ASEAN European Academic University Network (ASEA-UNINET)

20th Plenary Meeting

Meeting Minutes

8 -12 September 2025
held at the University of Brescia (UNIBS) in Brescia, Italy

under the patronage of

Prof. Francesco Castelli
Rector of Università di Brescia

Prof. Roberto Ranzi
President of ASEA-UNINET

COMUNE DI BRESCIA

"For a peaceful and sustainable development"

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI BRESCIA

OeaD
Agency for Education and Internationalisation

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FULL PROGRAMME, 20ᵀᴴ ASEA-UNINET PLENARY MEETING

The Full Programme of the 20th ASEA-UNINET Plenary Meeting may be accessed via link and is listed in the Appendices.

DAY 1 "ASEA-UNINET PLENARY MEETING"   TUESDAY, 09-09-2025

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OPENING CEREMONY

The Chair of the Opening Ceremony welcomes the participants to the 20th Plenary Meeting of the ASEAN – European Academic University Network (ASEA-UNINET). Under the theme "for a peaceful and sustainable development", the Plenary Meeting is opened with welcome addresses delivered by a selection of distinguished speakers.

Initial addresses are delivered by **Castelletti**, the Mayor of Brescia, who welcomes participants both to the Palazzo della Loggia, where the Opening Ceremony takes place, and to the city of Brescia more broadly; by **Castelli**, Rector of the University of Brescia; and by **Ranzi**, President of ASEA-UNINET and host of the Plenary Meeting. **Ranzi** explains that ASEA-UNINET, founded in 1994 by Austrian and Southeast Asian universities, is committed to fostering cooperation among academic institutions and partners in education, science, technology, innovation, and the arts, and highlights that the network's mission aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals, promoting inclusive research collaboration, staff and student mobility, and intercultural understanding. He further emphasises that mutual trust, respect, and inclusiveness form the foundation for jointly addressing global challenges and strengthening academic ties between

Europe and Southeast Asia. Drawing on the vision of Prof. Bernd Michael Rode, one of ASEA-UNINET's founders, **Ranzi** notes that this aspiration is reflected today in the network's growth to 14 countries and over 90 universities, with additional members expected to join the network during the 20th Plenary Meeting. As underscored in the following addresses by **Dindo**, **Strohmayer**, **Abbiati**, **Tironi**, **Pasini**, and **Tira**, the European Union and ASEAN countries emphasise shared ethical values, particularly the importance of work and education. This common ground is illustrated through enduring cultural respect for educators, symbolising the long-standing commitment of families to high-quality education. From an academic perspective, both regions recognise the value of strengthening cooperation to advance these shared priorities.

Sprizzi delivers an address on "The adoption of the Abu Dhabi Declaration on Human Fraternity into the Timor Leste National Juridical System and Education Curriculum". Illustrating the importance of forgiveness, **Sprizzi** highlights the reconciliation between Timor-Leste and Indonesia as a profound example of how nations can transform conflict into fraternity through dialogue, justice, and forgiveness despite decades of suffering. Today, Timor-Leste and Indonesia stand as partners who collaborate across diplomacy, education, and culture—demonstrating how former adversaries can build shared futures. Their journey underscores the vital role that dialogue, truth, and mutual understanding play in overcoming division, offering a compelling model for international and academic cooperation.

Pipan in an address on "Perspectives of the ASEAN-Europe Relations" explicates the rapidly developing ASEAN region as one that brings significant global influence, in particular also for Europe. Beyond economic and demographic weight, the ASEAN region shares important values and a commitment to collaboration.

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Keynote addressed are held by a variety of speakers on the following topics.

- **Calice** (in absentia), OeAD – Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD), represented by **Niederhauser**:
    "Perspectives of Europe-ASEAN Academic Cooperation"

- **Salleh**, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS):
    "Driving Sustainability Through ESG: Digital Pathways, Decarbonisation, and Inclusive Transitions for a Climate-Resilient Future"

- **Pla**, University of Torino (UniTo):
    "European Universities Alliances"

- **Knees**, Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien):
    "Vienna Manifesto on Digital Humanism"

- **Wongnate**, Vidyasirimedhi Institute of Science and Technology (VISTEC):
    "Research and Innovation for Sustainable Waste Management in the Bio-based Economy"

The keynote presentations may be accessed via link and are listed in the Appendices.

Working groups take place for discussions, exchanges, and an exploration of five topics. The topics were chosen in alignment with the 20th Plenary Meeting's theme "for a peaceful and sustainable development" as a scientific exchange on the working group topics and a reflection on multilateral research cooperation on these topics   . An executive summary of each topic is provided in the following.

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i.   **Digital Humanism and Arts in Academia**
     Working Group Leads: **Tjoa** (Vienna University of Technology), **Dung** (Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema)

     The working group emphasises that Digital Humanism and Digital Humanities are distinct but complementary fields whose meaningful integration can strengthen academic inquiry and societal impact. Digital Humanism focuses on shaping technology in alignment with human values, while Digital Humanities applies digital tools to cultural and historical analysis. Bridging the two creates opportunities to connect ethical reflection with creative and analytical practices.

     A central theme is the power of the arts to foster dialogue, inclusion, and empowerment. Artistic approaches, enhanced by digital tools such as data science, visualisation, ICT, and IoT, give voice to diverse communities and enable new forms of deliberation. Cultural heritage and artistic collaboration, especially among young learners, help navigate "cultural collisions" constructively and promote mutual understanding.

     Education emerges as a key driver across all levels, supporting awareness, transparency, and accountability in the digital age. Teaching ethics, communicating the consequences of design choices, and integrating arts-based methodologies are essential to preparing students for a technologically shaped society.

     The group also examines the complex role of AI. While AI raises fundamental questions about human identity and challenges traditional notions of creativity and ownership, it simultaneously enhances creative expression and reduces repetitive workload. Participants stress that humans remain the ultimate evaluators of AI-generated content and that minority perspectives must be consciously protected. AI

development is viewed not as the rise of a single 'super intelligence' but as a collective, community-based endeavour.

Overall, the discussion highlights the need for closer collaboration between arts, technology, and the humanities to ensure that digital transformation supports human dignity, cultural diversity, and ethical responsibility.

ii. **Ocean Sciences and Climate Change**
Working Group Lead: **Djawad** (Universitas Hasanuddin)

The working group identifies urgent challenges at the intersection of ocean sciences and climate change, emphasising the need for joint action between ASEAN and European partners. Priority issues include the degradation of marine ecosystems such as coastal erosion, multi-hazard risks, and carbon cycle disruptions, as well as growing concerns over ocean acidification, pollution, microplastics, and declining water quality. These interconnected problems require coordinated scientific, social, and policy responses.

To address these challenges, participants propose developing a joint thematic research agenda that reflects ASEAN–European priorities and establishing a Marine Climate Action Network in cooperation with ASEA-UNINET. Collaboration with UN partners, particularly UNESCO and FAO, is identified as a strategic asset for expanding scientific impact and aligning efforts with global frameworks.

Capacity building is recognised as essential for long-term progress. The group highlights the importance of researcher and student mobility, jointly organised workshops, and summer schools to strengthen scientific expertise and cross-regional exchange. These activities create a foundation for innovative, interdisciplinary research and support the next generation of ocean and climate specialists.

In terms of policy and community impact, the working group stresses the need to support coastal community resilience, integrate indigenous knowledge into climate solutions, and ensure alignment with SDGs 13 (Climate Action) and 14 (Life Below Water). Effective solutions must involve local communities, indigenous peoples, and private-sector actors, while raising public awareness about the critical links between oceans and climate systems. Integrating social–ecological perspectives into climate models and providing clear, actionable knowledge for adaptation and mitigation remain key priorities.

As immediate next steps, the group recommends strengthening connections among ASEA-UNINET partners and exploring additional funding opportunities, including schemes such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA). These actions will help catalyse collaborative research, support regional resilience, and advance sustainable ocean-climate strategies.

iii. **Renewable Energy**
Working Group Leads: **Reichl** (Johannes Kepler University Linz), **Utke** (Suranaree University of Technology)

The working group brings together ASEA-UNINET member institutions to exchange expertise and identify strategic cooperation opportunities in the renewable-energy domain. Participants map a broad spectrum of competencies, including renewable energy production (hydropower, thin and transparent PV, synthetic/e-fuels), energy storage technologies (chemical storage, hydrogen compression), and power-electronics components for smart grids. Further areas of strength include circularity concepts such as lithium-battery refurbishment and the utilisation of residual materials, as well as material research on biodegradable storage solutions and globally accessible, non-harmful components.

Energy-policy expertise – ranging from regulatory design to incentive alignment and green certificates – are highlighted as an important complement to technological research. Several institutions report access to test-bed facilities for demonstration, validation and system improvements, and the group emphasise the role of cross-border educational programmes in addressing the growing shortage of qualified personnel in the energy transition.

Building on this inventory, the group identifies three priority themes for future collaboration: (1) flexibility solutions that combine technical, economic and policy knowledge; (2) joint material-research initiatives aimed at strengthening resilience and supply-chain independence; and (3) localised approaches tailored to regional contexts and resource availability. Participants express strong interest in developing joint project proposals and expanding research links within ASEA-UNINET.

iv. **Global Health and Sustainable Food Production**
Working Group Leads: **Paganelli** (University of Brescia), **Farizal** (Universiti Utara Malaysia)

The working group identifies economic sustainability as the foundation of sustainable food systems, noting that food shortages stem less from insufficient production than from poverty and unequal distribution. Current global patterns reflect severe disparities: undernourishment persists in many regions while wealthier populations face overconsumption, food waste, and poor dietary habits. Climate change exacerbates these pressures by altering ecosystems, increasing disease risks, and disrupting production systems. Simultaneously, it also creates opportunities to redesign food systems to be more resilient, efficient, and adaptive. Participants emphasise the need to rethink every stage of the food chain, explore sustainable alternatives such as insect-based proteins, reduce food loss and waste, and expand the use of innovative technologies and post-harvest solutions. Environmental considerations, including reducing packaging waste, remain central to achieving long-term ecological and nutritional sustainability.

In parallel, the group underscores that global health and food systems are inseparable. Major health challenges, ranging from noncommunicable and infectious diseases to climate-related health risks, are aggravated by inequalities in access to nutrition, healthcare, and preventive services. Strengthening disease surveillance, promoting early detection, and investing in prevention are essential to building resilient health systems. Political and social barriers, including anti-science movements and

inequitable global policies, hinder progress and require coordinated international responses. Innovation and technology such as big data, phenomics, and metabolomics can enable earlier interventions and more personalised care, provided that regulatory frameworks support responsible use.

To advance global solutions, the group recommends expanding capacity-building efforts through joint programmes, shared digital learning platforms, and transnational training across ASEAN and European institutions. Knowledge sharing must be inclusive and accessible, not restricted to wealthier countries. Finally, coherent policy frameworks – e.g., integrating pandemic preparedness, climate adaptation, nutrition, and surveillance – are necessary to sustain both global health systems and food system resilience. The combined insights point toward a unified agenda where sustainable food production, equitable health access, and climate-responsive policies reinforce one another in support of global well-being.

v. Ecological Economics/Bioeconomy

Working Group Leads: **Wongnate** (Vidyasirimedhi Institute of Science and Technology), **Anggraini** (IPB University)

The working group defines the bioeconomy as an economic model driven not solely by profit maximisation but by multiple interconnected objectives: technological innovation, effective governance, policy intervention, fiscal support, behavioural change, ecological education, and community empowerment. While the bioeconomy is not yet cost-effective, participants emphasise its long-term potential and the need for coordinated preparation. Technological innovation, particularly biotechnology for applications in health, beauty, bioenergy, and waste-to-energy systems, is viewed as essential. These advances, however, require significant investments in infrastructure, including waste collection systems, processing facilities, and sustainable transport networks.

Institutional leadership and policy frameworks play a central role in accelerating the transition. Universities are encouraged to act as role models in adopting green energy and sustainable practices. Policy interventions are necessary, as intrinsic individual motivation alone is considered insufficient to drive a large-scale shift toward ecological economics. Regulatory frameworks should incentivise industries to support research, invest in green technologies, and align bioeconomic strategies across neighbouring countries. Fiscal tools such as green bonds can mobilise resources to finance environmental protection, research, and innovations that improve the cost-effectiveness of bio-based solutions.

Behavioural change, ecological education, and community empowerment are highlighted as prerequisites for a successful bioeconomy. Improved practices such as AI-assisted stock management to reduce food waste demonstrate how behavioural shifts can have tangible ecological benefits. Educating youth and local communities fosters long-term cultural support for sustainability, while technology transfer creates opportunities for communities to add value to local resources and participate meaningfully in the bioeconomic transition.

To support these efforts, ASEA-UNINET can play a catalytic role by expanding joint research funding, facilitating expert matchmaking, and creating dedicated digital platforms to connect researchers working on bioeconomy themes. Working group activities, including webinars and collaborative events, can strengthen networks and accelerate knowledge exchange. Collectively, these actions can help build a coherent, interdisciplinary foundation for a resilient and inclusive bioeconomy across the ASEAN-European academic community.

DAY 2 "ASEA-UNINET PLENARY MEETING"   WEDNESDAY, 10-09-2025

COUNTRY COORDINATORS' REPORTS
Reports by the following participating National Coordinators are presented:

- **Austria**
- **Cambodia**
- **Indonesia**
- **Italy**
- **Malaysia**
- **Pakistan**
- **Philippines**
- **Thailand**
- **Vietnam**

The individual country reports may be accessed via link and are listed in the Appendices.

PRESENTATIONS ON FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND ASEA-UNINET
Keynote addressed are held by a variety of speakers on the following topics relating to funding opportunities and partnerships beyond ASEA-UNINET.

- **Nikolov**, Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU), Competence Center on Emerging Markets:
  "International Network Management at WU Vienna"

- **Trung**, Hanoi University of Science and Technology (HUST):
  "Project 89 of Vietnam MOET"

- **Djawad**, Universitas Hasanuddin (Unhas):
  "Indonesia-Austria (IASP) Scholarships"

- **Choudhary**, H. I., S. I., T. I., OIC-COMSTECH:
  "Global Capacity Building and Research Support Initiatives of OICCOMSTECH"

- **Smansin**, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI), Thailand:
  "Thailand Scholarship for Austrian Students (ASEA-UNINET)"

The presentations may be accessed via link and are listed in the Appendices.

PRESENTATION OF WORKING GROUP RESULTS
The working group leads present a summary of the discussions and outcomes of the individual working groups as explicated in the executive summary provided previously.

MEMBERSHIP PRESENTATIONS
Presentations by the following universities seeking membership are held.

New Universities seeking Candidate Membership:
1. **Institute of Technology of Cambodia** (Cambodia)
2. **Palacký University Olomouc** (Czechia)
3. **University of Torino** (Italy)
4. **Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin** (Malaysia)
5. **Transilvania University of Brasov** (Romania)
6. **Western University of Timişoara** (Romania)
7. **Princess Galyani Vadhana Institute of Music** (Thailand)
8. **Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e** (Timor-Leste)

The presentations may be accessed via link and are listed in the Appendices.

In addition to these, Candidate Member Universities are recommend by their respective National Coordinator to become Full Members on the basis of active and successful cooperation within the network throughout their Candidate Member tenure.

Candidate Member Universities seeking Full Membership:
1. **University of Arts Linz** (Austria)
2. **Universitas Padjadjaran** (Indonesia)
3. **Vidyasirimedhi Institute of Science and Technology** (Thailand)
4. **Walailak University** (Thailand)
5. **Posts and Telecommunications Institute of Technology** (Vietnam)

Submitted presentations may be accessed via link and are listed in the Appendices.

ASEA-UNINET ELECTIONS
Ranzi explains the procedure for the upcoming scheduled elections:
1. Institution Membership Status
2. Motions
3. Regional Coordinators
4. Network President

With the consideration of participants' input, elections proceed with an open vote. As communicated to participants prior to the Plenary Meeting, (i) only physically present university coordinators may cast votes, and (ii) vote delegation is possible in the case of non-participation, provided arrangements were made prior to the Plenary Meeting with advance notice given to the ASEA-UNINET Network Office and a letter of confirmation by the absentee.

1. ELECTIONS FOR INSTITUTION MEMBERSHIP STATUS

The following New Universities seeking membership are proposed by the National Coordinators for being approved as **Candidate Members** of ASEA-UNINET:

- **Institute of Technology of Cambodia** (Cambodia)
- **Palacký University Olomouc** (Czechia)
- **University of Torino** (Italy)
- **Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin** (Malaysia)
- **Transilvania University of Brasov** (Romania)
- **Western University of Timişoara** (Romania)
- **Princess Galyani Vadhana Institute of Music** (Thailand)
- **Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e** (Timor-Leste)

Following a vote, the listed institutions are accepted as **Candidate Members** of ASEA-UNINET unanimously by the Plenary Meeting delegates. The Candidate Membership is given for at least one and a half years to demonstrate active cooperations within the network before requesting Full Membership.

The following Candidate Member institutions are proposed by the National Coordinators for being accepted as **Full Members** of ASEA-UNINET:

- **University of Arts Linz** (Austria)
- **Universitas Padjadjaran** (Indonesia)
- **Vidyasirimedhi Institute of Science and Technology** (Thailand)
- **Walailak University** (Thailand)
- **Posts and Telecommunications Institute of Technology** (Vietnam)

Following a vote, the listed institutions are accepted as **Full Member** of ASEA-UNINET unanimously by the Plenary Meeting delegates.

2. ELECTIONS FOR MOTIONS

Ranzi proposes a motion to extend the Strategic Advisory Team of the network with a new coordination role with a nomination made for **Obenaus** (Vienna University of Economics and Business) as "Coordinator for Scholarships & Finances".

Following a vote, the motion to establish this new coordination role within the Strategic Advisory Team is passed unanimously by the Plenary Meeting delegates, including the nomination for **Obenaus** as "**Coordinator for Scholarships & Finances**".

Kotsis further proposes a motion to extend the Executive Members with a new role of **Past President** to support the incoming new President of the network. The nomination would automatically apply to the outgoing President.

Following a vote, the motion to establish this new role is passed unanimously by the Plenary Meeting delegates, thereby designating **Ranzi** as "**Past President**".

3. ELECTIONS FOR REGIONAL COORDINATORS

A motion is proposed to elect the Regional Coordinators for 2025-2026.
Following a vote, this motion is passed unanimously, and the **Regional Coordinators** are elected as follows:

- **Vice-President and Regional Coordinator for Europe:**
  Kotsis (Johannes Kepler University Linz)
- **Vice-President and Regional Coordinator for South-East Asia:**
  Hendrantoro (Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember)
- **Coordinator for Technology, Innovation and Sustainability Projects for Europe:**
  Tjoa (Vienna University of Technology)
- **Coordinator for Technology, Innovation and Sustainability Projects for South-East Asia:**
  Trung (Hanoi University of Science and Technology)

4. ELECTIONS FOR NETWORK PRESIDENT

Kotsis thanks **Ranzi** and expresses appreciation for his activity within the network as President, having advanced the representation of European members, established cooperations through members within university alliances, and organised the network's 20th Plenary Meeting with great hospitality. To build upon his tenure, **Sungsanit** (Suranaree University of Technology) is nominated to become the next President of ASEA-UNINET.

Following a vote, **Sungsanit** (Suranaree University of Technology) is elected unanimously as **President of ASEA-UNINET (2025-2026)**.

SUMMARY OF THE PLENARY MEETING

Sungsanit as new President delivers an address to the Plenary Meeting participants. After thanking the hosts at UNIBS and expressing gratitude for an excellently organised Plenary Meeting, **Sungsanit** invites the delegates to the next Plenary Meeting with a brief image video.

February 2027 is announced as the likely date for the next **Plenary Meeting**, which is planned to take place in Thailand.

Ranzi as host and outgoing President expresses gratitude for the input and support throughout the Plenary Meeting. Throughout the event, delegates were able to contribute towards a variety of perspectives embedded in research cooperations between and amongst ASEAN and Europe so as to continue fostering peace and sustainable development.

Ranzi as host officially closes the Plenary Meeting. Photos with the newly elected President are taken.

Photos of Hosting President and Newly Elected President: **Ranzi** and **Sungasanit**

EXCURSION: CAPITOLIUM AND S. GIULIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Prior to a closing gala dinner, participants take part in an excursion to Brescia's Capitolium and the S. Giulia Archaeological Sites, two central landmarks of the city's UNESCO-listed Roman and medieval heritage. The visit offers insight into the layered history of Brescia, from its Roman forum and temples to its long-standing monastic and cultural traditions, illustrating how archaeological sites connect past societies with present-day cultural understanding. The excursion offers thematic grounding for broader discussions on heritage preservation, education, and the value of interdisciplinary cooperation.
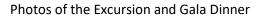

Photos of the Excursion and Gala Dinner

APPENDICES

The appendices may be accessed using the following links:

I. **Full Programme of the Plenary Meeting**
II. **Keynote Addresses**
    i. "Perspectives of Europe-ASEAN Academic Cooperation"
    ii. "Driving Sustainability Through ESG: Digital Pathways, Decarbonisation, and Inclusive Transitions for a Climate-Resilient Future"
    iii. "European Universities Alliances"
    iv. "Vienna Manifesto on Digital Humanism"
    v. "Research and Innovation for Sustainable Waste Management in the Bio-based Economy"
III. **Country Coordinator Reports**
    i. Austria
    ii. Cambodia
    iii. Indonesia
    iv. Italy
    v. Malaysia
    vi. Pakistan
    vii. Philippines
    viii. Thailand
    ix. Vietnam
IV. **Funding Presentations**
    i. "International Network Management at WU Vienna"
    ii. "Project 89 of Vietnam MOET"
    iii. "Indonesia-Austria (IASP) Scholarships"
    iv. "Global Capacity Building and Research Support Initiatives of OICCOMSTECH"
    v. "Thailand Scholarship for Austrian Students (ASEA-UNINET)"
V. **Presentations of New Universities Seeking Membership Status**
VI. **Submitted Presentations of Candidate Member Universities Seeking Full Membership**
    i. Vidyasirimedhi Institute of Science and Technology (Thailand)
    ii. Posts and Telecommunications Institute of Technology (Vietnam)

VII. **List of Participating Institutions**
VIII. **List of Participants** (as per data consent provided during registration)

PLENARY MEETING PHOTOS*

Plenary Meeting Group Picture:

UNIBS has provided event photos on the following link.

An additional selection of photos, courtesy of **Ranzi** and other Plenary Meeting delegates, may be accessed via link*.

*These files were uploaded via IONET-Cloud. Due to their size, these may be accessed up until **31.01.2026**. If access is requested beyond the date listed, kindly get in touch with us: asea-uninet@oead.at .