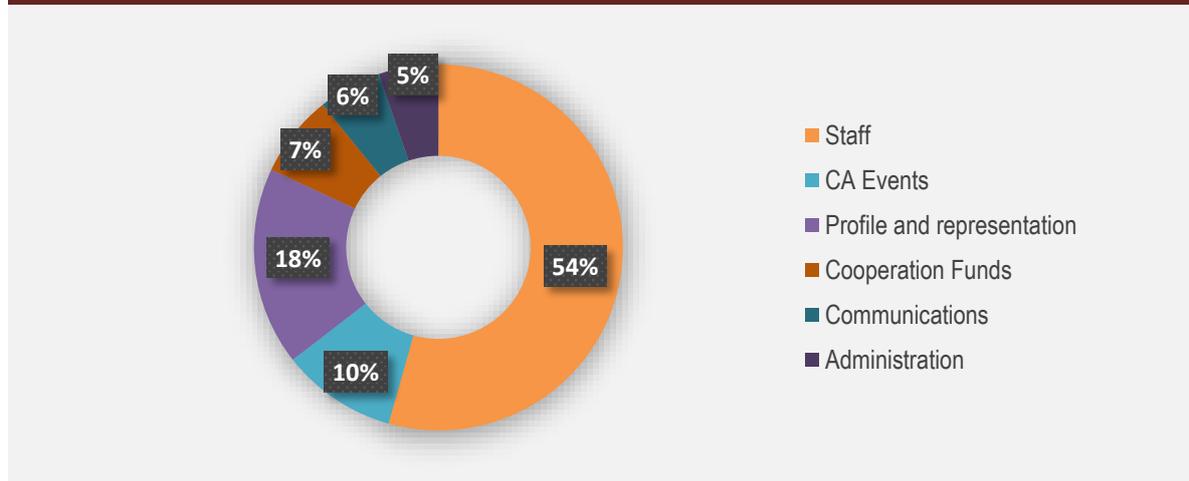
In addition to the described expenditures an important part of the CA workload was covered by in-kind contributions of the whole CA Leadership Team.

The year 2024 closed with a negative balance of € 5,692.55, resulting in a total account balance of € 20,813.96 at the end of 2024.

## Finances in 2024 (in €)

↓		↶	
<b>Membership fees</b>		<b>Staff</b>	
20 Institutional Members	20,000.00	15,000.00	<b>CA Events</b>
2 HE NGOs, Associations & Agencies	1,200.00	2,790.00	Higher Education Summit 2024
2 Student Organizations	200.00	4,826.45	<b>Profile and representation</b>
4 Individual Members and Observers	500.00	2,000.00	<b>Cooperation Funds</b>
		1,531.64	<b>Communications</b>
		1,444.46	<b>Administration</b>
	<b>21,900.00</b>	<b>27,592.55</b>	
	<b>-5,692.55</b>	<b>Balance 2024</b>	
	<b>26,506.51</b>	<b>Carried forward from 2023</b>	
	<b>20,813.96</b>	<b>TOTAL BALANCE</b>	

## Allocation of expenditures in 2024



## COPERNICUS ALLIANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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