

# OCEANS

Network



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ERASMUS+ STUDENT AND  
ALUMNI ALLIANCE

2023

# OCEANS-EU MAGAZINE

Focus on the OCEANS network and its members

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR



*Credit Photo: Leandre*

**Dear Guests,**

### **Welcome to the OCEANS-EU Magazine**

It is with great pleasure that we extend our warmest welcome to you. We are honoured and excited to have you onboard. We are now delighted to bring you the first edition of the OCEANS-EU Magazine. In this first edition, you'll hear about the OCEANS annual general meeting held in Vienna Austria, from 30 June to 2 July, some OCEANS members with their achievements, some personality of the academic world, upcoming events, opportunities, and inspiring stories. This is an incredible opportunity to learn from innovators and professionals. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the European Commission for OCEANS support.



**Dr Philippe Sessou**  
**Chief Editor and**  
**OCEANS' Vice-President**

## OCEANS BOARD 2023-2024

 <p><b>OCEANS BOARD</b></p>	 <p><b>Farouk Kouider Moussaoui</b></p>	 <p><b>Philippe Sessou</b></p>
<p>2023-2024</p>	<p>President</p>	<p>Vice-President</p>
 <p><b>Donaldson Chima Ofoha</b></p>	 <p><b>Ilhem Bendahmane</b></p>	 <p><b>Carlos A.L. Filho</b></p>
<p>Head of Communications</p>	<p>Head of Community Dev</p>	<p>Head of Content Dev</p>
 <p><b>Custody Chikambure</b></p>	 <p><b>Mohammed Ashqar</b></p>	 <p><b>OCEANS BOARD</b></p>
<p>Head of Projects</p>	<p>Head of Int coordination</p>	<p>2023-2024</p>

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

**Farouk Kouider Moussaoui - OCEANS President**



Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied

It is with pleasure to write the opening of the first OCEANS-EU Magazine to be published and presented to the OCEANS members. This magazine is the fruit of the continuous hard work of the OCEANS Board as well as the members who made such a significant piece come through.

The OCEANS-EU Magazine will be a bridge to share OCEANS news with the members and keep them up-to-date about the organization. It will also be a platform for members to share their Erasmus experiences and OCEANS related contributions. OCEANS welcomes all members who are passionate, eager to serve, learn and develop their leadership skills, to join the efforts to support the growth of the organization and influence the Erasmus+ students and alumni communities.

OCEANS forwards special thanks to the EU as our organization's sponsor and would like to invite members to take the most of it. Last but not least, members are invited to have a joyful time reading through the content of this volume of the magazine.

## FLASH INFOS

### National Representatives

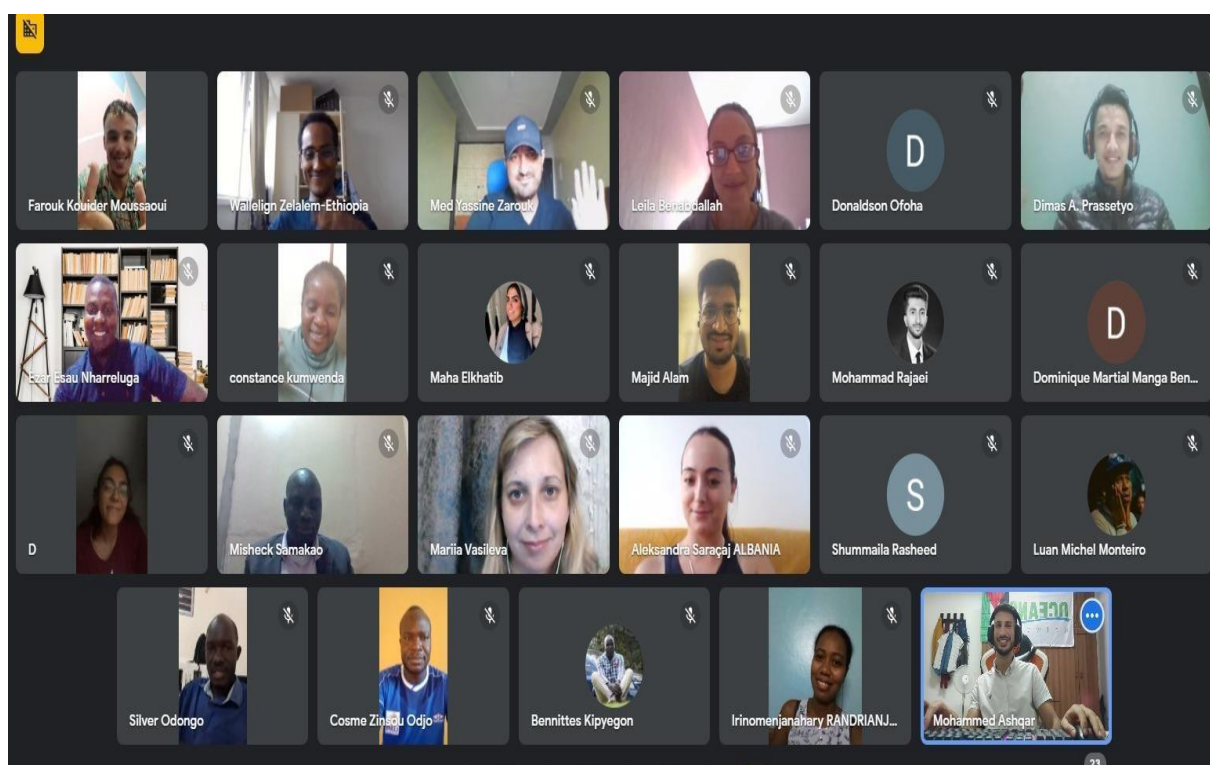
To represent the voice of the OCEANS members globally, the Board has created the National Representative position. National Reps support the Board, namely the International Coordinator, in seeking feedback from alumni in their regions to help plan future alumni engagement activities. Therefore, National Reps are key external relations players who will activate our Network at the grassroots level. Find here the message of Head of International coordination, **Mohammed Ashqar** and the newly elected national representatives.



*Credit Photo: Personal archive*

OCEANS Network has achieved remarkable success in its mission to assign dedicated National Representatives in 33 countries across the globe. These representatives will emerge as dynamic ambassadors of international exchange and educational outreach, effectively connecting OCEANS with diverse communities worldwide. Through their strategic planning and tireless efforts, these representatives are going to orchestrate a myriad of impactful events, fostering a deeper appreciation for international exchange, skill development, and awareness. Moreover, they will forge vital partnerships between universities, encouraging academic institutions to promote bidirectional exchange programs. The data collection initiatives led by these representatives will contribute significantly to our network's growth, as they are working systematically to compile valuable information on universities offering international exchange programs and identify prospective OCEANS members. This global network of representatives has not only enriched our international connections but also enhanced our members' experiences, improving their skills, and broadening their horizons.

In short, OCEANS' success in appointing representatives in 33 countries is a testament to our commitment to promoting international exchange and fostering a global community of learners and advocates.



*Credit Photo: Mohammed Ashqar*

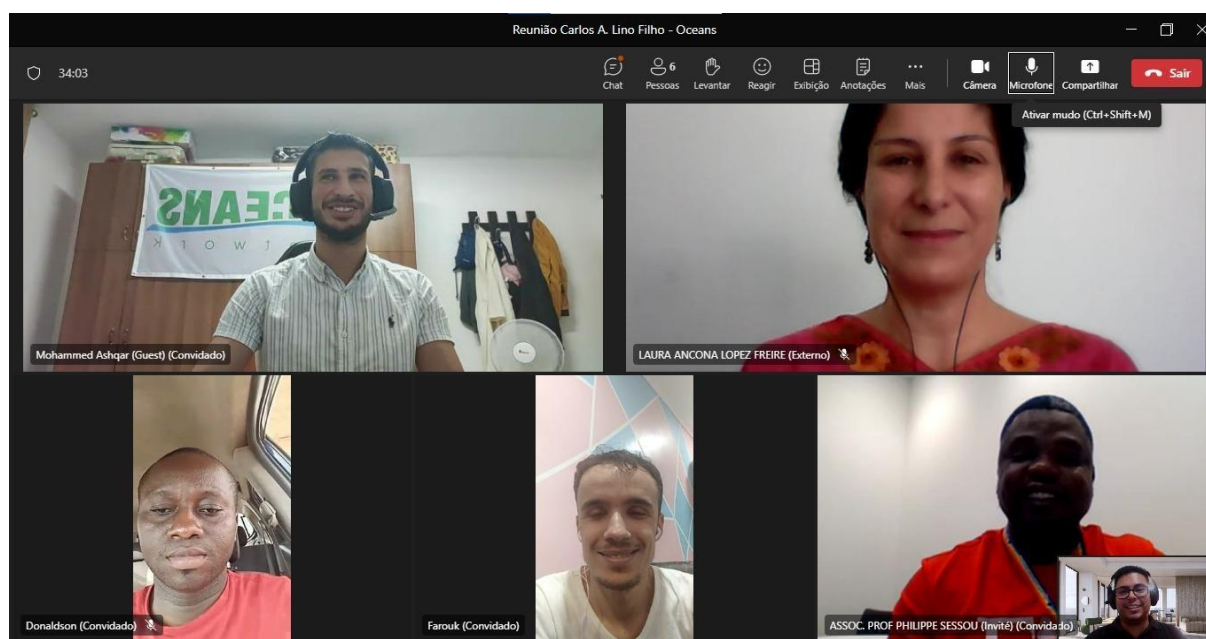
Table: List of the National Representatives (NR) for 2023-2025

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## International cooperation with OCEANS Network

The organization has partnerships with universities around the world



*Credit Photo: Carlos Lino Filho*

OCEANS Network's mission is to support intercultural exchange and global dialogue between alumni and students; empower members in their personal and professional development; and enhance internationalisation of higher education by supporting universities around the world to take part in international credit mobility programmes. In this way, the organization, through its national representatives, seeks partnerships with universities to expand possibilities for its members. Recently, board members met with **Laura Ancona Lopez**, vice-dean of academic internationalization at Universidade Paulista (UNIP), Brazil.

The meeting was attended by the president of the OCEANS Network, **Farouk Kouider Moussaoui**, the vice-president, **Philippe Sessou**, as well as the members of the Organization's Administrative Council: **Mohammed Ashqar**, Head of International Coordination; Donaldson Chima Ofoha, Head of Communication; **Carlos Alberto Lino Filho**, Head of Content Development. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the functions of the OCEANS Network, as well as the organization's past and future projects. Furthermore, **Laura** explained about Universidade Paulista, which has partnerships with European universities through the Erasmus+ program.

The OCEANS Network, in turn, seeks partnerships with universities through its national representatives. With Universidade Paulista, for example, the national representative of OCEANS in Brazil, **Luan Monteiro**, will meet with the university's internationalization council to propose partnerships to attract more members in addition to developing projects in partnership with the university, which is the largest in Brazil.

**Luan Monteiro, Croatia, 19th of September, 2023**

From 1 to 4 June, OCEANS was represented by its President and Head of communication at ASAF Annual General Forum in Nairobi, Kenya. During this meeting of the sister organisation, the head of communication had a pleasure to present the network, its goals and vision.



*Credit Photo: Donaldson Ofoha*

## Connections around the world

OCEANS Network members participate in workshops in countries around the world



*Credit Photo: Donaldson Ofoha*

As members of OCEANS, you have the world at your fingertips. You can take part in our events around the globe (and receive travel reimbursement), attend skill-building workshops and fairs to promote international exchange, organise your event (and apply for funding to put the event on), publish articles, foster friendships and have fun! Membership is career-enhancing, allows you to impact your community, and keeps you connected with the world. Being part of the Erasmus+ Students and Alumni Association (ESAA), the OCEANS Network helps members improve their knowledge and expertise through workshops made by their own Organization and ESAA. Furthermore, members of OCEANS go to international training and events around the globe.

One of these examples is **Donaldson Ofoha**, Head of Communications. Donaldson was invited and participated in a training on African Research Security Consortium organized by the U.S. Department of State which was facilitated by Sandia National Laboratory U.S. The training which was fully funded by the U.S. Department of State featured expertise and workshops on research security. Necessary skills were acquired against the activities of malign actors and foreign influence in HEIs and research producing organizations. At the completion of the training **Donaldson Ofoha** was presented with a certificate of honour in Research Security.

ESAA also holds its Workshops. The last one, held in Lisbon, Portugal, had the theme "Inspiring Sustainability in Tourism". The event reunited promising young leaders gathered in the heart of Lisbon for an empowering dialogue on Sustainability in Tourism. The agenda was a catalyst for change, igniting engaging discussions and creative tasks. Together, the participants sculpted the future of sustainable tourism, one idea at a time.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



The OCEANS Network Annual General Meeting which had in attendance online and onsite network members, who participated from across the world, was a memorable, exciting, enriching and a lifetime event.



*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*

The OCEANS Network Annual General Meeting began on day one morning with a welcome to OCEANS AGM 2023, overview of agenda and an introduction of the OCEANS Board Members. This was followed with a presentation and updates from the European Commission, presentation of OCEANS Annual Work Plan, presentation of the Proposed Statutes, presentation on the National Representation Information and a share your story experience of Erasmus+ Mobility. Day one continued with an overview and presentation of successfully completed OCEANS ESAA led Projects and a presentation by the Service Provider. Day one also featured a group photo, a team building treasure hunt activity and wrapped up with a cultural dinner for all participants including external guests.



*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*

The event continued on day two with an overview of the agenda, OCEANS brainstorming which allowed participants to choose breakout rooms to join during the workshop sessions which featured breakout rooms. There was sharing and discussions of findings from the sessions.



*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*



*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*



*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*



*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*



*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*





*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*



*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*



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*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*



*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*

The OCEANS Annual General Meeting, 2023, came to an end with a closing remark from the President on behalf of the OCEANS Network Board, thanking everyone who participated and contributed to the success of the 2023 OCEANS Annual General Meeting.

**Donaldson Chima Ofoha**

*Nigeria, Enugu, 6<sup>th</sup> of July, 2023*

## PROJECTS NEWS

### Project 1: Developing Excellence in Leadership

Project Coordinator: **Zinsou Cosme ODJO**, [odjozinsoucosme@gmail.com](mailto:odjozinsoucosme@gmail.com)



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

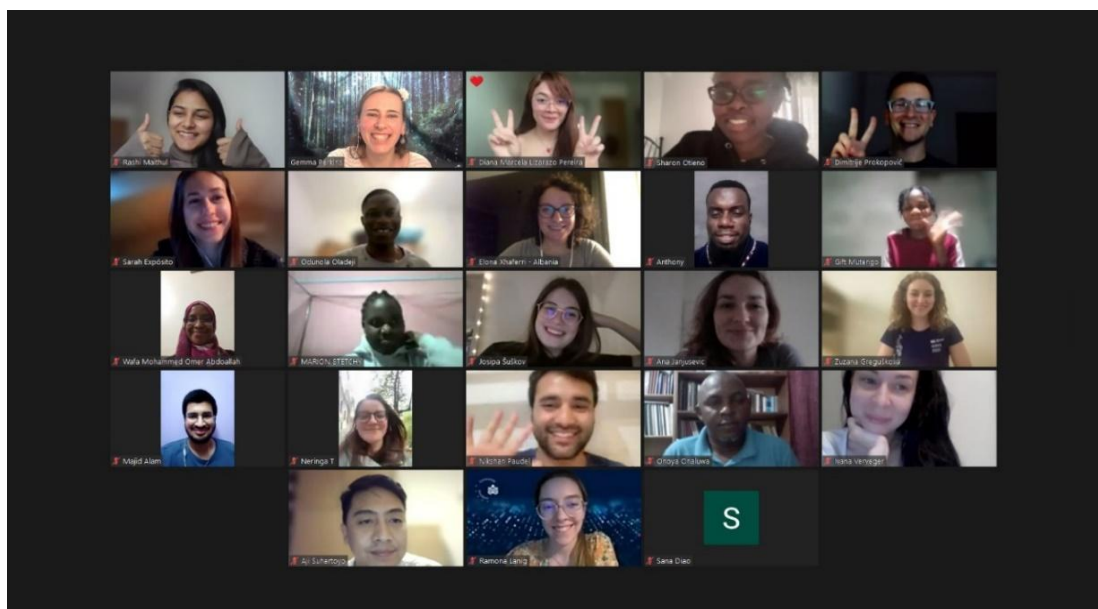
The EU Commission announced that 2023 is to be the European Year of Skills. This aims to address the challenges of improving employment rates and ensuring that the workforce has the necessary skills that employers need.

This project recognizes that almost all workplace roles require the skills of effective leadership. Even when people are not the ‘leaders’ in a team, leadership skills such as goal setting, time management, communication, conflict resolution, and change management all support a productive and effective team. A barrier that younger people may face is that leadership training can be expensive or only available to those who are already in middle- to senior-level positions in the workforce. This project aimed to provide high-quality online leadership skills training across the ESAA global network to enhance people’s leadership skills, confidence, career progression, and ability to take on leadership roles within their ESAA communities. The project also directly supports ESAA’s clusters by providing skills training and allowing members from across six ESAA networks to connect. A curriculum of 12 weeks of remote, interactive leadership training was developed with a third-party training provider, The Self Leadership Initiative. This included 24 hours of training content and individual coaching sessions to assist participants in tailoring the learning to their specific

context. We created a program brochure and advertised it across the ESAA networks: ESN, OCEANS, garagERASMUS, EMA, WBAA, and ASAF. We received 104 applications for the program; 69 people were offered places, and 61 of these completed the program. The participants were split into two cohorts. The training sessions took place between May 1 and July 20, 2023, and participants had until August 12 to utilize their 1:1 coaching session. As part of the program, we also hosted interviews with two established leaders. **Jean Lambert** shared her wisdom from her 20-year career in the European Parliament. **Bodil Agasøster** gave insights from working in industry and education. Both of these interviews were recorded and posted on the OCEANS YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@TheOceansNetwork>.

To evaluate the impact of the project, all participants were asked to complete a self-assessment of their leadership skills before and after the training. The smallest improvement was an 8.85% increase in ‘collaborating to reach common goals’. The largest improvement was a 36.65% increase in the ability to ‘manage stress’. The average improvement across all 16 skill areas was 20.24%, which most definitely fulfils the objective of the project, which is to build participants’ capacities.

Thank you to Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Alliance (ESAA) for supporting the initiative and all partner organizations for promoting the program. A special thanks to **Scott Darby** from OCEANS Network for his support throughout the project & **Mrs. Gemma Perkins** at The Self Leadership Initiative for delivering the training and coaching, and finally to all the participants for being engaged and sharing this wonderful learning experience.



*Credit Photo: Gemma Perkins*

**Zinsou Cosme ODJO**  
Cameroon, Yaoundé, 12th of August, 2023

## Project 2: Community Leader Global Dialogue

Project Coordinator: **Uswa Alhamid**, [uswa.alhamid@oceans-network.eu](mailto:uswa.alhamid@oceans-network.eu)



*Credit Photo: Uswa Alhamid*

Community Leader Global Dialogue took place in Tokyo, Japan from 2nd to 3rd August 2023 on the topic of Society 5.0. The event gathered 14 promising young leaders from different backgrounds and nationalities. This event was organised by OCEANS Network in partnership with the Erasmus Mundus Association (EMA) and Erasmus Student Network (ESN), supported by ESAA and funded by the European Union.

The New Era of Society 5.0 has begun and we live in an era of rapid technological advancement in which science and technology play a significant role in solving various challenges and social problems by utilising various innovations. This is why the role of our young generation in facing the era of Society 5.0 will be important.

Community Leader Global Dialogue was a two-day in-person event on 2nd- 3rd August 2023 in Tokyo, Japan. During two days of insightful dialogue, fourteen promising young leaders

from different backgrounds and nationalities discussed the current issues related to Society 5.0 and contributed to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing social challenges and giving solutions to tackle the issue.

This dialogue's agenda boasted an impressive speaker lineup from both the university side and the company side. The 1st session led by **Nari Matshushima**, a lecturer at Waseda University, was on the topic of Education and Society, and there were also interactive discussions about international student perspectives related to the problems that foreigners face in Japan and how they relate to education and work. The 2nd session led by **Taiga Ogusu**, Project Manager at the International Edutainment Association, was on the topic of critical thinking and problem-solving. During the session, there were also group discussions and presentations related to sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) where the participants shared ideas and solutions for the SDGs issue.

In addition to these inspirational speaker sessions, we are thankful for the enthusiasm and spirit of the participants. As diverse thinking comes from diverse thinkers, and diverse thinkers lead to innovative solutions, we hope that the knowledge and connections shared during this event will have a positive impact on a better world.



*Credit Photo: Uswa Alhamid*

**Uswa Alhamid**

*Tokyo, Japan, 2nd to 3rd August 2023*

### Project 3: Educational Serial Book Number

Project Coordinator: **Rahmat Putra Yudha**, [yudha.founder@virtualeduacademy.com](mailto:yudha.founder@virtualeduacademy.com)



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

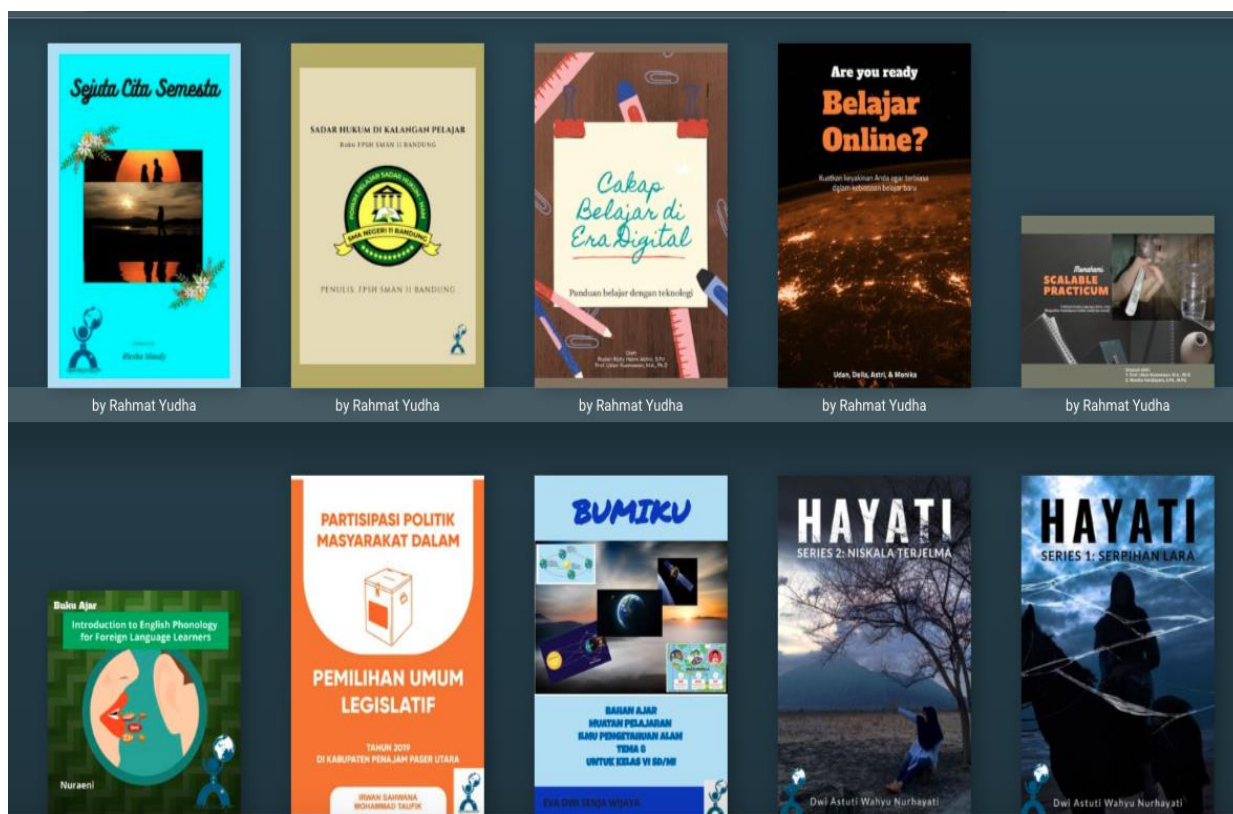
The ESAA project ID2021048 consortium, led by **Rahmat Putra Yudha**, developed the ESBN (Educational Serial Book Number) product to provide a unique identification number for educational books. The ESBN is a global standard for identifying educational books of all types, including textbooks, modules, workbooks, monographs, enrichment books, guidebooks, tutorials, and more. With the ESBN, each book is assigned a unique identifier consisting of a 3-digit country code, an 8-digit unique book number, a 2-digit publication year, and a 1-digit code indicating the type of educational book. This standardized system ensures that every educational book in the world can be easily identified and tracked, regardless of its publisher, author, or language.

In addition to providing a unique identification number for each book, the ESBN also uses a GTIN GS1 standard, which can be scanned to quickly and easily identify the type of educational book. The code contains information such as the book's author, title, publisher, and subject matter, allowing it to be quickly recognized and accessed by educators, researchers, and students.



The ESNB is now accessible to authors from all worldwide publishers through the website [www.esbn-international.com](http://www.esbn-international.com). This website facilitates requests for ESNBs, making it easy for authors and publishers to obtain a unique identification number and QR code for their educational books. By making the ESNB accessible to authors and publishers worldwide, the ESAA project ID2021048 consortium is contributing to the organization and dissemination of educational resources on a global scale.

The ESNB is a valuable tool for improving the accessibility and organization of educational resources worldwide, and the ease of use and standardization it provides will help to facilitate greater collaboration and exchange of knowledge within the global educational community. Despite the challenges faced by the ESAA project ID2021048 consortium, their creation of the ESNB demonstrates their resilience and creativity in finding solutions to problems and their commitment to making high-quality educational resources available to all.



*Credit Photo: Rahmat Putra Yudha*

## Project 4: United for Employability

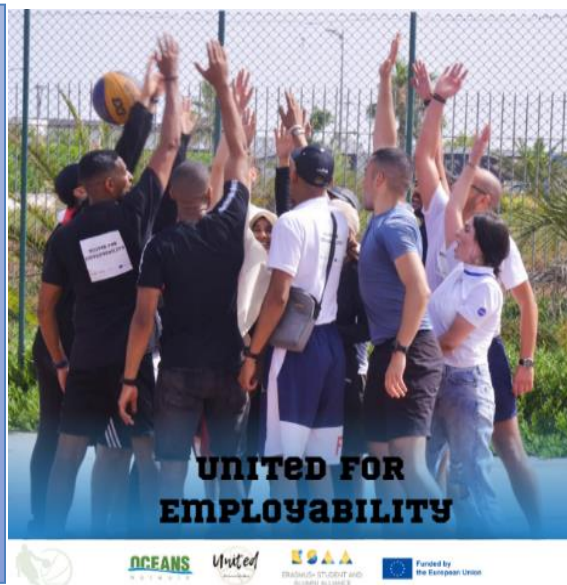
Project Coordinator: **Leïla Benabdallah**, [united4employability@outlook.com](mailto:united4employability@outlook.com)



*Photo: OCEANS Network Community Portal*

### United for employability

Held in the Region of Casablanca, Morocco, from 8 to 10 July 2023, the project “United for employability”, led by the OCEANS network in partnership with United Morocco and supported by ESAA aimed to empower youth through basketball and soft skills development. Trained by renowned experts, 17 participants developed their skills through a three-day program



17 participants, from 4 countries, and 6 nationalities, united for a common goal: aiming to enhance youth employability and develop essential soft skills through a 3-day training program,

the project “United for Employability” took place in the Region of Casablanca, Morocco, from 8 to 10 July 2023. It targeted diverse participants, both local and international, offering workshops, group discussions, basketball games, and officiating lessons. By promoting social inclusion and equal access to education, this project contributes to addressing youth unemployment and fostering a more cohesive society. Indeed, by utilising basketball as a means of engagement, the program promotes social inclusion and fosters teamwork, communication, leadership, and entrepreneurship skills.

Organised by OCEANS Network, in partnership with United Maroc, the program was led by renowned experts who provided essential skills to participants through theoretical and practical activities. Fuelled by their wish to bring an intersectional approach to education, engagement, and development, they focused on the transferability of skills between sports, and personal and professional life.

Following workshops including a reflection on the performance objectives versus result objectives as well as a presentation of international mobility opportunities, participants were able to practice through relevant and targeted activities on the court. By exercising mutual trust, playing in teams or individually, and cooperating, all these activities provided us with great examples of how sports are an essential tool for empowerment and skills development while promoting values, friendship, mutual understanding and cohesion. Learning, then sharing, playing and engaging with children to create a cohesive and safe environment, was one of the great highlights of the 3 days program. Indeed, this project is implemented in the eco-city of Zenata, in the region of Casablanca, Morocco, engaging with local people particularly children was essential. We thank the Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Alliance (ESAA) for its support in implementing the initiative.



**Leïla Benabdallah**, Casablanca, Morocco, from 8 to 10 July 2023

## WHAT OCEANS NETWORK CAN DO FOR YOU?

Read stories about how OCEANS helped members become better and build a network.

Prepared by : **Luan Monteiro**



*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*

As an organization focused on helping Erasmus+ Alumni, OCEANS have a vital job and goal for our members' lives. Being free for new members to join and being run by volunteers, the OCEANS Network improves relations and networking. This way, the organization provides opportunities to build your professional network, develop skills, join events all over the world, and even get funding to realize your project.

**Dua Omari**, from Palestine, joined the organization in 2022. For her, OCEANS gives an opportunity to "Get to know new people". For her, the best thing is "A lot of helpful people who are looking for a change and experiences".

The feeling of Dua is also how **Khaled Drim**, from Algeria, feels. He joined OCEANS in 2021 and said that the organization gave him guidance, advice and recommendations. "Oceans Network may have a team of experts from different countries who can offer their expertise and knowledge to assist me. They can provide guidance, advice, and recommendations based on their experience and expertise in a particular field. This assistance can help me make informed decisions and achieve my goals more effectively", explained **Khaled**.

"OCEANS Network has a positive workplace, opportunities for growth and development, competitive compensation and benefits, or the opportunity to make a difference in society as the best thing about it", continues **Khaled**.

With a lot of options of programs, recently OCEANS Network presented the new National Representatives who are responsible for representing the voice of the organization members globally. National Reps support the Board, namely the International Coordinator, in seeking feedback from alumni in their regions to help plan future alumni engagement activities.

**Shummaila Rasheed**, for example, is the new National Representative in Pakistan. For her, the hope is to connect with people and make new friends. Her favourite thing is "Interactive sessions about OCEANS", which happen a few times a year.

**Aleksandra Saraçaj**, from Albania, explains the importance of OCEANS for her. "Helped me to make amazing friends from around the world". Now, she is the National Representative in Albania and is happy to meet "Members from around the world".

## THE VOICE OF OCEANERS



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

Young European Ambassador in Ukraine, **Nadiia Symonenko** studied International Relations, Public Communications and Regional Studies in Ukraine. She holds a bachelor's degree from the National University of Ostroh Academy (Ukraine). In 2020, she took part in the Erasmus+ student exchange programme and studied Management and Business Tourism in Lithuania for a full term. She became a Young European Ambassador in Ukraine in 2018. She is interested in international politics and the process of Ukrainian euro-integration.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Mohammed Ashqar** is a Palestinian computer science specialist. He is a board member of Al-Quds Tech Bootcamp and works as a network administrator and general manager at an internet service-providing company. Mohammed is a strong believer in the power of teamwork and is always eager to help students and communities in any way he can. He is full of energy and is always looking for new opportunities to make a difference. When he is not studying or working, Mohammed enjoys sports, especially mountain biking, travelling, and meeting new people.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Devick** is a student of Economics at the Universidad del Pacífico, belonging to the upper third and a scholarship holder of the BCP and Erasmus+ Scholarship program. He is interested in developing himself in the field of banking and investments, data analysis and risk analysis. He usually learns and adapts quickly to diverse environments, demonstrating good organizational, communication and performance skills under pressure in each of the challenges that he has set himself.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Tatiana Pozdnyakova** is a young girl from Russia with an active lifestyle and strong motivation to achieve goals and fulfil her dreams. She is a former professional alpine skiing athlete with a set of awards, a successful university graduate with high honours, a participant and speaker of several scientific conferences, as well as the winner of several school Olympiads. She is an active volunteer in various non-profit organisations. She served as an archivist in Russian Railways, Transport and logistics and as CAD-designer at Spetsdorproject, Architecture and planning, and Cartographer at Beorg, Energy, Water and Environment in Moscow, Russia. She did her Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window for Russia, Integration, Interaction and Institutions (Triple I) in Bulgaria She studied Geodesy and Remote Sensing (B.Sc.) at Moscow State University of Geodesy and Cartography, Moscow, Russia.





*Credit Photo: Carlos Lino Filho*

**Luan Monteiro** is a journalist based in Brazil. He graduated in Marketing and Communication at Zagreb School of Business and Journalism at Universidade Paulista. Works as a Chief editor at Jornal O Hoje, one of the biggest newspapers in Brazil. He also writes about international politics, economics and geopolitics for a few newspapers around the world. He did his Erasmus+ exchange in Croatia and joined the OCEANS Network in April 2023. He also represents Brazil in the organisation.



*Credit Photo: Neringa Tuthankamenaite*

**Neringa Tuthankamenaite** is a former President of OCEANS Network and a trainer and researcher specialised in International Affairs and EU Policies on Youth, Human Rights and Internationalisation of European Higher Education under the Erasmus+. Currently, Neringa is a PhD candidate at SOAS University of London and a Visiting Fulbright Schuman fellow with the Roma Program at the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University. Her research delves into the role of youth participation in advancing climate justice. Neringa is also the director of a community interest company focused on providing consulting and training solutions for global cooperation in the fields of youth and media literacy. In addition, she is a Co-founder of Erasmus+ Global Partnerships, which held international summits in Bangkok (Thailand), Rabat (Morocco) and online in order to facilitate knowledge exchange among entrepreneurs and activists from Asia, Europe and Africa.



*Credit Photo: Khaled Drim*

**Khaled Drim** is a PhD student from Algeria. His field of study is chemistry. His academic journey led him to receive an esteemed international mobility scholarship at Masaryk University (Czech Republic). This scholarship, fully funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ program, allowed him to participate in the Pan-University Studies and pursue a full-time study in the complex studies degree program. Khaled firmly believes that his mobility experience has been invaluable for personal growth. It enhanced his self-confidence, research skills, self-reliance, networking abilities, and adaptability in an intercultural setting. These were just some of the outcomes he gained from this enriching experience.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Aleksandra Saracaj** is the National Representative of Albania at OCEANS Network. She has a bachelor's degree in accounting and finance at the University of Elbasan, Aleksander Xhuvani. She has done an Erasmus mobility in Istanbul at the Istanbul Technical University for Economics. Also, she is part of ESN Albania and the Western Balkan Alumni Association. She was a 3rd prize winner in the CleanScore competition for Research papers. She was awarded a scholarship from OSCE in the framework of the YDEAS project to participate in the European Innovation Academy in Porto, Portugal. Erasmus+ mobility changed her whole life and her thoughts. She likes to be independent, and Erasmus is the best opportunity for all the students who want to try a different and unique experience.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Gaga Gvenetadze** is a PhD researcher in Applied Social Psychology at Tbilisi State University. He graduated from Ilia State University in 2020 and received a Master's degree in Education Administration. Gaga Gvenetadze also holds a Master's degree in Global Governance, intercultural relations, and Peace-process Management (Siena, Italy). Gaga Gvenetadze received a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Tbilisi State University. He is an expert in the subject of Higher Education Quality Assurance and has considerable expertise as the head of the quality assurance department at multiple foreign universities in Georgia and has been organizing the National Quality Assurance Agency's review process of higher education institutions and programs. Gaga contributes important insights to the sector as a member of the Georgian Authorization Council of Higher Education Institutions and an International Expert for Quality Assurance Agencies in Slovenia, Slovakia, Montenegro, Armenian, ESU, and IEP EUA. He is deeply committed to promoting excellence in education and fostering continuous improvement.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Hazem Ashour** is a mechanical engineer who is enthusiastic about combating climate change and the integration of renewable energy into our lives. He is currently doing an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in DENSYS: Decentralised Smart Energy Systems with a speciality track of thermal energy management. He is a member of the international coordination team and the projects team. He loves travelling, football and reading.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Immaculate** is a Ugandan living in Malawi as a Nun belonging to the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries. She has a degree and diploma in Social Communication from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa–Kenya, a Certificate with master’s credits in Women Leadership - Applied Spirituality from Hartford International University, Connecticut and a master’s degree in Journalism and Media studies.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Iva Vukcevic** is an Associate Researcher at the Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses. She is a Strong research professional with a Master's degree focused in International Economics from the University of Donja Gorica. from Montenegro. She did her Erasmus + KA107 in Spain at the University of Valladolid. She works on data collection and creation of different types of analysis and publications regarding actual social and economic questions, to help the government and the business community to make projections based on unbiased, well-researched data. In the past, she worked on raising the awareness about UN's Sustainable Development Goals among youth in its capital, Moscow and held workshops on this topic at local universities, talked with students about global issues and the ones they consider the most important for their local communities. Together worked on creating potential resolutions and organized a Youth Speak forum to promote their actions.



*Credit Photo: Shiva Thapa Magar*

**Cosme Zinsou ODJO** is a TVET Specialist from the Benin Republic (West Africa). He worked as an intern in the ENSSURE Project at Helvetas-Nepal and as an administrative assistant at the West African Oil Pipeline (Benin) Company (WAPCO BENIN SA). Since 2021, he has consistently devoted his time to supporting and volunteering with community private TVET institutes and organizations in the Republic of Benin. Recently, he has coordinated Project ESAA2022044 entitled “Developing Excellence in Leadership” funded by the European Union Commission. He is volunteering as a Teaching Assistant at Kathmandu University School of Education as well as with the OCEANS Network as a former Coordinating Board Member and current Benin National Representative. Currently, he is also volunteering with UNESCO-UNEVOC in the Inclusion and Youth Team. Research interests: dual (VET) apprenticeship, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), governance, regional integration, labour market analysis, work-based learning and lifelong learning.





*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Lana Dillane** is from Ireland. She has done Business Studies with languages (Commerce & French (B.A.) at University College Cork – National University of Ireland, Cork Ireland and her Erasmus mobility at Jean Moulin University Lyon 3, Lyon, France. She is a MSc in Sustainable Development student at University College Dublin. She did her Student Summer Internship at European Investment Bank Global in Luxembourg. She worked as an Office and accounts Worker at Supervalu Inc. in Skibbereen, County Cork, Ireland. She is an English & French Tutor freelance.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Thu Tra Nguyen** is from Vietnam and a member of Oceans Network. She is a Ph.D. candidate in Management at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and her Research Interests are Sustainable consumer behaviours across countries and sustainable mobility. She has done her Erasmus+ ICM program with a scholarship at Questrom School of Business, Boston University, USA. She holds a Master of Research in Management Studies and a Master's degree in Business Administration - curriculum International Management, fully funded by Invest Your Talent in Italy scholarship, GPA and a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Salma Ben Mamia** is an Oceans member. She holds an International Research Master co-founded by the Tempus program of the European Union, Intelligent Systems Road Traffic Control (Hit4med), at the National Engineering School of Sousse.

She is currently a PhD student at the Faculty of Sciences of Monastir at the University of Monastir in Tunisia. She developed extensive skills in her research. She is excellent at de-escalating situations and finding a way to find the best solution. She has competencies in Real Estate Development Projects · PLC Siemens · Pandas (Software) · Qt Creator · Git · PostgreSQL and Python (Programming Language). She has done her mobility in Kaunas, Kauno, Lithuania.



*Credit Photo: Simon Kupferschmied*

**Ilhem Bendahmane** is a PhD researcher from Algeria, specialising in Cultural Studies, Media and Film Analysis. She is passionate about learning new things and discovering new cultures. She is interested in solving global issues including childcare, and equal education and believes education is the key to the success of our future. She holds a master's degree in English Literature and Civilisation from the University of Tlemcen, Algeria. She works as a part-time teacher at the University of Tlemcen, Algeria and did her Erasmus mobility at the University of Murcia, Spain in 2021.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Florida Goçi** from Albania is a final-year student at the University of Tirana, studying Finance and Accounting. I am 20 years old and I love travelling and meeting new people. I am currently at the end of my semester at the University of Applied Sciences of Bielefeld, Germany, with the Erasmus program, which was an unforgettable experience for me. I had the chance to meet amazing people, to travel and party with them. I am a very determined person and motivated, who seeks perfection in everything I do.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Elizabeth Nyantakyiwaa Ofori** is from Ghana. She has a B.Sc.) in Hospitality Management (Tourism, Catering, and Hotel Management at the University of Energy and Natural Resources, Sunyani, Ghana. She has done an Erasmus Exchange Semester at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Cerdanyola del Vallès in Spain.



*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network*

**Shireen Mikkawi** is from Palestine. She held a B.A. in Law at An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine and did her AVEMPACE III - Erasmus Mundus Connecting Europe and the Arab States in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EU - Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria) at the University of Palermo in Italy.

## OCEANS UPDATES



# OCEANS NETWORK CAPACITY BUILDING

## “Social Media Skills and Content Creation”



**Donaldson Ofoha**



**Uswa Alhamid**



**Carlos Lino**



**By Communication & Content Development Team**

*Credit Photo: OCEANS Network Communications and Content Development Teams*



# ANNOUNCEMENT

## UPCOMING ELECTIONS



# OF THE BOARD



THE BOARD WOULD LIKE TO HEREBY  
INFORM YOU THAT THE FORTHCOMING  
BOARD ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN  
SCHEDULED FOR THE PERIOD OF  
NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2023



Funded by European Union

YOU ARE  
ENCOURAGED  
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YOURSELVES  
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## FOCUS ON LEADING FIGURES IN THE ACADEMIC WORLD



*Credit Photo: Internet*

Professor **Ameenah Gurib-Fakim** served as the first female President of Mauritius from 2015 to 2018, thus making her the third woman to serve as Head of State of the country. Born in 1959, **Gurib** finished her higher school education at Loreto Convent Quatro Bornes before studying chemistry at the University of Surrey. She completed her PhD in organic chemistry at Exeter University before returning to Mauritius in 1987. In Mauritius, Professor **Gurib-Fakim** taught organic chemistry at the University of Mauritius, where she also served as Dean of the Faculty of Science and Pro-Vice Chancellor. In 2009, **Gurib-Fakim** opened a research centre devoted to studying the medical and nutritious effects of plant life in Mauritius, where she is still Managing Director. She served as the Chairperson for the International Council for Scientific Union – Regional Office for Africa from 2011 to 2014. In 2016, she was in the Forbes List for the 100 "Most Powerful Women in the World" and 1st among the Top 100 Women in Africa Forbes List 2017, 2019. In 2019, Gurib-Fakim also served as a keynote speaker at Cambridge University's conference "Africa Together: Which Way Forward?" For her efforts as a scientist, **Gurib-Fakim** has been recognized worldwide, receiving the L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science, Laureate for the National and Economic Council, and the African Union Award for Women in Science. In 2019, Professor **Ameenah Gurib-Fakim** received the "Trailblazing Award for Political Leadership" from the World Women Leaders Council in Iceland. In 2022, she served on the Science Advisory Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome.



*Credit Photo: Internet*

Professor **Éléonore Yayi Ladekan** is a Chemist, Full Professor, Academic and Politician from the Republic of Benin, who was twice a Minister under the presidency of His Excellency Thomas Yayi Boni and that of His Excellency Patrice Talon. In 2015, she was named one of the “50 women who have become role models in science”. In 1998, she defended her PhD thesis in organic chemistry at the University of Clermont-Ferrand, France. She was 3rd Vice-Rector in charge of International Cooperation, Partnerships and Professional Integration until 2019, when she left this position to accept a new ministerial portfolio, this time in His Excellency President Patrice Talon's government as Minister for Higher Education and Scientific Research.



*Credit Photo: Nikistratos Siskos*

Professor **Marirena Grigoriou** is the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs & Life Long Education at Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH), Alexandrouplis in Greece. She serves as a Professor at the Department of Molecular Biology & Genetics (MBG) and the Director of the Laboratory of Molecular Developmental Biology & Molecular Neurobiology. She studied Biology at the National Kapodistrian University of Athens and completed her PhD at the Institute of Molecular Biology & Biotechnology (University of Crete, 1993). She was a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Medicine, University of Crete (1993-1995) and at the National Institute for Medical Research, London (currently Crick Institute, 1995-2000) with a Marie Curie fellowship grant from the European Union. Her research interests focus on functional networks in cellular/animal models and on the development of methods and applications of Molecular Biology. She has published more than 30 research articles in peer-reviewed journals (Nature, J Neuroscience, Development etc., citations >3500). Her work at MBG-DUTH has been supported by 9 research grants (FP7-REGPOT-2008-1, INTERREG IIIA, Bilateral S&T cooperation etc.) with a total appx 2,8M€ (coordinator in 3 of them).



*Credit Photo: Luan Monteiro*

Professor **Laura Ancona Lopez Freire** (Laura Ancona Lee) has a Doctorate from the State University of Campinas - UNICAMP, a master's degree in Communication from Universidade Paulista and was an international scholarship holder in Italy, Spain, USA and China. She works in the academic area as Vice-Rector of International Relations and institutional coordinator of Erasmus for Universidade Paulista. She is leader of the Study and Research Group on Academic Internationalization.

## UPDATES FROM SISTERS' ORGANIZATIONS

ASAF has organized a capacity-building training for its active members in Tunis, Tunisia, from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of September. Participants had been working hard to develop strategies and plans regarding resource mobilisation, and taking part in collaborative group discussions to learn from and empower each other.



*Credit Photo: ASAF*

From 21st to 30th November 2023, EMA will organize in Belgium a youth exchange project “Let’s Get Digital”. Participants will come from Armenia, Belgium, Georgia, Greece, Lithuania, and Spain. The main aim of the project is to improve participants' digital skills and competitiveness in the labour market to address youth unemployment and other social concerns. Participants in the initiative will network with local entrepreneurs and exchange experiences regarding the importance of digitalization in running efficient business operations. They will also generate, plan activities, and collaborate.



## CALL FOR GROUP LEADER

# Let's Get Digital

A FULLY FUNDED ERASMUS+ YOUTH  
EXCHANGE

21.11.2023 - 30.11.2023

KOBULETI, GEORGIA

APPLY NOW!

 DEADLINE: 25.09.2023



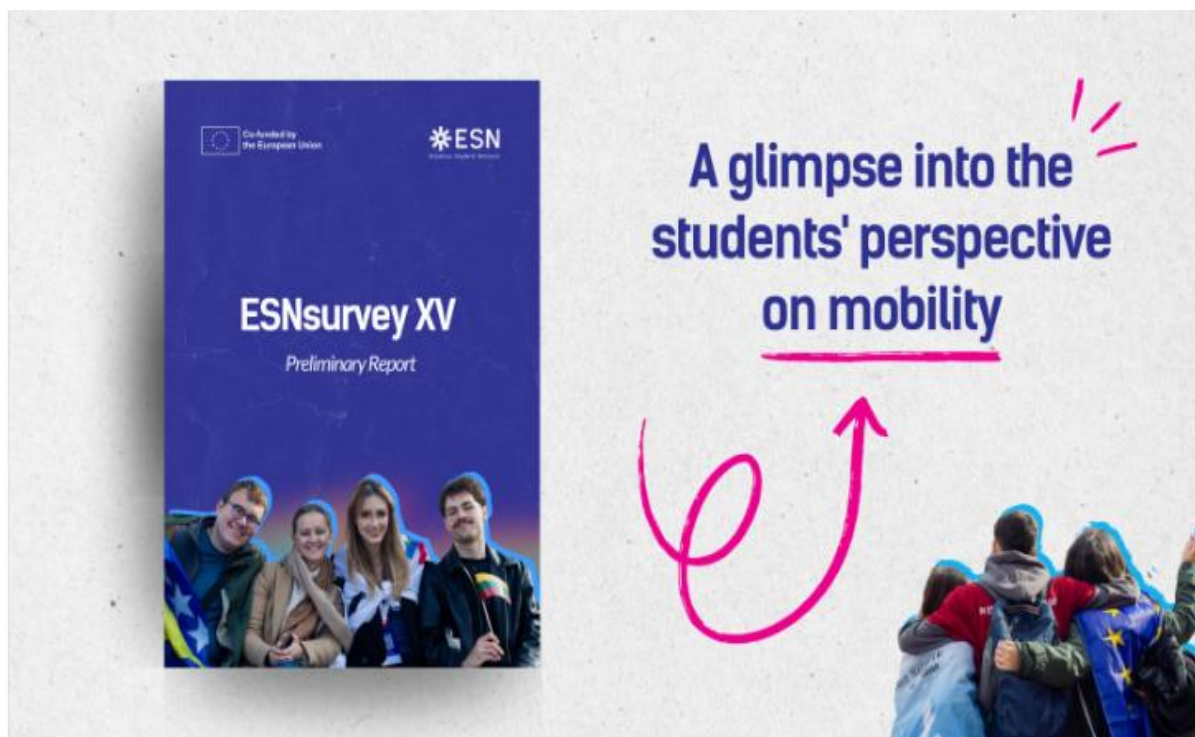
*Credit Photo: EMA*

On September 22, 2023, in Ljubljana, Slovenia, EMA organised an event called EMA Meet Up. It was a chance for members to reconnect with fellow EMA members and EMA MB members, forge new connections, and celebrate the vibrant meetup community. It was an opportunity where they dived into insightful discussions, savoured local culture, and relished in the camaraderie of like-minded individuals.

The poster features the Erasmus Mundus Association logo at the top left, which consists of a blue circle with a white stylized figure. To the right of the logo, the text 'Erasmus Mundus Association' is written in a blue, sans-serif font. Below the logo, the title 'EMA MEET UP' is displayed in large, bold, orange-red capital letters. Underneath the title, the text 'Come meet EMA MB Members!!' and 'Reconnect and Share!!' is written in a dark blue, sans-serif font. The central part of the poster is dominated by a dark blue rounded rectangle containing event details. On the left side of this rectangle, there are three stylized illustrations of people: a man with red hair, a woman with dark hair, and a woman with red hair, all in various poses. To the right of these illustrations, the text '22 SEPTEMBER 2023' and 'LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA' is written in white. Below this, the heading 'EVENT HIGHLIGHTS' is followed by a bulleted list: 'Meet the MB', 'Life Updates', 'Share EMA experience', and 'Q&A with MB'. Underneath the list, the text 'The event is in person.' is written in a smaller white font. At the bottom of the dark blue rectangle, the location 'Petkovškovo nabrežje 3, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia' and the time '18:30 - 20:00 p.m. CEST' are listed in white. The background of the poster is a light yellow color with large, stylized orange-red arches at the bottom.

*Credit Photo: EMA*





*Credit Photo: ESN*

On the 29th of May, ESN launched the new edition of its flagship research project, the XV ESN survey. The data collection was open until the 31st of July, and it targeted students who have participated in exchange programmes or mobilities abroad during the last two years, as well as students who have not taken part in mobility yet.

The XV ESN survey collected 17,855 answers from exchange students, 1,856 answers from full-degree students and 3,064 from non-mobile students. The success of this data collection effort can be attributed to the support and collaboration of numerous stakeholders such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, National Agencies, Higher Education Institutions, Networks of Universities and European Alliances.

In light of the ongoing midterm evaluation process of the Erasmus+ programme, ESN has launched a preliminary report with the first key findings addressing the student voices' perspective on international mobility.

During this preliminary report, valuable insights into the primary trends among students who participated in mobility between 2021 and 2023 were gained. It's important to highlight the positive impact of the implementation of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 priorities, especially the inclusion of one, with 36% of respondents agreeing, and 46% strongly agreeing with these measures.

Findings related to exchange students highlight the need for accessibility of information, with 82% of the respondents reporting as a priority the need for information about available financial support. The challenges faced by students often revolve around insufficient money to cover the cost of living (35,63%), difficulty finding affordable housing (35,5%), and course-matching problems during their exchange period (33,97%).

Grants, while being distributed to more students before departure, student purchasing power is affected by the fundamental issues of insufficient funding and the high cost of housing during mobility. Additionally, there's room for improvement in terms of environmental sustainability and digitalisation in the exchange student experience, particularly concerning travel choices (many students still use planes) and access to online processes.

Credit recognition continues to be a concern, where 42% of students reported changes to their courses during their exchange. Lastly, while students generally express satisfaction with the services provided by Higher Education Institutions, it's worth noting that compared to the previous survey, there has been an increase in dissatisfaction rates, both with sending and hosting institutions.

On the knowledge of non-mobile students on Erasmus+ initiatives among students, it's evident that Erasmus+ for studies stands out with 95%. However, initiatives like the Blended Intensive Programme (9%) tend to be less familiar among higher education students, indicating a need for increased awareness about these opportunities.

Source of information:

ESN Network, <https://www.esn.org/news/launch-preliminary-results-xv-esnsurvey>

## WBAA Virtual Teams Meeting on September 17, 2023



On Sunday, September 17 from 10 am – 2 pm CEST, WBAA held its Virtual Teams Meeting. This meeting is the perfect introduction for those who are interested in the work of the WBAA teams and want to become members. Following this meeting, a 90-minute task force session on “WBAA Teams Restructuring” took place for the first time from 2:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Every interested WBAA member has joined this discussion.

**Caroline Simmler** on behalf of the Service Provider

*Germany, Cologne, 17th of September, 2023*

## OCEANS HIGHLIGHTS



OCEANS - Organisation for Cooperation, Exchange and Networking: Student & Alumni network of international exchange programmes - connects students and alumni of international exchange programmes.

It was designed exclusively for the students and alumni who have participated in the international credit mobility between the Erasmus+ Programme and partner country universities.

It's free for members to join, run by volunteers, and supported by the European Commission. OCEANS Network provides opportunities to build your professional network, develop skills, join events all over the world, and even get funding to realise your project. Join now to enrich your personal and professional life, find career opportunities, travel to new places, make lifelong friends, and have fun! Not only Members of the OCEANS Network do benefit from the community but are also willing to shape it. Together they build a perfect forum for creativity and action.



## CONTACT

OCEANS Network is a global organisation of students, alumni, universities, and other stakeholders run by volunteers with the help of a service provider funded by the European Commission. OCEANS is open to students or alumni who have done an international credit mobility exchange between Erasmus+ programme and partner country universities.



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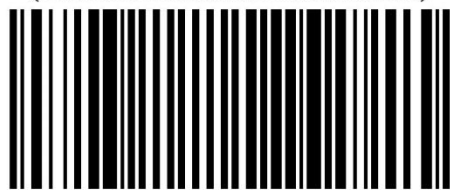


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# OCEANS-EU MAGAZINE

