



ECOLOGY AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABLE GREEN DEVELOPMENT:  
COLLABORATION OF UNIVERSITIES AND LOCAL ACTORS  
2023-1-SK01-KA220-HED-000161639

# NEWSLETTER

BUILDING A GREENER FUTURE TOGETHER



Project Results

Recent Events

Sharing & Promotion



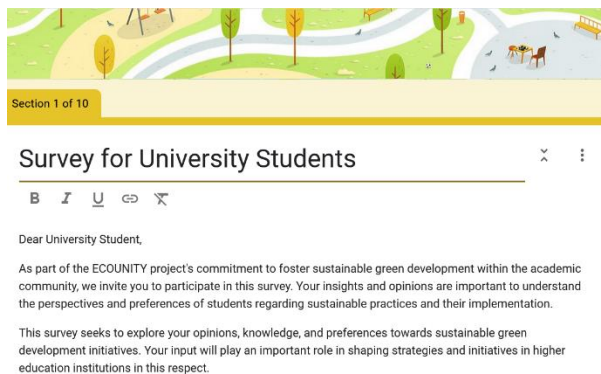
***ECOUNTY is dedicated to raising awareness of sustainable green development among students, academics, universities, employers, communities and other stakeholders. By doing so, we are equipping future leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute to creating a more sustainable future for all.***

# PROJECT RESULTS

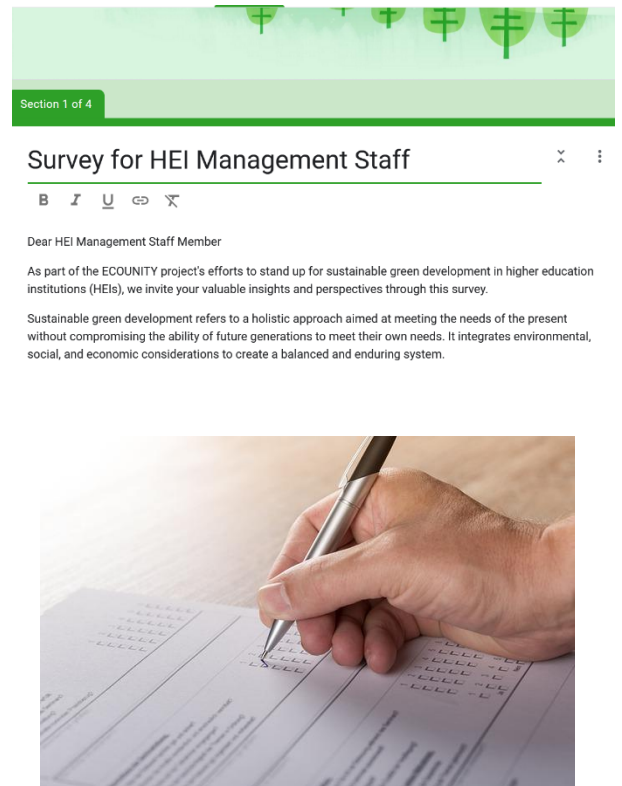
## Surveys

During January and February 2024, the partners engaged in the implementation of the online survey application process intended for undergraduate students and HEI administrative staff. Each partner institution conducted the survey within their country. The respondents consisted of undergraduate students who attend the partner universities' economics, business, and administrative sciences departments, and administrative staff involved in the university's environmental policies.

The aim of surveys was to collect data about student population opinions and initiatives in sustainable green development and the sustainability policies of higher education institutions.



As specific topics covered by the survey, the following stand out: University policies on green sustainable development, Importance of stakeholder in collaborative work for SGD, Knowledge level on climate change, biodiversity and the protection of natural resources, World risks, Eco-friendly behavior, etc.



## Workshops

A series of workshops were held in the period from January to May 2024 at the local level in the partner countries to identify the most important interactions between university management, students, teachers and the local community with regard to sustainable green development.



The main focus was to gather valuable data on the existing interaction dynamics, to promote awareness and understanding of sustainable practices among this diverse groups of stakeholders and to identify the key areas and directions for future cooperation.



Participants generally discussed the topics of the student – local actor interactions, sustainable practices and capacity building opportunities. The workshops led to a number of conclusions that point to the need for further effective collaboration between students, teaching and administrative staff and local stakeholders.



## Curriculum Modules

As part of Work Package 2 (WP2) of the ECOUNITY project, the members of the project consortium have developed specific curriculum content to stimulate students' interest in current issues of Sustainable Green Development (SGD). This content is part of the project's educational package. Officially called the Ecounity higher education course curriculum, the package it aims to combine sustainability interests, environmental awareness and knowledge of SGD in a form of co-operation between universities and local stakeholders.



To fulfil the educational needs of all stakeholders, the curriculum consists of four different modules:

- Module 1 - Green Economy
- Module 2 - Social Responsibility and Sustainable Financing
- Module 3 - Green Environment and Agrifood
- Module 4 - Sustainable Urban Development and Smart Cities



The curriculum aims to raise awareness among students and interested stakeholders about environmental change and degradation, resource scarcity, health rights and social inequalities. The members of the ECOUNITY consortium have therefore created innovative educational plans to promote the learning and teaching of SGD.

Each curriculum module contains learning objectives with step-by-step knowledge acquisition and achievement for students. Each university, as an ECOUNITY team/consortium member, has developed teaching methods and techniques for each curriculum module. Every module is planned to be delivered over 4 week period, with teaching materials and assessment programmes provided according to the weekly lesson plans.

The structure of the curriculum is operationalised through lesson plans for each week within the modules. The lesson plans cover the learning growth in terms of identifying basic elements of SGD and advanced content of sustainability in economy and society in general, green finance, agri-food/agriculture and sustainable urban development and smart cities approach.



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## ECOUNITY

# HIGHER EDUCATION COURSE CURRICULUM

Ecology Awareness of Sustainable Green Development: Collaboration of  
Universities and Local Actors

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Higher Education Course Curriculum

## Research paper

*Is Erasmus going green? The footprint of European academic mobility and sustainability policies of European universities.*

Prof. Dr. Mariusz E. Sokołowicz, member of the Ecommunity project team, in co-authorship with Prof. Dr. Piotr Gabrielczak, published the research paper: *Is Erasmus going green? The footprint of European academic mobility and sustainability policies of European universities*. The paper was published in the journal *European Spatial Research and Policy*, 2024, 31 (1).

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Piotr GABRIELCZAK , Mariusz E. SOKOŁOWICZ 

### IS ERASMUS GOING GREEN? THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF EUROPEAN ACADEMIC MOBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES OF EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

**Abstract.** The European Union has promoted academic mobility for almost half a century. A side effect of that has been a growing carbon footprint, as most academic mobility in Europe is done by air. Based on mobility data for 2014–2020, we analysed its spatial distribution and identified dominant destinations. Juxtaposing these results with research on higher education institutions' environmental measures and policies, we have identified that the willingness to reduce the carbon footprint is emerging yet tenuous, and more declarative than actual. We recommend more decisive steps to reduce air travel within Europe, outlining the possibilities for carbon footprint reduction without harming European academic mobility itself.

**Keywords:** academic mobility, carbon footprint, Erasmus.



The authors analyzed the spatial distribution of academic mobility in Europe and identified the most important destination countries on the basis of mobility data for 2014–2020.

Furthermore, these results are accompanied by research on higher education institutions' environmental measures and policies. The research results indicate that the willingness to reduce the carbon footprint is emerging and is more declarative than actual.

According to the findings, the authors recommend more decisive steps to reduce air travel within Europe and outline the possibilities for reducing the carbon footprint.

# RECENT EVENTS

## Ecounity & International Women's Day

On March 8, International Women's Day, the ECOUNITY project team and the Sustainable Green Economy Club distributed flowers to employees and students at the Biga Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences.



## Assessment of Environmental Sustainability within the Framework of Development Plans

In cooperation with the 'ECOUNTY' project team and the Sustainable Green Economy Club, an online event titled 'Assessment of Environmental Sustainability within the Framework of Development Plans' was held on 15 March 2024 under the moderation of ECOUNTY project Turkey coordinator Assoc. Prof. Dr. Erdal Eroğlu.



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rükan Kutlu Korlu participated in this event as a speaker. In the event, the importance of including environmental objectives in Development Plans to ensure sustainable development was discussed. The role of development goals in ensuring sustainable environmental progress was also analyzed.

## Workshop – Water management resilient to climate change for agriculture, citizens and ecosystems

On 19. of April 2024 a workshop on Water management resilient to climate change for agriculture, citizens and ecosystems took place on the grounds of the SUA in Nitra. Within 4 thematic sessions of the workshop experts presented their data and opinions to over 80 attendees:

- Session 1: WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGES  
Ján Pokrivčák (SUA), Ľuboš Jurík (SUA), Zlatica Muchová (SUA)
- Session 2: AGRICULTURE AND WATER  
Jozef Šumichrast (SPPK), Marián Varga (SPPK), Helena Patasiová (AKS), Róbert Kovács (SPPK), Marián Glovaťák (ASYF)
- Session 3: CAP STRATEGIC PLAN AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
Igor Kondé (Hydromelioration, š.p.), Maroš Kminiak (Ekotrend Union), Juraj Pénzeš (MPRV SR)
- Session 4: ENVIRONMENT AND WATER  
Martina B. Paulíková (WWF Slovakia), Michal Rácik (Waterworks), Martin Kováč (Climate Club)

Water is a precious natural resource that is used not only by households, but also by energy, industry, agriculture and ecosystems. As the economy grows, so does the demand for water. The lack of quality water can disrupt the environmental and economic sustainability of Slovakia.



The water cycle in nature is affected by climate change. As a result of climate change, the average temperature in Slovakia increases, which promotes evaporation and evapotranspiration, the extremes of precipitation increase, less water soaks into the soil, which reduces soil and groundwater levels and increases the risk of drought. Measures to improve water retention in the country (retention and accumulation of water) are important. Effective water management is a big challenge for Slovak, European and global society.



A modern approach to the management of water resources, i.e. setting policies, regulation, and their implementation, is the WEF (water, energy, food, ecosystems) Nexus approach, which requires that technical and non-technical stakeholders participate in all decisions, who are dependent on the efficiency of water management. It is also important to involve marginalized stakeholders, such as small farmers, women or minorities. Within the framework of WEF NEXUS, the cooperation of the Ministry of agriculture, economy, environment, and others is also important.



## The Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University ECOUNITY Project Team held an event on the university's advantages in green transformation, the challenges faced, and potential solutions

On May 16, 2024, an event titled "Advantages of the University in Green Transformation: Challenges Encountered and Solution Suggestions" was held at the Biga Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences as part of the ECOUNITY project.



The event began with an opening speech by the Turkey coordinator of the ECOUNITY project, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Erdal Erođlu, who provided a brief overview of the project to date and explained the purpose of the event.

After the opening speech by the project coordinator, one of the project researchers, Kendal Deniz, provided information about the survey results gathered from Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University administrators and students from the Biga Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences within the scope of the project.



Subsequently, Assoc. Prof. Didem Saygın, another project researcher, presented the results of the workshop on cooperation between local actors and the university in Çanakkale.



Following the presentations, the event continued with a question-and-answer session and collaborative solution generation with the students.

The event concluded with the presentation of a plaque to the President of the Green Sustainable Economy Community, a music recital, and expressions of goodwill.





Photo by Ecommunity  
Rijeka, 25 June 2024

## Transnational project meeting in Rijeka

The second face-to-face transnational project meeting was held on June 24 and 25, 2024 in Rijeka, Croatia. The host of the meeting was the University of Rijeka (UNIRI), Faculty of Economics and Business (EFRI), the project partner from Croatia.



Photo by Ecommunity  
Rijeka, 24 June 2024

Project partners from Slovakia, Turkey, Romania and Poland, together with members of the EFRI project team from Croatia, discussed the dynamics of implementation of project activities, including revising activities within the second work package related to the preparation of curriculum modules related to sustainability, and planning activities within the third work package related to the preparation of content for the development of an e-learning platform.



Photo by Ecommunity  
Rijeka, 24 June 2024

Scientific cooperation was also agreed, which will result in the publication of a scientific paper on the topic of sustainable green development and the interaction of HEIs, students and local stakeholders.



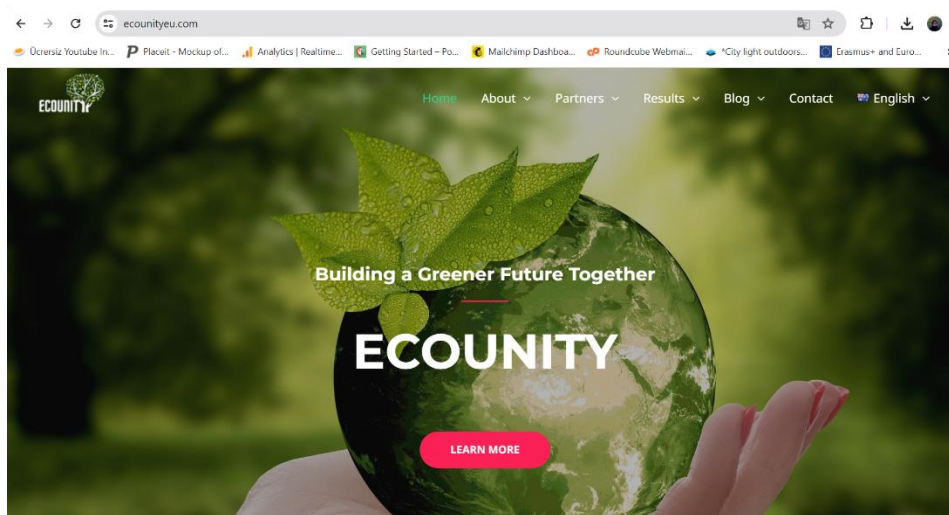
In addition to the formal part of the meeting, the informal part included excellent social and cultural activities, such as a trip to Rovinj and a visit to a small family farm and a tour of the Rijeka Art quarter.



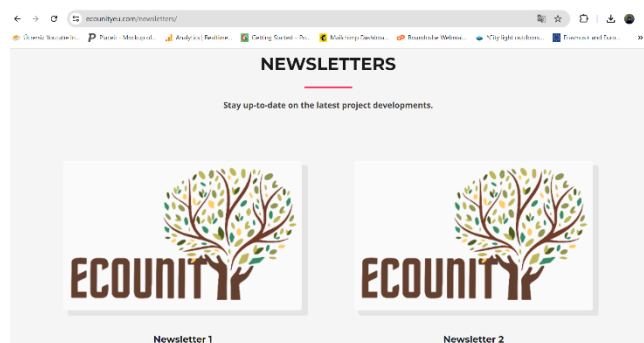
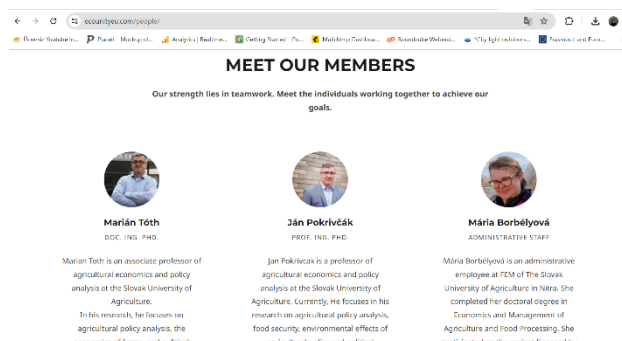
# SHARING & PROMOTION



## Project website



We established the project website <https://www.ecounityeu.com> and invite you all to visit our website to see our activities and news about the project.



On the project website, you will find information about project's objectives, outcomes, news, LMS platform, partners, and contact channels. We look forward to seeing you as ECOUNITY community members on our website through our interactive pages.

## Presentation of the ECOUNTRY project at the Danube Rectors' Conference Summer School in Sarajevo

The 19th DRC Summer School on Regional Cooperation took place in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, hosted by the University of Sarajevo, School of Economics and Business, from July 16-22. The main themes were European Integration, Demographic Change, Higher Education, and National Policy Making. With 19 participants from 10 different countries, there was a diverse range of cultures and expertise.

The presentations led to conductive debate and discourse around the topics presented by the young researchers, broadened participants' knowledge on many themes, and functioned further as helpful academic feedback.



Ornella Jadreškić from the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Rijeka took part in the Summer School. As a member of the UNIRI project team, she presented the ECOUNTRY project and its main activities.



The presentation of the project took place during a lecture on sustainable policies in the Western Balkans and how to contribute to them by improving the higher education system. The presentation of the project was followed by an interesting discussion in which the participants agreed that the ECOUNTRY project is an excellent example of improving certain curricular practises.



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