



**DOC**

# **REPORT ON ALUMNI NETWORKS IN EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY OF THE SEAS SEA-EU ALLIANCE**

**BEYOND ACADEMIA: BROADENING THE CAREER HORIZONS OF DOCTORAL  
STUDENTS IN MARINE AND MARITIME SCIENCES IN EUROPE  
(SEA-EU-DOC)**

---

**JULY, 2022**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## 1.SUMMARY

## 2.INTRODUCTION TO ALUMNI ORGANISATIONS IN SEA-EU ALLIANCE COUNTRIES

## 3.METHODOLOGY

## 4.RESULTS

- General information
- Financial background
- Perceived benefits
- Communication channels
- Alumni tracking
- Activities and events
- Events targeting doctorate alumni
- Collaborations

## 5.STRENGTHS

## 6.WEAKNESSES

## 7.ALUMNI ORGANISATIONS AND THE MARINE, MARITIME AND COASTAL THEMATICS

## 8.CONCLUSION

## 9.LESSONS LEARNED

## 10. APPENDICES



# SUMMARY


The future and competitiveness of Europe depends crucially on global networking and relevant education. Apart from providing quality education, universities need to enable an active information flow between current and past members. Promotion and enhancement of the university's connection with its former students is an important factor in achievement of university strategy goals for many universities around the world. Former students and university graduates can support their universities in various ways and open up employment opportunities outside the academic world.

Research by the SEA-EU alliance has shown that better preparation of doctoral students is needed for their entry into the non-academic world. In order to mitigate this transition, the idea of creating a unique alumni network of doctoral students in the field of marine, maritime and coastal sciences was developed.

In order to get a broader picture of alumni organisations in different cultural and national contexts, the University of Split compiled a questionnaire which the project countries (Croatia, France, Spain, Germany, Malta and Poland) distributed to alumni organisations.

This report analyses the functioning of alumni networks in countries of the SEA-EU alliance based on the results of the above-mentioned questionnaire and interviews with representatives of national alumni associations. The questionnaire was sent to 284 (82 Croatia, 65 France, 39 Spain, 40 Germany, 18 Malta and 40 Poland) email addresses and 103 responses (35 Croatia, 20 France, 13 Spain, 22 Germany, 3 Malta and 10 Poland) were received.

The report showed that alumni organisations are often founded by the university of origin or have a strong collaboration with it. Many organisations consider their collaboration with universities as successful and collaborate frequently, but are also highly dependent on its funding. Still, a significant number of organisations managed to find a way to have membership fees as the most dominant sources of funding, which shows that alumni are willing to pay for their membership if they perceive what they get in return as valuable and worthy.



Most often benefits provided by the alumni organisations are participation at events and access to alumni directories. Access to university literature, special discounts for lifelong learning courses and, less frequently, access to university software and licences, are also being offered. When organising events, most often these are in the form of networking events and lectures & workshops, but also informal social events. Alumni organisations are also active in providing assistance with job opportunities and at some level with student placement.

Collaboration with the economic sector is not insignificant, as many organisations organise activities involving such collaboration and perceive it as successful. Yet, given the importance of such collaboration in reducing the gap between students and the business world, it is important for universities to take this as one of the essential ingredients when developing and managing the alumni network.

To examine the problem of professional integration of students (employability, ease of entering the professional sphere) and find good practices of grand alumni organisations, we have conducted 11 case studies of global networks and 3 national ones. Using their examples and recommendations we were able to identify interesting practices related to alumni networking and the professional integration of students that can help any emerging network.

Thanks to the online portals offered by global alumni organisations, alumni and students are enabled to present themselves, their skills, search for a job or employment opportunity. On the other hand, portals also serve as a benefit to employers and businesses to present their work and find highly qualified staff. The practice of the ambassador programme, which provides support to students in their career development and facilitates their transition to the labour market with the help of a mentor, is also significant. We were also able to identify the strong presence of LinkedIn channel as an effective communication tool for professional networking.

# INTRODUCTION TO ALUMNI ORGANISATIONS IN SEA-EU ALLIANCE COUNTRIES

Alumni organisations in SEA-EU countries come in different forms, with different outreach and capacity. Their historical background and tradition varies from having the earliest alumni organisation established during the mid-19th century in France, to not having an alumni organisation established earlier than the end of 20th century in Croatia.

Naturally, countries with stronger historical traditions have implemented some previous studies and analysis of alumni organisations; however, the majority of the SEA-EU countries have no available literature on that topic. Likewise, none of the countries have identified national directory or register of alumni organisations.

Alumni organisations of the SEA-EU countries have many things in common, among which the increased recognition of their importance by universities. Most organisations are established with the purpose of reaching out to alumni of a particular organisation (i.e. University, institute, programme, etc.) and less frequently based on a certain field or topic (e.g. association of engineers, lawyers, etc.).



There are some exceptions in which an established organisation reaches to various alumni groups, regardless of affiliated organisation or field of studies. One such example is Alumniportal Deutschland (Germany Alumni) that keeps track of all non-German alumni that studied in Germany, which counts more than 150 thousand users from 184 countries (as of 2017). Another progressive showcase of alumni work in Germany is the Alumni-club.net which is an umbrella association of alumni organisations in German-speaking countries with more than 300 universities and alumni organisations as members and over 550 alumni organisations registered in the directory.

Despite differences in background and tradition, the great majority of the organisations of the SEA-EU countries can still learn a lot from the example of Anglo-Saxon based alumni organisations. For that reason, some of them were involved in the survey on best practices and are included as case studies on global alumni organisations in the Appendices section of the report.

# METHODOLOGY

**The following methodology was applied:**

## Identification

Partners of the SEA-EU alliance carried out web-based search in order to identify alumni organisations that are based in their countries. The number of identified alumni organisations per country varied, from less than 20 organisations to over 80 organisations per country, which correlated with the country's size and number of universities as well as with the amount of information available online.

## Collection

The University of Split drafted a questionnaire with 36 questions structured in seven main topics. All project partners commented on and amended to produce the final questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to 284 alumni organisations by project partners per email throughout February-June 2021. The identified organisations were either at the university/faculty level or associated with other institutions and programs, and sometimes informal or having no direct relation to some formal institution.

After the initial email, project partners have sent one email reminder and when necessary followed by a phone call by which alumni representatives were kindly asked to fill in the survey. The questionnaire was closed on June 22. In the end, we received feedback from 103 alumni organisations through the questionnaire.

Within the questionnaire, organisations were invited to indicate their interest in providing additional information about their alumni organisation practices. Potentially interesting ones (based on their answers in the survey) were selected and interviewed by some of the partners, which resulted in case studies on national alumni organisations that are included in the Appendix section of this report.

## Data processing, analysis, and reporting

Data was collected in an Excel file and analysed in a quantitative and qualitative way. This report presents the analysis of 103 alumni organisations and includes the case studies on national and global alumni organisations in the Appendices section. Due to the unequal number of respondents per country, results of the alliance might be dominated by the country with the most answers. To provide a better picture, in case of any significant variations in answers, the country's results will be referred to during the reporting.

# RESULTS

## General information

In SEA-EU countries, alumni networks are organised in different forms – as NGOs, universities or associations, as shown in Figure 1. Most frequent form of alumni organisations is association (58 out of 103 respondents) followed by university (32 out of 103 respondents). Looking at individual results of each country, we find somewhat different results in the case of Spain and Germany, where university form prevails. At the level of the SEA-EU countries, 14 out of 103 respondents have identified themselves as NGOs, whereas only 2 respondents in the form of alliance. 6 out of 103 respondents have selected other forms of organisations, and when asked to identify which forms that would be, some of the responses were: informal groups, enterprise, foundation, and programs.

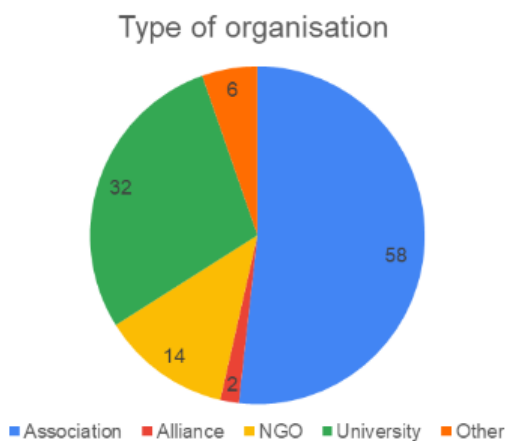


Figure 1 Number of organisations according to type, multiple answers possible, n=112

Out of the 103 respondents which responded to the questionnaire, 80 reported being connected with the university and its constituents (faculty, department, academy, etc). Even 20 respondents reported having no direct relation with the university, among which are thematic alumni organisations, but also some that are organised (probably independently) to reach alumni of particular universities. Still, nearly all of them rated their collaboration with the university as successful.

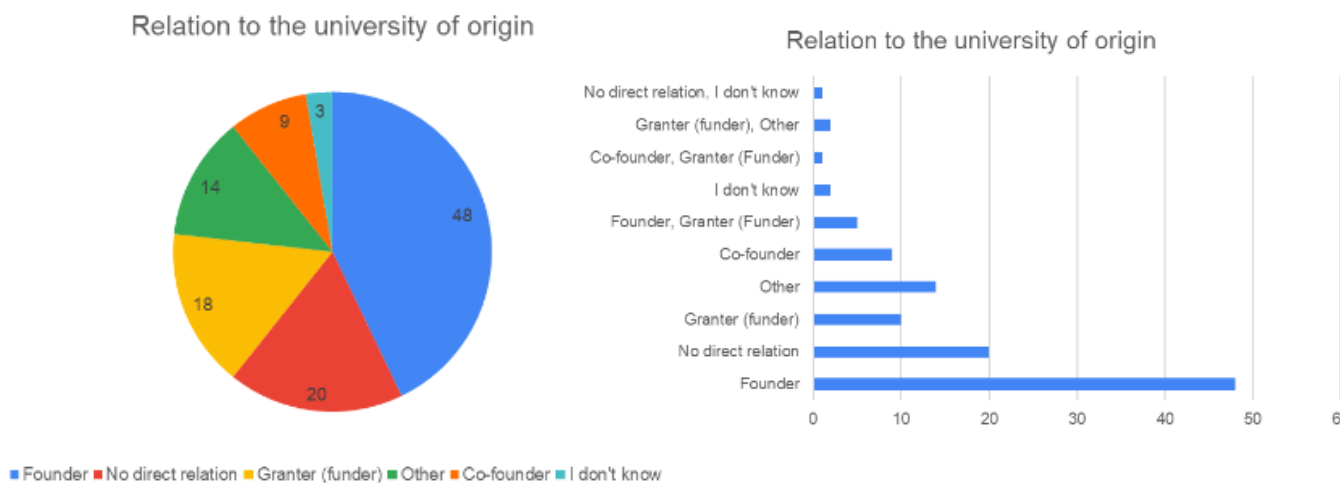


Figure 2 Number of alumni organisations by the type of relation to the university of origin, multiple answers possible, n=112

The number of alumni members in SEA-EU alumni organisations varies significantly: from less than 10 to over 75 thousand members. From a total of 101 respondents that answered this question, 32 respondents have reported having less than 100 members, with an average of 33 members. About the same number (34 of them) have between 100 and 1,000 members, with an average value of 385 members. 24 respondents have reported having between 1,500 and 9,500 members where an average equals nearly 5,000 members, whereas the 9 remaining respondents have reported having 10,000 or more members, with an average number of members of a bit more than 27 thousand members. The total average of the entire data set of answers equals 3,782 members.

However, one needs to be cautious with this data because different alumni organisations have different ways of counting their members (some alumni organisations consider all students who completed their studies as alumni members).

Respondents were also asked to estimate how many alumni members that reside outside of the country they are still in contact with. This was answered by 73 out of 103 respondents. Most respondents (44 out of 73) estimated that they are in contact with less than 10% of them, while 17 respondents selected between 11% and 30%. Another 8 respondents selected over 50% and only 4 of them selected between 31% and 50%.

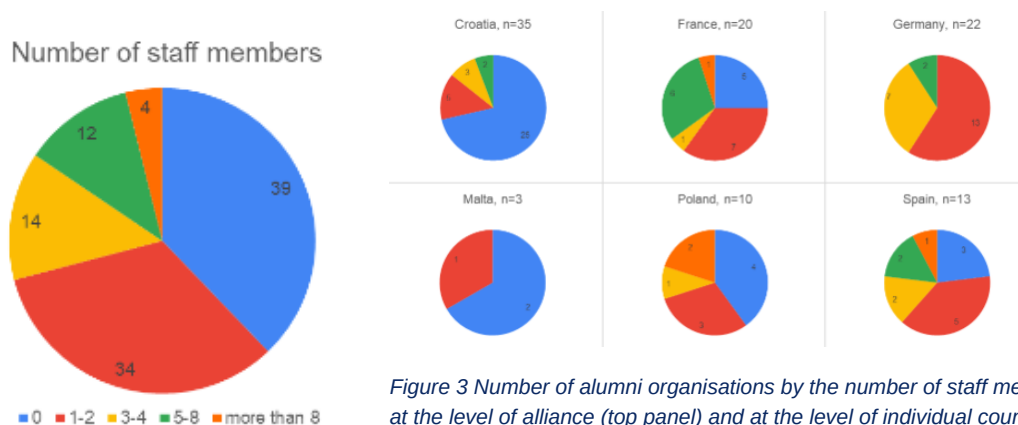


Figure 3 Number of alumni organisations by the number of staff members at the level of alliance (top panel) and at the level of individual countries (bottom panel), n=103

An important indicator of alumni organisation capacity for activities is the number of employed staff and volunteers. Figure 3 (top panel) shows that the highest number of respondent alumni organisations from the SEA-EU alliance countries have no employed staff (39 out of 103 respondents) or between 1 and 2 employees (34 out of 103 respondents), from which not all are on full time basis. The remaining respondents have between 3 and 4 employees (14 of them) or between 5 and 8 employees (12 of them). 4 respondents have reported having more than 8 employees. If we look at the results per country, we will find different results in the case of Germany, where all respondents have employed staff (bottom panel in Figure 3 shows results per country). However, it is still unclear if the involved employed staff is dedicated only to alumni organisations. Considering the web pages of the respondents, it is most likely that staff refers to the university employees who are engaged in different boards of the alumni organisations. Volunteers thus have most credit for activities performed by the respondents in SEA-EU countries. 73 out of 91 of the respondents that answered this question have reported having between 1 and 600 unpaid volunteers engaged in the organisation's work, with an average of 23 unpaid volunteers. The majority of them (46 out of 91) have between 1 and 10 unpaid volunteers, whereas 23 respondents reported having between 11 and 50 unpaid volunteers. The remaining respondents (4 of them) have between 100 and 600 unpaid volunteers. Only 18 respondents reported no unpaid volunteers. Considering individual country's results, France is the country with the highest number of volunteers (on average 93, but as high as 600).

## Financial background

As shown in Figure 4, respondents of the SEA-EU countries use a combination of funding sources. University financing or co-financing and membership fees are the most common, chosen by 55 and 52 out of 103 respondents, respectively. They are closely followed by the donations, selected by 41 respondents. Charging attendance at the events/activities was selected by 18 respondents. Only 4 respondents reported generating revenue from service provision, while 2 respondents reported no funding at all. Although only 4 respondents reported generating revenues from service provision, even 10 of them provided examples of services generating revenue, from which most are related to organising various events, including training events, job fairs, excursions, trips and exhibition visits. Also, some respondents generate revenues by providing premium services, coaching, diploma attestation, professional survey and promotional services for companies, book sales, advertisement space in alumni magazines, or provision of facilities. Furthermore, 23 out of 103 respondents that responded to this question have reported other sources of funding, among which are EU funds and competitive calls, city and regional budget, private funds, grants from tender applications or even foreign office grants in case of a chapter of a global alumni organisation.

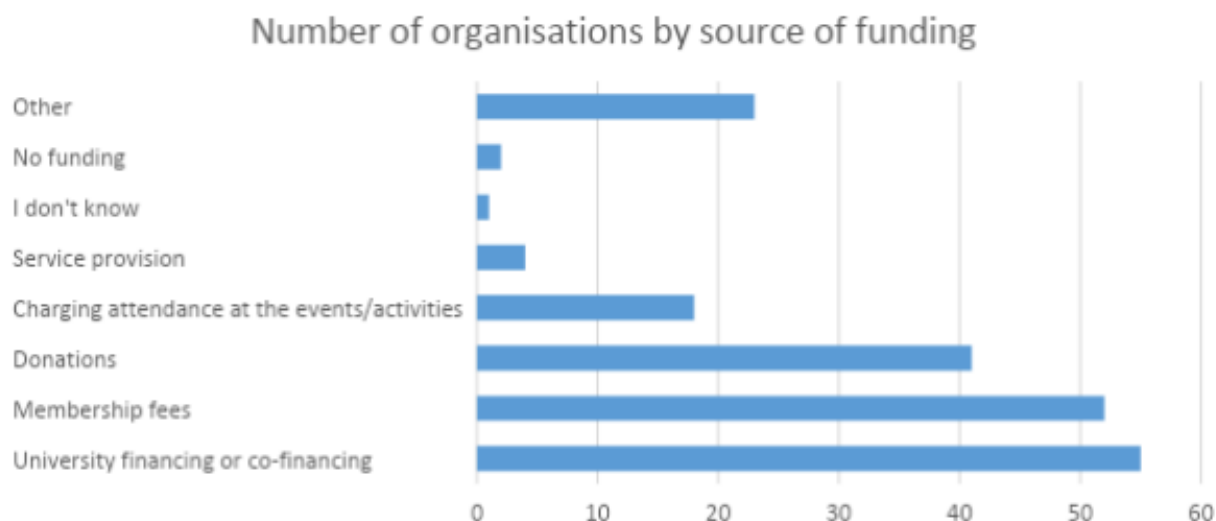


Figure 4 Number of alumni organisations (out of 103 respondents) by source of funding, multiple answers possible, n=196

When looking at individual results per country, the most frequent answers chosen by respondents are presented below:

Table 1 Two most common sources of funding of alumni organisations from a particular country

Country	Most common source of funding	Second most common source of funding
Croatia	Donations	University financing or co-financing
France	Membership fees	University financing or co-financing
Germany	University financing or co-financing	Membership fees
Malta	Donations	Other
Poland	Membership fees	Donations
Spain	University financing or co-financing	Membership fees

## Offers provided by alumni organisations

When questioned about benefits offered to alumni, the most common answer found among the respondents was participation at university events (73 responses), followed by access to alumni directory (54 responses), as shown in Figure 5.

The other two significant offers that were most commonly referred to were: access to university literature (34 responses) and special discount for lifelong learning courses (28 responses). Special discounts for professional and educational development (book stores, online platforms, magazines, etc.) and special discounts at shops, travel agencies, and sports clubs are offered by 24 and 20 respondents, respectively. 8 out of 103 alumni respondents listed access to university licences and software. A large number of answers were from category “other” (8 responses), where professional lectures, mentorship programs, and micro grants were listed as some of the most common offers. 7 respondents stated not providing or having no knowledge of providing any of the suggested offers for their members.

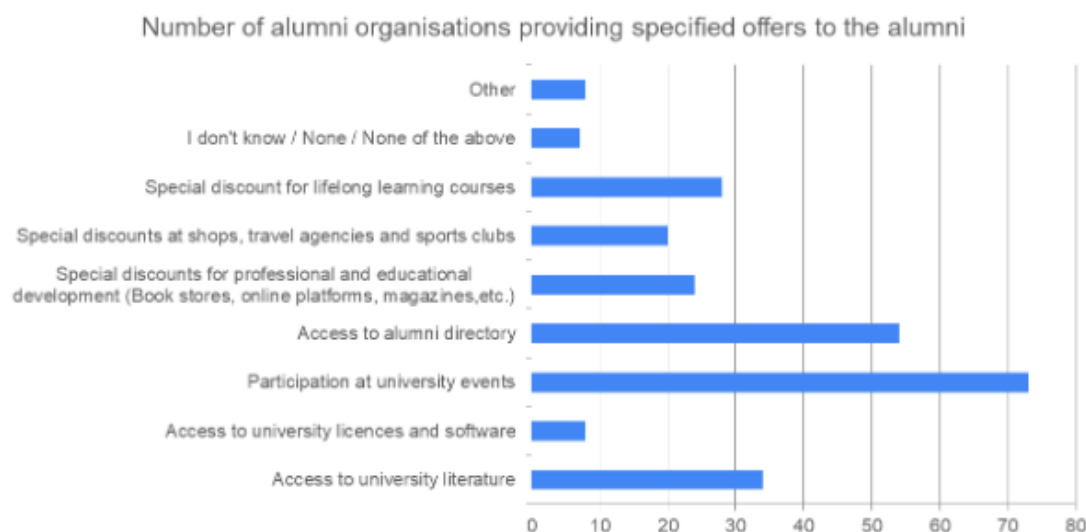


Figure 5 Number of alumni organisations (out of 103 respondents) by the type of offers provided to alumni (multiple answers possible),  $n=256$ .

## Communication channels

Alumni organisations use different channels to communicate with their members, with a visible shift away from communication using traditional and printed information in alumni magazines to digital channels. Figure 6 and Figure 7 show that four communication channels, out of eight proposed, are mostly used by the respondent alumni organisations: the mailing list (95 out of 103 respondents, mostly with monthly frequency), other social media (83 respondents out of 103, most often on monthly basis), alumni website (82 out of 103 respondents, mostly on monthly basis), and university web page (79 respondents out of 103, mostly on annual bases). More than half of the respondents use an institutional LinkedIn account and nearly half of them use private groups (Whatsapp, Viber, Slack, etc....).

When used, communication in private groups occurs most often on a daily basis, while most respondents update dedicated alumni websites on a monthly basis.

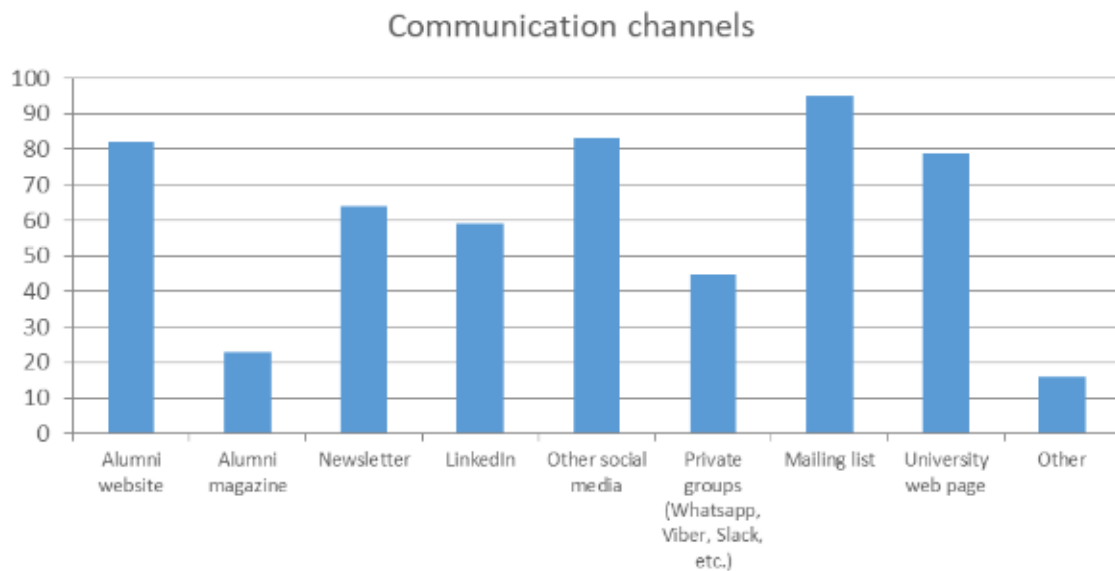


Figure 6 Number of alumni organisations by the type of used communication channels with their members (103 respondents, multiple answers possible), n=546.

Everyday communication is common (46 out of 103 responses), and is maintained preferably through alumni websites, other social media and private groups. Weekly communication is maintained mostly through “other social media”. The questionnaire did not specify the type of other social media. Also, in weekly communication, LinkedIn, mailing list, alumni website, private groups, and at some level university website and newsletter are used. To maintain communication with their members on a monthly basis, respondents prefer to use newsletter and mailing lists, as well as university web pages and alumni websites. For the annual frequency, the most used communication channels are the university's web page, the mailing list and the alumni magazine.

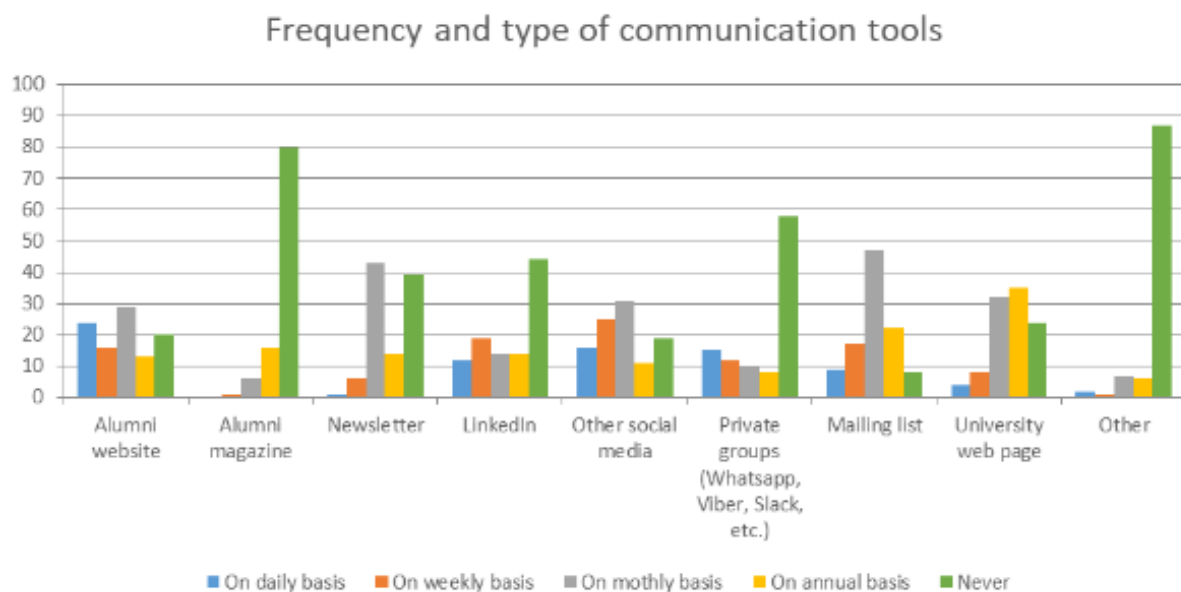


Figure 7 Number of alumni organisations showing frequency and type of communication channels used (103 respondents, multiple answers possible), n=546.

## Alumni tracking

Given the fact that alumni tracking is in general considered challenging for many alumni organisations, it is not surprising that about half of the respondents (56 out of 103) found it challenging as well. Still, nearly two thirds of the respondents have found at least one way to successfully track alumni careers (74 of 103 respondents). Figure 8 shows that Web searches are rated as successful by the largest number of respondents (57 of 103), followed by data mining in social media at no cost (41 of 103). On the other hand, paid data mining in social media is seldom used (26 of 103) and, when used, it was rated as successful by only slightly over half of the respondents. It is really interesting that very few of the channels used were rated as unsuccessful. This implies that when alumni tracking was done, it was usually successful (moderately or more).

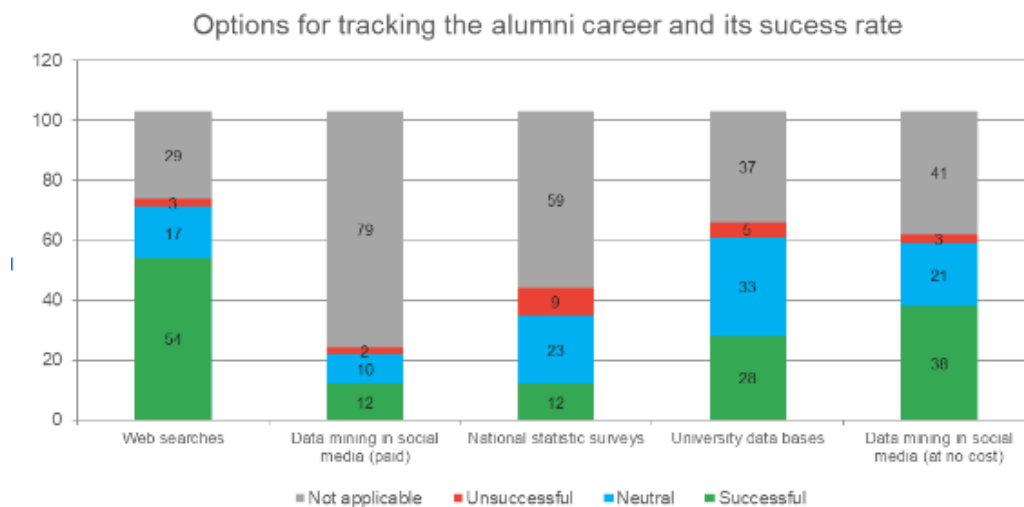


Figure 8 Number of alumni organisations according to the perceived success of options used for tracking alumni careers, n=515

## Activities and events

In Figure 10 we report how successful alumni respondent alumni organisations from SEA-EU countries rate the success of their activities. The networking events are listed as the most common and successful activities for respondents. 84 out of 103 respondents organise them, and most have between 1-5 activities per year, as shown in Figure 9.

Furthermore, among the most successful activities are lectures/workshops, which are organised by 79 respondents, most of which (69 of them) rate them as successful. Informal social events are organised by 78 respondents, which are rated as successful by 63 of them. Again, most (62) organise 1-5 informal social events per year. Conferences are organised by 66 of 103 respondents and are rated as successful by 52 of them. The frequency of organised activities does not necessarily need to be connected with the size of the respondent alumni organisations, as in most questions related to number of activities both faculty alumni organisations and large alumni networks, reported organising more than 10 activities per year. The same goes with connection between number of employed staff and the frequency of activities, where in some instances, respondents with no employees reported organising activities more frequently than those with over 10 employees. But then again, one must take into consideration that some respondents might have counted regular university staff which have many additional duties aside from alumni activities.

On the other hand, we have noticed that respondents that have a large number of volunteers tend to have a higher frequency of activities than those with no volunteers, especially in case of networking events and informal social events.

Regarding student placement, most reported no activities (64 out of 103), while 39 of them reported organising such activities on a yearly basis. 29 respondents reported 1-5 student placement activities per year and 2 of them reported 6-10 activities. 8 respondents reported more than 10 annually. For those that try to engage in students' placements, more than half report them as successful activities. The situation is better with activities of job assistance, which report slightly more than half of the respondents (57), of which 36 have 1-5 assistants yearly and 6 of them have 6-10. Even 15 respondents have reported having more than 10 such activities annually, from which about half are French respondents. Overall, nearly two thirds that engage with this activity, considered it successful.

Charity and fundraising events are organised by about one third of the respondents (32 and 27 respondents, respectively). Most of them organise such events 1-5 times a year and nearly half of them rate them as successful. Two respondents have reported more recurring charity events, one between 6 and 10 and another one more than 10 such events a year. Also, two respondents (one from Croatia and one from Poland) have reported organising between 6 and 10 fundraising events per year .

Another important message that we can take from this survey is that, if we look at the activities in general, when respondents organise activities, they hardly ever rate them as unsuccessful.

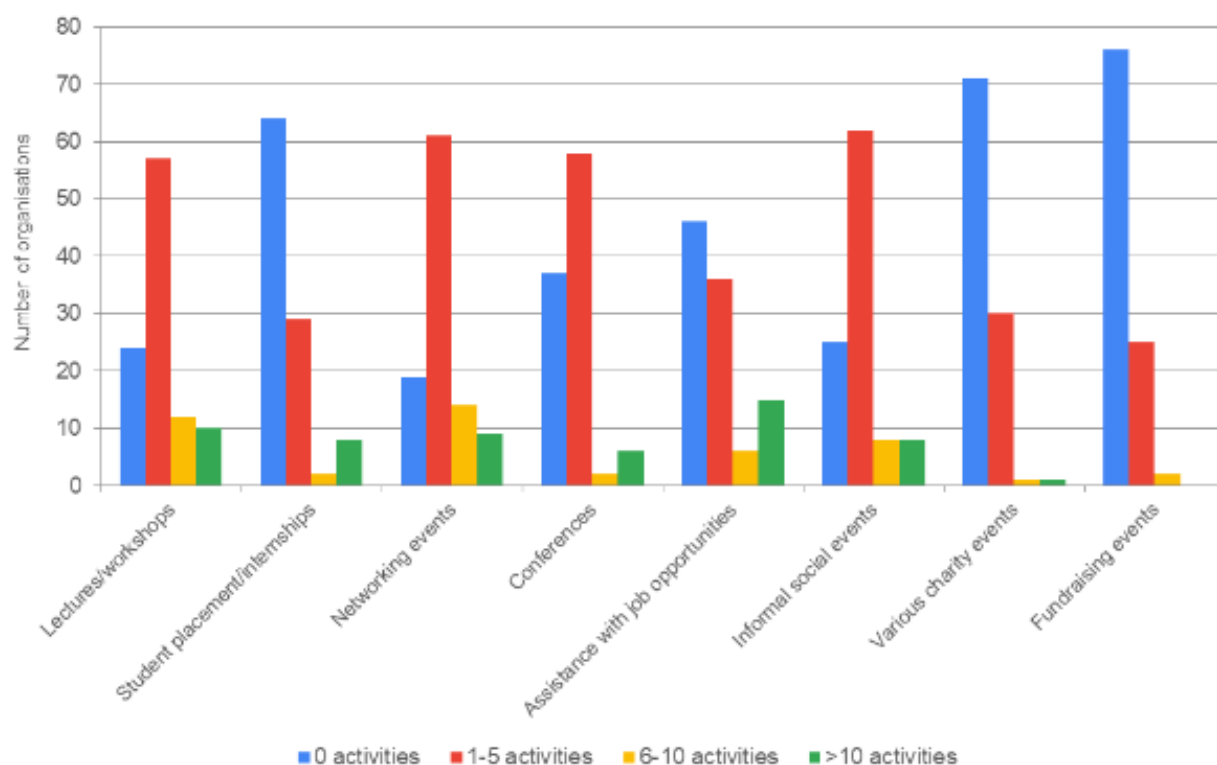


Figure 9 Number of organisations according to the number and type of activities organised yearly (out of 103 respondents, multiple answers possible), n=824

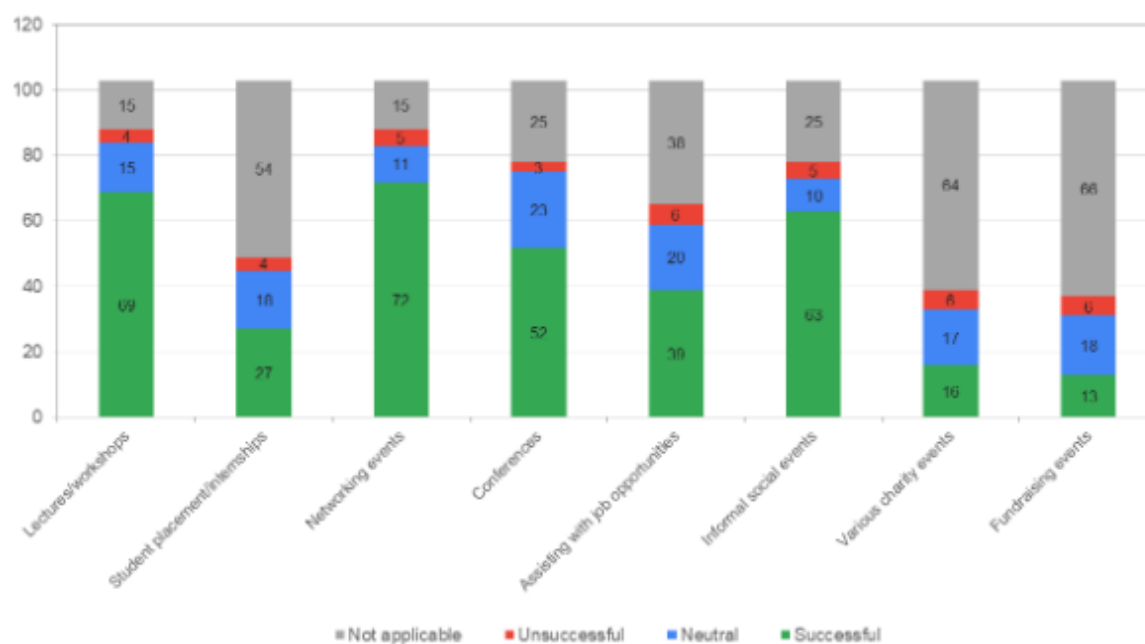


Figure 10 Number of alumni organisations according to the perceived success of activities they organised (out of 103 respondents, multiple answers possible), n=824

## Events targeting doctorate alumni

Most of the surveyed alumni organisations are linked to the institutions having PhD programmes (78 out of 103). As shown in Figure 11, 40 of the respondents target doctorate alumni in the general events that are organised while 38 of them don't have activities that target doctorate alumni. 15 answered affirmatively to having targeted activities for doctoral students, of which nearly half are French respondents. If we look at the fraction of surveyed alumni organisations organising doctoral activities for each country, we will find the highest fraction in Malta and France (all offer activities targeted at doctoral candidates and nearly two thirds of respondents offering such activities, respectively) and the lowest one in Spain (less than one quarter).

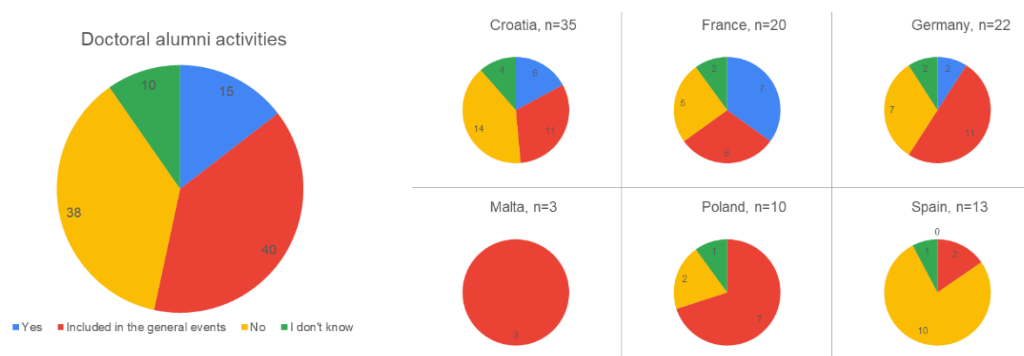


Figure 11 Number of organisations reporting whether they have targeted doctorate alumni activities at the level of alliance (top panel) and at the level of individual countries (bottom panel), n=103

In total, only 24 out of 103 respondents specified these types of activities. These are mostly events, such as workshops, conferences and lectures, but also mentoring programs and promotion of PhD students in newsletters. One respondent mentioned awarding prizes for doctoral thesis (environmental) and prizes for the best supervision of doctoral students. One scholarship/fellowship respondent mentioned co-organising round tables, leadership courses and similar events with other research institutions. Several respondents mentioned lectures and workshops done by PhD students, as well as promotion of PhD students' positions and their activities. One respondent mentioned successful alumni career talks with renowned alumni speakers from international enterprises and businesses as well as video stories about current students and their field of research on social media.

## Events targeting doctorate alumni

The task for the respondents in the questionnaire was to evaluate the collaboration with four categories of stakeholders: international organisations, other alumni organisations, university of origin and economic sectors.

Evaluation of the quality of cooperation is shown in Figure 12. The cooperation with the university of origin was rated the best. Out of 103 respondents, 83 of them considered it successful and only one unsuccessful. As shown in Figure 13, most respondents (45 of them) organise 1-5 activities per year in collaboration with the university of origin, while even 30 of them organise more than 10 activities. 16 respondents reported organising between 6 and 10 activities per year. When asked about suggestions for the improvement of collaboration, respondents often suggested better everyday communication and higher engagement of university administration. Some suggested establishing an alumni and career office for improvement of collaboration with the university of origin. Some respondents recommended having a dedicated university employee as a leading member of an alumni organisation or a single point of contact (a person, an office) responsible for cooperation and support. In other cases, they would like to be part of alumni organisations at the university level. Some respondents also said that universities should foster alumni activities, by teaching students about the alumni value added benefits, supporting social networking, and updating profiles and contact information about alumni. Also, some respondents recommended financial support and providing more benefits for the alumni of the university.

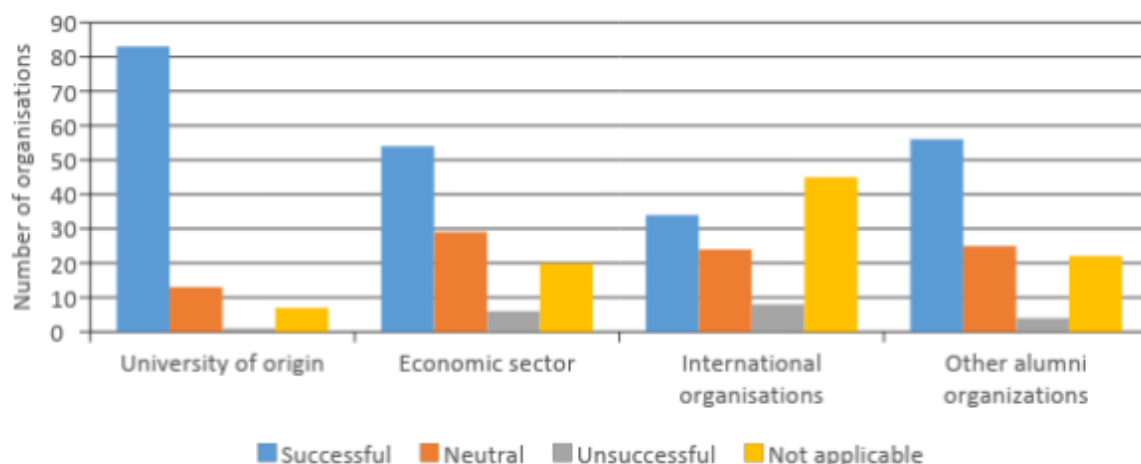


Figure 12 Number of alumni organisations according to the perceived success of activities they organised (out of 103 respondents, multiple answers possible), n=824

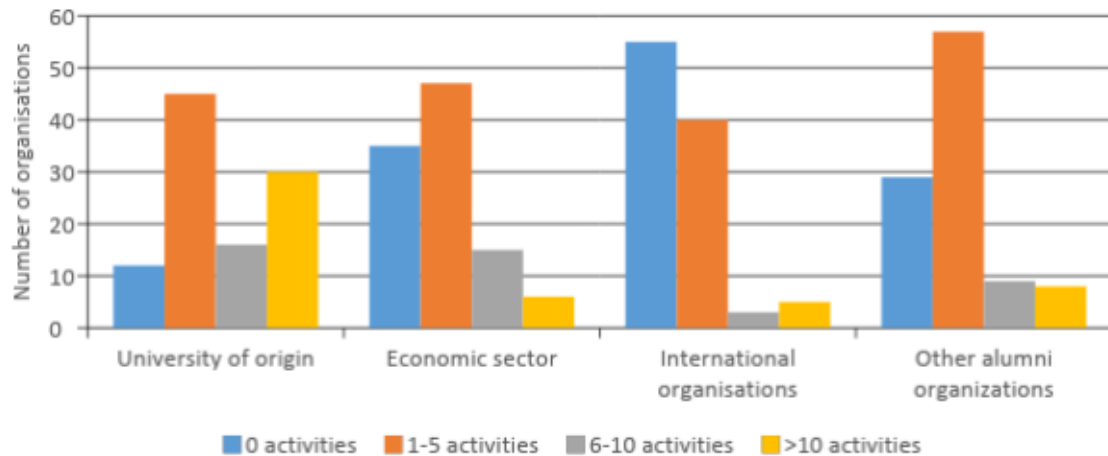


Figure 13 Number of organisations reporting whether they have targeted doctoral alumni activities at the level of alliance (top panel) and at the level of individual countries (bottom panel), n=103

Figure 12 and Figure 13 also show that nearly two thirds of the respondents have at least one activity per year organised with other alumni organisations (74 of 103), and slightly more than half of them (56) perceived such type of collaboration successful. A significant portion of respondents, 68 out of 103, manage to organise at least one activity per year in collaboration with the economic sector, while 21 of them organise more than 6 such activities per year. Slightly more than half of the respondents (54) perceive their collaboration with the economic sector successful. Even 35 of respondents do not organise any activities in collaboration with the economic sector. Finally, and expectedly, only 48 (less than half) of the respondents report at least one yearly activity with international organisations. Only 8 of them report more than 5 such activities per year. Still, a significant portion of them (34) report successful collaboration with international organisations. As an example of successful international collaboration, one of the respondents (with thematic focus) listed a global research project which is led by its alumni and implemented in 10 countries on the topic of coastal monitoring of essential ocean variables.

# Strengths

Table 2 lists the main strengths of the respondents of the SEA-EU countries in four different fields.

The main mission of the alumni organisation is to support a network of former students who in turn promote the reputation of the university, connect students with business and enable knowledge transfer. Because of this, their collaboration with the university is essential for the sustainability of the organisation. The results of our survey show that the majority of the respondents successfully collaborate with the university of origin.

An important aspect for keeping the alumni organisation alive and alumni engaged is through frequent communication. Our survey has shown that most alumni organisations use several communication channels, with mailing lists being used by nearly all respondents and most often on a monthly basis. Social media and dedicated alumni websites are also amongst the most frequent tools used, especially for more frequent communication (on daily or weekly basis).

Alumni tracking is another important task for organisations, as it not only helps them find out about employment status of their alumni, but can also help them get an insight about all the potential careers of particular study programmes. Even though generally challenging for many alumni organisations, our survey has shown that two thirds of the respondents have found a way to successfully keep track of their alumni.

*Table 2 main strengths of the surveyed alumni organisations*

Collaboration with the university of origin	91 of the surveyed alumni organisations collaborate with the university of origin at least in one activity per year, and 30 of them have more than 10 yearly activities. Also, collaboration is considered successful by 83 respondents.
Communication	More than two thirds have a dedicated alumni webpage (82 of 103) which is updated at least monthly by 69 respondents. Mailing lists, which report 95 of 103 respondents are used at least monthly by 73 of them. Most of the respondents use at least five communications channels (84 of 103).
Activities and events	Networking events are listed as the most successful activity and they are considered successful for 72 out of 84 respondents that organise them. Among the most successful activities are also lectures/workshops (69 of 79), informal social events (63 of 78) which are very important for creating the sense of community as well as conferences (52 of 66).
Alumni tracking	Most of the surveyed alumni organisations have managed to find at least one way of successfully tracking the careers of their alumni (74 of 103), while 14 more find a way which they rate neutral.

# Weaknesses

Table 3 lists the most common weaknesses, challenges, and difficulties of the surveyed alumni organisations that we found through the analysis of the responses and through the comments of the alumni associations. Lack of personnel and lack of interest by the alumni is denoted as a challenge for most of the respondents (68 of 103 respondents find this challenging). Lack of financing has been marked as challenging by 66 of 103 respondents, which is consistent with 39 of 103 respondents having either no employed staff or 1-2 employed staff (34 of 103) and relying much on unpaid volunteers.

Despite the fact that 74 of 103 respondents have found some way to successfully track the careers of their alumni, when indicating the eventual challenges and difficulties in developing and running the alumni organisation, tracking alumni has been marked as challenging by 56 of them. 16 of the respondents listed competition with other networking platforms as a difficulty. Also, when asked to comment on any other negative aspects encountered in their work, the respondents stated financial stability of the association, maintaining of the mailing list and structure of the alumni. 91 out of 103 respondents gave some examples of how they try to overcome the challenges. The majority make an effort through interesting lectures, workshops, online meetings, networking activities, and trips to motivate and gather alumni. Several mentioned applying for projects, some talking to relevant stakeholders and university administration. A couple of respondents mentioned better campaigns at social networks, active searching for new alumni and having personnel dedicated entirely to attract alumni.

*Table 3 The main weaknesses of surveyed alumni organisations*

Alumni interest	The common challenge and difficulty for 68 of 103 of the respondents is the lack of interest by the alumni
Alumni engagement	34 of 103 of the respondents answered that their members are disengaged with work performed by the organisations, and only 8 of 103 report highly engaged alumni.
Funding	Lack of financing and financial stability are considered to be among the greatest difficulties for the work of the alumni organisations (66 of 103)
Salaried staff	9 of 103 of respondents have no employed staff. 34 respondents have between 1 and 2 employees, and about 36 respondents have between 3 and 8 employees. This ratio of employed staff is much worse when looking at individual country's results, such as in the case of Croatia, where volunteers are most worthy for activities performed by alumni organisations. 73 respondents reported having between 1 and 600 unpaid volunteers. Also, the establishment of a career office is suggested. Some respondents warn: "Working staff is highly involved in the work of faculty, there is no time to deal with alumni."

## Alumni organisations and the marine, maritime and coastal thematics

Figure 15 shows that the majority of participants answered that they are not related to marine, maritime, and coastal themes (57 out of 103). On the other hand, 30 out of 103 respondents indicated that they were related to marine, maritime, and coastal themes. At the level of alliance, the French alumni organisations stand out, of which half of the respondents (10 out of 20) are related to the maritime theme. From the 30 respondents that are related to the maritime theme, more than half of them (18 out of 30) organise events targeting doctoral alumni whether as special events or as part of general events. Furthermore, from the 30 respondents related to the maritime theme, 20 of them collaborate with international organisations and other alumni organisations at least 1-5 times a year. These respondents could be taken into consideration when planning potential collaboration activities within the new alumni network.

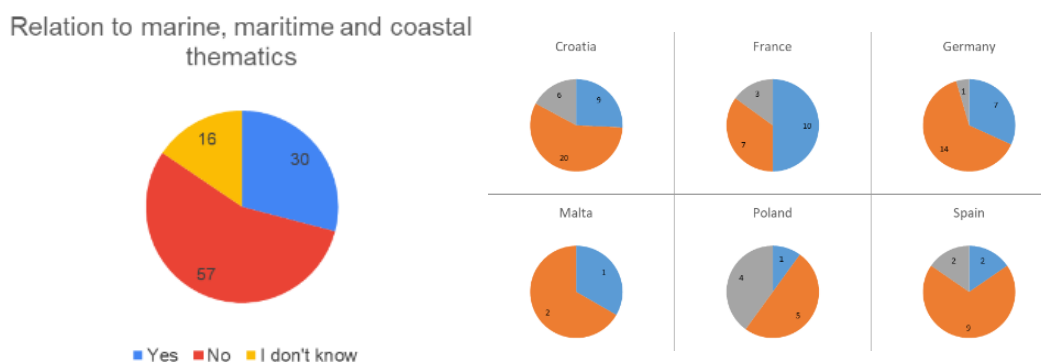


Figure 14 Number of organisations related to marine, maritime and coastal thematic at the level of alliance (top panel) and at the level of individual countries (bottom panel)

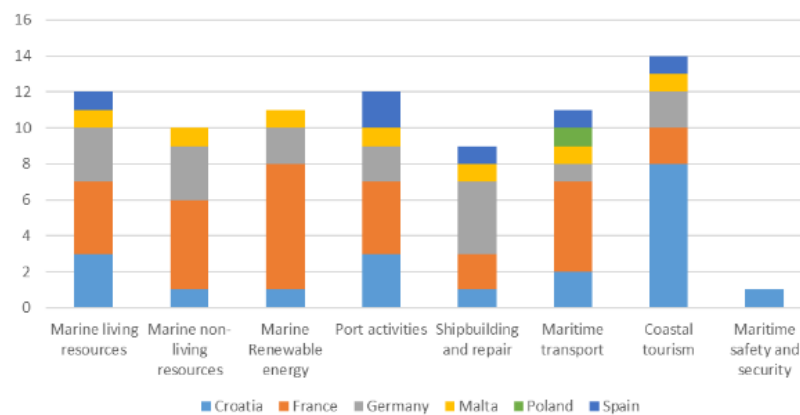


Figure 15 Number of organisations from each country that are related to a particular sector of the blue economy.

The largest number of them are related to coastal tourism, as shown in Figure 15. We can see that a great deal of them are from Croatia, which is expected due to the country's high dependency on tourism. Furthermore, 12 respondents are related to marine living resources, and an equal number of them to port activities. Maritime transport and marine renewable energy are listed by 11 respondents each, where the highest number of them are from France. Marine non-living resources have been selected by 10 respondents, mostly from France and Germany, whereas shipbuilding and repairs has been selected by 9 respondents, of which four are from Germany. Only one respondent has reported linkage with the maritime safety and security sector. However, we have noticed some respondents which are connected to several faculties in which part of the activities are connected to the marine, maritime, and coastal thematics seem not to be aware of this component of their alumni competences.

# Conclusion

The conclusion of this study provides an overview of the most important findings of the survey, as well as some of the most valuable material from the conducted case studies on national and global alumni organisations and networks.

Despite the different historical backgrounds and tradition, the survey has shown that alumni organisations of the SEA-EU countries have many things in common, among which also the growing interest for nurturing the alumni relations.

Based on the results of our survey, alumni organisations are most often founded or co-founded by the university of origin. They are mostly organised as associations, while universities are the second most common type. It is difficult to reliably discuss the size of the organisations as the membership is determined in various ways and keeping track of members is one of the biggest challenges for respondent alumni organisations. University financing and co-financing prevail as a source of funding for about half of the alumni organisations.

Organisations generally perceive lack of financing among their largest challenges, but despite that, less than half of them charge membership fees. Offers by the organisations to alumni are mainly participation at university events, access to alumni directory, and university literature, whereas some alumni organisations also offer special discounts to life-long learning courses and professional development, special discounts at sports clubs, travel agencies and shops, and less frequent access to university licences and software.

Alumni organisations also organise informal social events, networking events, various charity and fundraising events, as well as provide assistance with job and student placement. Since the particular focus of the SEA-EU DOC project is doctoral students, we hoped to gain some valuable experience for creating the network of doctoral alumni, doctoral students, and businesses. It is interesting to note that “in the end of 20th century, in the university environment, interest in the alumni question took shape within the doctoral student association, acting to monitor the careers and help the professional integration of their graduates.”

**(Bousket & Belloc, 2020.)**

However, few alumni organisations target their activities specifically for PhD graduates, but instead rather include them in general activities. Examples of successful activities include joint organisation with research organisations or universities of round tables and various events as well as leadership courses for young scientists, lectures, and workshops done by PhD students, promotion of PhD students positions and their activities.

**The preferred option for communication with alumni is the mailing list, although most organisations use several communication channels. However, some organisations reported challenges in maintaining an accurate mailing list. Other social media is also highly used, whereas LinkedIn, as the world's largest professional network is used by nearly two thirds of the organisations.**

Joint activities with the university of origin are frequent and such collaboration was rated successful for 83 out of 103 surveyed organisations. Some alumni organisations suggested strengthening it by more communication with university management, better visibility at the university pages, and more funding. This collaboration is also important in order to be able to contact and attract new members and keep an accurate track of their careers. Although most have found at least one way to track the alumni, comments suggest that there is desire for further improvement. Lack of interest of alumni and lack of engagement of the alumni members are among the biggest difficulties that organisations are experiencing. They try to overcome them by organising interesting events and networking activities.

The cooperation with the economic sector and with international organisations is not as strong as the cooperation with the university of origin. Some of the successful examples of such activities include accepting students for internship at companies, support by companies on workshops and job presentations, events with international lecturers that attract alumni and students, and events that enable networking. This collaboration is considered essential for better preparedness of students for the non-academic sector, and should be taken into account when creating the alumni network. Finally, most alumni organisations readily cooperate with other alumni organisations, which means there is potential in establishing cooperation, particularly with those that have marine, maritime, and coastal thematics.

Lack of financing is reported as a difficulty for nearly two thirds of the organisations, which explains why most organisations have no paid employed or very few staff and rely on unpaid volunteers. Forming a dedicated office for alumni was suggested as one of the possible solutions for improvement of the alumni organisation activities. Having dedicated staff is thus an important element to consider in the creation of the network.

**Even though some organisations provided impressive results in this survey, most of them are still at the beginning with their alumni networks and can still learn a lot, and are willing to do so, from the example of global alumni networks, in particular the Anglo-Saxon based ones. The intention is not to copy paste their models, but rather gain understanding of the alumni relations and get ideas for designing a model that will work for the blue community of the SEA-EU alliance.**

## Lessons learned

For the needs of the SEA-EU-DOC project we have conducted an additional survey, with 14 case studies (11 global networks and 3 national ones).

Within these 14 studied alumni organisations it is interesting to point out that 3 of them relate to universities from the U.S.A. (Cal Alumni Association, Penn State Alumni Association, and MIT alumni association), 4 of them are in relation to European universities (University of Helsinki alumni association, Toulouse Alumni doctors, The Sorbonne University network, Association of former students and friends of Dental faculty of the University of Zagreb), 2 of them have a sectoral focus with an emphasis on the maritime theme (International Ocean Institute alumni and NF-POGO network for the Ocean) and 5 of them are global European networks related to research and mobility (Marie Curie Alumni association, The Oyster group as a part of the European research network, The Erasmus Mundus Student Network, The Erasmus Mundus Association, and Max Planck Alumni Association).

Although these organisations have different focuses and contexts, through their case studies we can draw conclusions that can be helpful to any emerging alumni organisation.

The good practice we can learn from American alumni organisations is related to online portals. These online hubs can be used by alumni organisations as a forum for students and alumni to connect and get most of their career path. The LionLink (Penn State Alumni Association), Infinite connection platform (MIT Alumni Association) and Berkley Virtual Career Network are examples of online portals where their graduates, students, and alumni foster lasting relationships and gain career guidance. One of the benefits that MIT Infinite connections platform offers, is a lifelong email address for its members. This is something that could be considered by an emerging alumni network or any network that is looking to increase its benefits. For instance, The Sorbonne University network, one newly established alumni organisation, plans to include this benefit in the coming years.

Alumni organisations linked to European universities also have some interesting practices that help students develop their career skills. To enhance the student employment and develop their career skills, the alumni association from the University of Helsinki has developed the Ambassador program. The aim of this programme is to help young students who have not yet built work-life networks, by assigning them to the ambassador from the alumni association to answer all their questions. Another good example of connecting students and alumni is internship practice in alumni dental offices nurtured by the University of Zagreb Dental faculty Alumni Association.

As means of enhancing alumni networking, organisations can consider establishing clubs within its network. We noticed that many organisations leave space to its members to self-organise in internal communities named groups or clubs. These clubs/groups operate independently, but with the support of the association. The Alumni Association of the University of Helsinki supports their local clubs in organising their first events, finding local alumni and creating club rules. It is similar to the Max Planck Alumni Association, where clubs gather members who share affiliation to the same Institute or common interest.

Another common thing that accompanies clubs are LinkedIn profiles. In all studied global networks, a strong presence on the LinkedIn channel stands out. Apart from LinkedIn, Twitter is a good communication channel that allows reaching a large audience, which, for instance, the OYSTER group uses on a daily basis. According to them, Twitter is a good channel because it gives visibility to activities and is useful for organising group members working on a project through different channels. On the other hand, LinkedIn, in their opinion, is good for the non-academic world.

In order to get to know their alumni better, track their careers, as well as to improve the network's work, organisations can consider performing some surveys. From the examples of large organisations such as Toulouse doctoral alumni, The Sorbonne alumni network, Nano alumni network for the ocean we can learn that they all conduct questionnaires to improve the business of the organisation and to follow the trends among students. The representative of Toulouse doctoral alumni uses doctoral observatory, which analyses surveys on career follow-up of doctoral students via the Dumesri questionnaire that takes place every two years, as well as via university surveys. The students can also benefit from the surveys, as the results provide them with an overview of current job situations on the market and can help them in defining their new job search strategy.

Organisations should also foster good internal relationships, since employee motivation showed to play an important role in organising events and activities in the examples of global alumni organisations. The representative of the French chapter of Marie Curie Alumni Association emphasises that without motivation nothing happens. Even large networks depend on the engagement of volunteers and their motivation. From the University of Helsinki and Erasmus mundus association we can learn how these organisations support and coordinate volunteer work. An interesting practice of awarding the volunteers with volunteer work certificates comes from the Alumni Association of the University of Helsinki. In the case of the Erasmus Mundus association, volunteers play a key role in increasing the programme's visibility. The volunteers of this organisation are grouped into country representatives and programme representatives, and they act as contact persons between the students, alumni and coordinators of the association.

Regarding the international character and size of these global networks, we can learn that such organisations have local and global management. However, it is mandatory to have good coordination between those levels. One way to ensure this is to have the board involving members from the multi-level structure. Such a board can also serve as a guardian of integrity between internal structures of the organisation and the alumni themselves.

Organisations should also find a way to foster students' and alumni's interest and involvement in the alumni organisation, so that it doesn't just become "a stock of alumni", as is pointed out in the case study of the University of Sorbonne alumni network. This network has also conducted questionnaires on the topic of alumni motivation, where they found that compared to the other students, PhDs want to establish collaborations in research and innovation. This could be a good base for alumni attachment. Also, the maritime character of the SEA-EU-DOC network has a strong potential to forge a common identity, regardless of the alumni's institution of origin. The sense of belonging to these disciplines can be further strengthened by the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 declared by the United Nations.

We have seen from the above examples of renowned networks that there are many ways in which alumni organisations can establish and organise themselves in order to provide functional, beneficial and radiant networks for their alumni. Being a member of such a network opens horizons. We have the freedom to determine the goals and strategy of our future alumni network, but still with examples and recommendations of successful networks we can identify practices that are certainly a recipe for success. Even though some of these practices take many years of investment, given the long-term (10 years) vision for the SEA-EU alliance, with dedicated time and motivation there is enough time to create a strong network with a good image of excellence and outreach in the blue doctoral community.

# Appendices

## Appendix I: Alumni organisations that responded to the questionnaire

Name of the organisation	Country
Alumni ASUS/Almae Matris Universitatis Studiorum Spalatensis Alumni	Croatia
US Alumni Community of Croatia	Croatia
ALUMNI EFRI	Croatia
UDRUGA BIVŠIH STUDENATA ARHITEKTONSKOG FAKULTETA SVEUČILIŠTA U ZAGREBU (ALUMNI-AF)	Croatia
ASSOCIATION OF SOCIETIES OF FORMER STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB	Croatia
Hrvatska udruga alumnija Ekonomskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu/The Croatian association of alumni at the Faculty of Economics & Business, University of Zagreb	Croatia
Udruga bivših studenata Politehnike Sveučilišta u Rijeci - ALUMNI POLIRI	Croatia
ALUMNI FTHM	Croatia
Association of former students and friends of the Faculty of Food Technology Osijek (shorted TehNOS)	Croatia
Chevening Alumni Croatia	Croatia
Association of former students and friends of the School of Dental Medicine, University of Zagreb	Croatia
Alumni BiolOs (Alumni of the Department of Biology at the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek)	Croatia
Udruga Alumni Filozofskoga fakulteta u Rijeci	Croatia
Alma Matris Alumni Medicinae Univarsitatis Zagrabiensis	Croatia
Udruga mladih i Alumni FET Pula	Croatia
Alumni University of Applied Health Sciences	Croatia
Udruga diplomiranih studenata Fakulteta za odgojne i obrazovne znanosti Pula	Croatia
Alumni klub Akademije primijenjenih umjetnosti Sveučilišta u Rijeci	Croatia
Alumni Club of the Faculty of Law Osijek	Croatia
Alumni PMFST	Croatia
Udruga bivših studenata i prijatelja Agronomskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (Almae matris Alumni Croaticae – Facultas Agriculturae Zagrabiensis ) AMAC -FAZ	Croatia
ALUMNI KLUB MEFOS	Croatia

Alumni klub Odjela za matematiku Sveučilišta u Rijeci	Croatia
Društvo bivših studenata Katoličkoga bogoslovnog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (DBS-KBF / AMAC-FTC))	Croatia
Alumni udruga Filozofskog fakulteta Osijek	Croatia
ALUMNI KEMO	Croatia
Alumni klub Veleučilišta Nikola Tesla u Gospiću	Croatia
Alumni klub Libertas međunarodnog sveučilišta	Croatia
Udruga bivših studentica i studenata Fakulteta političkih znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu	Croatia
Alumni TVZ	Croatia
Udruga bivših studenata i prijatelja Kemijsko-tehnološkog fakulteta u Splitu( Almae Matris Alumni Chemico-Technologicae Facultatis Spalatensis)	Croatia
Alumni MORE Split	Croatia
Udruga diplomiranih studenata Ekonomskog fakulteta u Splitu (Alumni S.E.F.)	Croatia
Udruga Alumni Sveučilišnoga odjela za forenzične znanosti – Forensis (skraćeno: Alumni forenzike - Forensis)	Croatia
Udruga bivših studenata i prijatelja FFST	Croatia
NEOMA ALUMNI	France
Alumni LR Excelia	France
AI ISEN (Association des Ingénieurs ISEN)	France
Toulouse Alumni Docteurs	France
Sorbonne Université	France
Service relations Alumni de l'Université de Strasbourg	France
UPVD Alumni	France
AEN	France
CERDI ALUMNI	France
INSA Alumni	France
OYSTER (Orienting Young ScienTists of EuromaRine)	France
Alumn'IAE Montpellier	France
Ingénieurs Et Scientifiques de France	France
INSA Alumni Rennes	France
esix alumni	France
Marie Curie Alumni Association	France
TSM Alumni	France
Amicale ISAE SUPAERO ENSICA	France
ENSTA Bretagne ALUMNI	France

Carré Géoarchi	France
alumni halenses	Germany
THD-Alumni	Germany
AlumniNet e.V.	Germany
TU & YOU (TU & YOU Alumni und Stiftung Technische Universität Hamburg)	Germany
Alumni der Universität Bremen e.V.	Germany
Referat für Alumni-Arbeit	Germany
Alumni Management of FAU	Germany
Alumni-Club WWU Münster	Germany
Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg	Germany
LMU Management Alumni	Germany
Alumni-Club Worms e.V.	Germany
alumnus (Alumni-Netzwerk der Universität Stuttgart)	Germany
Alumni Göttingen e.V.	Germany
KölnAlumni	Germany
Absolventennetzwerk EUFH e.V.	Germany
Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf	Germany
Alumni-Netzwerk der Universität Hohenheim	Germany
Leipzig Alumni	Germany
Athene Alumni	Germany
NF-POGO Alumni Network for the Ocean (NANO)	Germany
IBI Alumni Initiative	Germany
Alumni Relations Management	Germany
Institute of Digital Games - Alumni	Malta
International Ocean Institute	Malta
JAYE Malta Alumni	Malta
Stowarzyszenie Absolwentów Szkoły Głównej Handlowej w Warszawie (SGH Alumni Association)	Poland
Klub Absolwentów Logistyki i Transportu	Poland
Klub Stypendystów Fundacji Kościuszkowskiej	Poland
Stowarzyszenie Absolwentów Politechniki Gdańskiej	Poland
Association of Silesian University Alumni	Poland
Alumni Association of Cracow University of Technology	Poland
University of Economics in Katowice Graduates Association "Collegium"	Poland
Stowarzyszenie Absolwentów Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu	Poland

Stowarzyszenie absolwentów Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Poznaniu	Poland
Uniwersytet Warszawski – Klub Absolwentów	Poland
PROGRAMA ALUMNI UCM	Spain
Alumni URJC	Spain
Asociación de Antiguos Alumnos y Amigos de la UPCT (A4 UPCT)	Spain
AGRALUZ	Spain
Alumni UPV - Universitat Politècnica de Valencia	Spain
Alumni UBU	Spain
ALUMNI CADIZ	Spain
A3U-Alumni UPNA	Spain
Alumni Universitat de Barcelona	Spain
Deusto Alumni	Spain
ASOCIACIÓN DE ANTIGUOS ALUMNOS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE HUELVA "3 DE MARZO"	Spain
Asociación Alumni de la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria	Spain
Programa de Antiguos Alumnos y Amigos de la Universidad de Almería	Spain

## Appendix II: National case studies

### 1. Case study on Association of former students and friends of Dental Faculty of the University of Zagreb

Established in 2013, this young association ingeniously works on connecting its students with alumni of the Dental Faculty of the University of Zagreb. In cooperation with alumni, the faculty's management has designed a scheme in which they send students for one semester to do part of the study at the dentist's office - their future natural and professional environment. Students get an assigned tutor, an alumni of the Dental Faculty, to demonstrate the daily work and organisation at the dentist's office. The alumni in return get help from the younger colleagues. For the purposes of this practice, faculty has made an electronic booklet with a list of all the procedures that students must undertake in their professional practice.

Through this practice, students learn practical elements of what they have learned in the classroom. After the practice, each student receives a package of dental materials (dentist coat with faculty emblem and basic dental kit). Each dental office receives a door sticker stating that the office is a collaborative institution of the Dental Faculty for that year.

This practice is of great honour for tutors, primarily because they have the opportunity to train and shape the younger colleague in their professional path, but also because by doing so they maintain their collaboration with the faculty. 10% of students achieve successful cooperation with alumni by becoming their employees.

In the last year of the study, students are informed about the existence and importance of the alumni association. Number of students are also invited to attend annual alumni events, through which they can network with different generations of alumni and monitor the exchange of experiences, so one day they would start convening their generations to socialise and exchange practices and ideas. At their graduation, each student receives a bag with a sponsor's gift and faculty insignia, as well as a promotional leaflet of the alumni association including the application form.

Success of this young association is built on strong support from the faculty members, their active involvement in the work performed by the association as well as the involvement of alumni in study programmes of the faculty.

## 2, Case study on Toulouse Alumni doctors and Sorbonne University network

A contact list of 65 national organisations was created. 18 national organisations responded to the questionnaire. We conducted a video interview with four of them:

- AI ISEN (Association of ISEN engineers) with Laurent Moussu, vice-president,
- Toulouse Alumni Docteurs with Lolla Choucavy, project manager,
- Ingénieurs et Scientifiques de France (IESF) with Jean Dambreville, Executive Director,
- Sorbonne University with Arnaud Magnin, Director of Alumni Relations.

The interviews lasted an average of one hour. We selected the Toulouse Alumni Docteurs network and the Sorbonne University network to carry out this case study.

### Toulouse Alumni Doctors

The Toulouse doctoral college (which includes 15 doctoral schools) is the initiator of this network and it is the Université Fédérale de Toulouse Midi-Pyrénées that is in charge of the project. Lolla Choucavy indicates that the network is "an institutional support service [...], it is not an association. ». The Toulouse Alumni Docteurs network was created in 2018 and has been coordinated since that date by Lolla Choucavy. Employed by the university, she is part of the "Toulouse doctoral school" service. The Toulouse doctoral school of doctors aims on the one hand to "mutualize certain aspects of the doctorate in Toulouse such as transdisciplinary doctoral training, costs, organisation and catalogue", includes "the observatory of the Doctorate for the pursuit of career after the doctorate", and on the other hand is committed to "dematerialize registrations, defence etc., [...] and have an alumni network".

To be a member of the alumni network, one must "be a doctoral student or holder of a doctorate from one of Toulouse's institutions, regardless of the discipline and the year of defence". In addition to this "basic public", since 2020, a "dedicated online platform" allows "PhD supervisors and research directors, recruiters and "friends of the network", PhDs working in the region but who are not from its institutions" to have an account.

The Toulouse Alumni Doctor Network is "not a platform like PHD Talents that recruits PhDs, we really offer a service for our graduates". This service is "exclusively focused on career development". "In Toulouse, there are already several alumni networks in the universities and engineering schools. Accounts for PhDs are rare. The idea is "not to replace [these already existing networks] but to add a specific "doctorate" layer because these are very specific needs".

As far as the financing of the Toulouse Alumni Doctors Network is concerned, it comes from the Region on the one hand and from the University on the other. The financing is important and renewed "with innovations every year". Membership in the network is free for members. When asked whether the service should evolve towards paying memberships, Ms. Choucavy answers: "It is a public service that we offer, and to go back and offer a paying service would not make sense". In the long term, it might be possible to work on an economic project based on sponsorship and donations. Indeed, the Federal University of Toulouse Midi-Pyrénées "has an endowment fund". By working on a "harmonisation of the actions of the endowment fund", the Network of Toulouse Alumni Doctors "could benefit from the actions of the endowment fund to finance either a part-time job (human resources) or to finance events" for example. However, for Ms. Choucavy, the question of the economic model of the network must be discussed from the beginning: an important piece of advice to take into account for the SEA-EU DOC project.

### The Sorbonne University Network

The YouTube launch video of the Sorbonne University Network dates back to November 30, 2020 (Appendix). Arnaud Magnin has invested full-time on this project for already two years (since 2019). It was only in March 2021 that the network "became really operational". In the meantime, it was necessary for Mr. Magnin and his team to "establish the budget, to have premises, and other "silly" things such as the information systems, which have to be chosen, found, taken; there are markets... All that is complicated".

Sorbonne University is the merger, in 2018, of the University of Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV) and the University Pierre and Marie Curie (UPMC-Paris VI). The creation of the Sorbonne University network was desired and is in line with the objectives of the new Sorbonne University, which aim to respond to "scientific issues that require a multidisciplinary approach and a partnership approach (by developing) a network of international partners, academic, political, economic, citizens, etc."

This ambitious goal requires resources to match. Today, a team of 7 people work at the direction of the alumni network of Sorbonne University. Of these 7 people, three have been redeployed from their functions at the university and have been working full time for the network since 2018: an assistant, a person from the Sorbonne University foundation and Mr. Magnin. IN 2019, two people were recruited, in charge of the Customer Relationship management (CRM) strategy and one in charge of the CRM information system (SICRM). In November and January 2020, two additional people were recruited, one in charge of the creation and animation of clubs and the other in charge of alumni relations.

Sorbonne University is one of the twenty or so members of the League of European Research Universities (LERU). This association "brings together research-intensive universities" and has working groups, notably on the themes of alumni and fundraising. It was within the framework of this association that Mr. Magnin "met with some 20 universities in continental Europe, the United Kingdom and Ireland, to prepare [their] strategy and ask them how to launch a network, what to do, how long it takes, etc. ». All the universities he met with indicated that "it takes about ten years to get up to speed" for an alumni network. It is interesting to note that this delay is also observed in "English universities that started to create alumni relations departments at the beginning of the 2000s, even though they had very old alumni networks that had already been established for a very long time, but they themselves felt that yes, ten years was what it took to get there, because there are many things to set up.

The funding of the Sorbonne University network comes from the university itself, since the network is a department of the university. Membership fees, as for many university networks, are free. Sorbonne University has a foundation that has existed for more than twelve years. It is the foundation that "got a foot in the door" and was "the first to develop relationships with alumni, for their own needs". In creating the alumni network, a lot of work was done between the network's management and the foundation to have "a common strategy, common IT tools, share our databases and ensure that we have working methods together".

".

### The meaning and role of alumni networks

For Mr. Magnin, the "problem of professional integration of PhDs" is a "problem encountered by all universities". However, Mr. Magnin adds that "alumni networks are just a small part [of the answer] to this problem". To address this particular issue, the University of Pierre et Marie Curie created the Institut de formation doctorale, which became the Institut de formation doctorale de Sorbonne Université, now called the Collège doctoral. This service deals with "federating and bringing together doctors, whose cohesion is hindered by their scattering in different laboratories", and the training of doctors. "Doctors are no longer trained from the moment they are in their lab, in which they only do research, while they still need training. So, the Collège doctoral offers them scientific training but not only. It also deals with professional integration, knowledge of the company, knowledge of the job market, and they offer a lot of meetings with former doctors from the university, visits to companies, but not only, also with professionals who are not necessarily doctors or alumni of the university, but who are professionals from industry and the economic sector to help them in their orientation and professional integration".

An alumni network considered only through the angle of orientation and professional insertion would be a "utilitarian vision", but alumni networks can allow other things. According to Mr. Magnin, it is not difficult to find people willing to "share their experience and accompany the younger generations". But if we take the concrete example given by Mr. Magnin (and reported by other organisations), for a survey for the benefit of the network "112,000 graduates were contacted, 6,000 responded, of the 6,000, there are 3,500 who say they want to invest in the orientation and professional integration of students", however the number of students requiring support for their orientation and professional integration "is rather 400 to 450" per year. There is a "distortion" that would worry Mr. Magnin if his network did not offer alumni something other than career guidance and integration.

To offer something else to his alumni, Mr. Magnin intends to need another "6 to 7 years". He does not want his network to look like "a stock of alumni", a "network that would merely live on". "The network must be alive, the alumni must be involved in it, they must co-construct it". To do this, students and alumni must find their interest, their pleasure in coming back regularly, what "will motivate them, what will push them, what common causes, what appetites" will make them come back. We must ask ourselves "what we are doing for them".

In their survey, when asked what would motivate them to get involved, Sorbonne University alumni PhDs largely answered, "compared to other students, that it is in research and innovation. So PhDs want, as much as others, to support students in the orientation and professional integration but they have twice as much desire than others to establish collaborations in research and innovation". For him, the SEA-EU DOC project should propose things in this area at the risk of "doubly" missing the point "because we would not fully exploit what we can do with PhDs, and [...] because we would simply promote the doctorate in the private industrial sector, while this does not only happen through the alumni network".

To get out of the utilitarian side, Mr. Magnin advises having an alumni board that "is a bit of a guardian of the integrity, of the generosity that can be deployed in the strategy". This board will allow "to develop the alumni commitment, but whose job will not be to implement the commitment". It will thus serve as a buffer between the prejudicial wills of the university's internal structures and the alumni themselves. As an example of a case known to Mr. Magnin, "if the foundation is in charge of alumni relations, it will do so to attract donations, and if the continuing education department is in charge, it will do so to develop continuing education and to collect money within the framework of its continuing education policy. [...] If we want [the alumni] to perform better with us and that together, we meet the scientific goals of today, we can't limit ourselves to that utility. There has to be something more. That is why it is important to have this board. One cannot be judge and jury".

We would like to point out that the results of our global study on French alumni organisations are to be taken with caution in view of the large number of participants from engineering and business schools. Here is an opportunity to emphasise it once again with the testimony of Mr. Magnin. "A school positions itself on the higher education market as providing experience, a job, a network, and therefore alumni. While the university positions itself on the higher education market as providing knowledge and high-level research. Now, universities are starting to add to this by saying "we also provide work experience, integration, alumni and student life" whereas schools are doing the opposite". Moreover, the number of alumni is not equal between universities and Grandes Ecoles, they are "not on the same volume stakes... When you make a network with 5000 graduates and when you make a network with 400 000 graduates, it's just not at all the same subject, really not the same subject".

### Questions to ask yourself when creating the SEA-EU DOC network

During our interview with Mr. Magnin, he advised us to ask ourselves certain questions at the start of the SEA-EU DOC project and to answer them sincerely. First of all, he advised us to ask ourselves some questions on the basis of the network itself, "why create an alumni network, why do we need it, what will it be used for?" to be able to offer alumni a clear argument, a comprehensible story. According to Mr. Magnin, it is essential that students and alumni understand what is expected of them and why they should get involved. For example, the alumni network of Sorbonne University emerged at the time of the creation of the new Sorbonne University, "that this university was created with an objective that was to respond to scientific issues that require an approach, on the one hand multidisciplinary, on the other hand partnership, and that if we want to develop a network of international partners, academic, political, economic, networks of citizens, etc., well there, the alumni network is quite appropriate. The alumni network is therefore one of the answers to Sorbonne University's strategic and scientific objectives, it tells a story and allows us to explain to the alumni what roles they will be assigned.

Next, we will question the basis of "alumni attachment". There can be two types of attachment: institution-based or discipline-based. If SEA-EU DOC alumni do not show attachment to their discipline, creating a network without this basis "is complicated". But for Mr. Magnin, marine sciences, the discipline of the SEA-EU DOC alumni, is a strong potential. For him it is a good "ground to connect people regardless of their university". This discipline is "what motivates [the alumni] every day, because a commitment to the sea is something visceral, related to the protection of / commitment to the planet, love of seaweed, etc., these are all things that lead to societal commitment and personal satisfaction."

If it is sometimes difficult to find answers to these questions, Mr. Magnin recommends performing a survey, which, admittedly, "takes time and perhaps a little money" but allows us to get to know the alumni better. For their survey, the Sorbonne University network resorted to "skill sponsorship with an agency owned by one of [their] alumni, that's also the advantage of the network". For him, the network would "never have progressed as much without the survey, it is a great gas pedal."

However, Mr. Magnin indicates that he has some reservations about the stated objectives of the SEA-EU DOC project: "To want to create an inter-university network on a single discipline seems to me as to take the issue by the most complicated route". It might be necessary to find out from the six institutions in the SEA-EU consortium whether there are any "courses in this discipline [marine sciences] that have developed an embryonic network or an association, or that bring back alumni for their own activities". Other French alumni organisations have indicated that they have the same reservations. According to them, the SEA-EU DOC network, which for the moment has only three years of funding, should perhaps be based on one or more existing networks. But this project "is still a very good idea."

### Time for alumni networks

As we saw in the presentation of the Sorbonne University alumni network, Mr. Magnin indicated that he still needed 6 to 7 years to set up his network. Indeed, according to our research and the information gathered during the various interviews, and to quote a phrase from Mr. Magnin, "the alumni time-scale is a little long". In order to better understand this dimension, let us recall that a student's curriculum to reach the master's degree is five years, and seven to eight years for the doctoral degree. Moreover, the network must be impregnated by the students from the very first years of their studies. For the alumni network to reach a "cruising speed", it must become a "habit", the alumni must have understood "what it is for and that it has become automatic". Only then, at the end of their studies, will graduates be able to say to themselves "yes, I am an alumni, and I am going to get involved [in my network]". It is therefore necessary to go through the entire student curriculum, that is to say 5 to 8 years, for the first alumni of a university to emerge.

### Global management

To follow its members, Lolla Choucavy uses the doctoral observatory, which analyses surveys on the career follow-up of doctoral students via the national Dumesri questionnaire that takes place every two years, as well as via university surveys. According to them, the figures from these surveys can be a "good support for doctoral students [for their] job search strategy". It allows them to "start from what exists", for example "there are that many fixed-term contracts, that many permanent contracts in such and such a field". On the other hand, a "quicker" way of "accessing people directly" is to do "keyword searches on LinkedIn". Finally, the alumni platform can be an "entry point for job searches" since "network members fill in their profile with the companies they work for".

The management of the website dedicated to the PhD alumni network has been developed with the AlumForce platform. According to Ms. Choucavy, "AlumForce works with many higher education institutions and universities, so they know how it works, we don't waste time negotiating a very complicated quote". Even if this turnkey solution makes it possible to lighten the technical part, Mrs. Choucavy indicates that the management and animation tasks which fall to her remain a "rather heavy work". Other alumni network management platforms exist such as NetAnswer, which "works more with associations or small schools (engineering or business)", HiveBrite, Edenet or Selforce, this last solution being used by the Sorbonne University network.

### Association or university management

When asked what type of structure should carry the network in the case of a university network, Mr. Magnin supports the idea of an internal management rather than an association and here are his reasons.

- On the one hand, for the sustainability of the project, an existing structure, internal to the university, avoids fluctuations in staff/volunteers and time devoted to the network. There is a need to ensure "a constancy of availability and activity". Ms. Choucavy confirmed the preference for a university for the management of the network in order to make this project sustainable, indicating that it is necessary "to have allocated, dedicated human resources".
- On the other hand, an internal management at the university allows a control, a mastery of the data on the alumni. It is sometimes difficult, if not impossible, to recover data from an organisation when it disappears, whether it is an association or a company. "Today, one cannot have an alumni relations policy, nor an institutional policy, without having a data policy."

However, Mr. Magnin indicates that unlike an association where "by definition, it is [the alumni]", the fact that a network is directed by an internal university management can lead to difficulties, especially in terms of ownership of the network by the alumni, so that they become "actors themselves".

One of the objectives of the Sorbonne University network could be, when the time comes, the creation of an alumni committee, made up of senior university staff and alumni. But the network is not there yet. In the meantime, a committee of five alumni accompanies the strategy implemented.

### Proposed activities

The Toulouse Alumni Docteurs network offers "a lot of job offers, a lot of portraits, advice from recruiters, sharing of recruiters". A large part of the content is open to all, without opening an account. For Ms. Choucavy, "Not doing events is missing the point of what people are looking for." Her goal is "an average of 8 events per year". She organises "local events, [alternating] between round tables or a panel of alumni who talk about their experiences on a particular subject, and workshops led by service providers or doctors."

At Sorbonne University, the events and activities of the alumni network take place in "clubs", sometimes pre-existing the creation of the network. These "clubs" are "linked to the university but do not have a legal existence in their own right and are run by alumni". They are hierarchically organised by sector (by business sector), geography (with foreign cities as well), interests (sports, culture) or themes (doctors, entrepreneurs). If alumni associations already exist within the university, the network works with them or supports them in their activities.

We can find in Gilles Bousquet's book the different events, activities and benefits that the Sorbonne University alumni network thinks will happen in the coming years. We will underline the will of a "continuity of the missions and services of the university", that is to say "access to knowledge" through communication supports, privileged events with researchers, programs in sciences, culture and society, access to libraries and documentary platforms, lifelong learning programs. But also the will to allow access to digital services "under the same conditions and in the same digital spaces before and after graduation". As a result, alumni will be able to access content adapted "according to their profile and their own choices" to academic documents, scientific content, the alumni directory, a platform for employment, lifelong learning opportunities, etc.

They should be offered a lifetime e-mail address. For orientation and professional integration, they will have access to a "career center" composed of "experienced scientific executives and staff. They should also have access to sports facilities. The network will remain free of charge and without membership, it will be enough to be a graduate, no registration will be required. Certain events, paid services or one-time financial contributions may be offered. The "communication and events [will be] accessible through digital". Alumni will be able to receive a "specific quarterly newsletter" and their alumni network will have a "strong presence" on LinkedIn. They will have a "dedicated information system" and "simultaneous or deferred online broadcasts" (access to a video library, podcasts, webinars), "events and meetings".

### Rituals

Rituals can be interesting for initiating and maintaining a culture and attachment of alumni to the network. Rituals can be oriented according to the type of attachment alumni have, whether it is to their institution, their lab or their discipline. To the question of whether rituals could be implemented in a network of PhDs, Ms. Choucavy answers that PhDs are a particular audience, they are not necessarily attached to their institution but rather to their research laboratory. She thinks that "graduation ceremonies are part of the rituals of an alumni network, but it is a bit difficult because the defences take place throughout the year, but the young PhDs who are interested would note that in 6 months they will have their graduation ceremony". According to her, PhDs who have already graduated and who would come to meet the new graduates would make sense, but "it has to be institutionalised, it has to start so that it becomes a ritual".

### Collaborations

Concerning collaborations with the economic sector, according to Ms. Choucavy, the ideal situation would be to "call on the institutions' corporate relations department, because they are dedicated contacts who have the socio-economic map of the field". Alumni can also bring their own network, "PhD students do not necessarily realise right away that they are building their network and that they know people who are important for their career." The PhDs she contacted who were willing to engage in the network "were ready to make a real return of experience only between 5 and 10 years after [their] PhD defence". There is also a "lot of personal networking" for those in charge of managing and animating the alumni network.

To work on collaboration with the socio-economic sector, LinkedIn is the preferred social media. It allows "to have access to HR, to the CEO of any large private socio-economic structure". But it is a task for which it is necessary to spend a lot of time "looking for contacts in companies, talking about the platform of the alumni network, where they [entrepreneurs, business leaders] can register". Ms. Choucavy emphasises that the "response and success rate is not huge, but if there is at least one response out of ten, then it is already a success. As for the academic sector, Ms. Choucavy passes on postdoctoral offers from laboratories to PhDs and reminds them that LinkedIn and Twitter media can sometimes be used to find such offers.

## TIPS

During the interviews, we were able to glean some tips for starting an alumni network project:

- "Give yourself room to manoeuvre".
- "A lot of work, renewal". The alumni network is "cyclical", it alternates between periods of intense workload and quieter periods.
- "Set up indicators and objectives."

Be very clear "on the relationship with the foundation from the beginning of the creation of the network", "what role" it will play in the network, "what objectives the foundation assigns to the alumni".

## Weaknesses

We were able to identify some weaknesses in the organisations, with the help of the interviewees.

- "A lack of tradition and culture of alumni networks in the university". "This is a weak point with regard to students, and a weak point with regard to the university itself." It is this lack of alumni culture that also requires a long time, "7 to 10 years" to reach the "cruising speed" of the alumni network. This is the time it takes for a "general acculturation of the community" to take place.
- A lack or total absence of "customer relationship management (CRM) culture, functions and skills" and "marketing". These skills are "more and more in public organisations". These are all "the strategies or actions that are implemented to deploy and maintain relationships with an individual". This discipline, still little used in universities, would allow to give "a global and coherent image of the university" and this throughout "the life of a person in his relationship with the university", through "all his lived experiences", which must "encourage action and collaboration with the university", from his entry to the university and for the rest of his life. CRM requires "subject matter expertise, information systems, processes, etc. ».

## Strong points

The interviews also revealed strengths that give a good potential for an alumni network. This information can be collected through surveys of alumni.

- "Extremely high attachment, extremely high pride" of alumni in the networks studied.
- This pride and attachment is based on what is "the heart of the action: the excellence of the training, the excellence of the research and the excellence of the research teachers".

## Appendix III: Global case studies

### 1. Case study on MIT alumni association

**One community, infinite connection** is a slogan of Massachusetts Institute of Technology alumni association, the global association with more than 137,000 alumni.

To provide its members with unlimited connections around the globe and across every stage of life, MIT has established the platform Infinite Connection - online hub for alumni, students, postdocs and associate members to get the most out of their career path.

This hub enables the students, alumni and MIT friends to engage with Institute and each other through registration for f2f and online events, a social platform and connecting to online content.

The Infinite Connection (the "IC") is a secure area requiring login where alumni, current students, their parents, associate members and friends of the Association may manage their own account and benefit from various services.

Through the IC, MIT members can search the online alumni directory to connect with fellow alumni in their region, industry, course, living group or more. Members can also keep their personal and professional info up-to-date on a secure, 24/7 platform and they can register for email for life, which gives them an @alum.mit.edu email address.

In December 2011, MIT alumni association made a new software behind Infinite Connections, giving the Online Alumni Directory, which is a part of Infinite Connection, a new look and expanded options for linking alumni.

The improved directory enables searches that can filter results through additional single-word searches and a list of common affiliations that appears at the side of the screen. New directory can also help alumni who are moving or travelling to find active MIT club members in their new locations. That allows those looking for a new job to find employees of interesting firms who welcome career inquiries.

Infinite Connection is one of the diverse MIT alumni association's benefits, services and resources that strengthen alumni, friend and parent ties to MIT and each other. The Association is a decisive collaborator in building the MIT community that cherishes all its members the ability and passion to work wisely, creatively, and effectively for the betterment of tomorrow.

## 2. Case study on Penn State Network

Penn State Alumni Association has served its university and alumni for more than 150 years. With more than 700,000 members, this is the largest dues paying alumni association in the world. This allows them to fund the programs, services and communications as well as it allows them to give back to Penn State in the form of scholarships and other philanthropic support.

Several aspects of the Penn State Alumni association might be considered as an example of good practice, most interesting of which is the Penn Stater Alumni Career Services. Alumni Career Services offer Penn Starters of all ages and experiences a full range of different services and tools.

One such service is the LionLink, a virtual networking and mentorship program exclusive to Penn Staters. The majority of LionLink is dedicated to helping students discover alumni who are able to quickly answer their career questions. Students can browse the network of available alumni and based on the profile information select to whom they wish to reach out. They can browse the Penn State community of professionals by industry, major, location and more.

Another career service is Nittany Lion Careers. It's Penn State's career management system for students, alumni and employers. This premier job site is launched in 2018 and it brings together Penn State alumni and employers who want to hire them. For students and alumni there is a possibility through this platform to turn to career professionals to help them find their dream career. Penn State career offices across the campus are well networked so both students and alumni can get everything they need to be successful and fulfilled in their career path. Students can turn to professionals to help them prepare for the interview, develop marketing materials or register for career fairs and workshops. In order to continue to leverage their degree, the alumni career centre will provide support to alumni through counselling, networking opportunities and events.

Another service that NittanyLion Careers provides for job-seeking alumni is Alumni Job Search Tune Up. This virtual learning community consists of exclusive webinars, career activities and strategies and discussion boards. Access to this service is available only to Penn State Alumni Association members. It is intended for those preparing for a career transition. Through this service they can find career advice that will help them build critical job search skills. Therefore, it is recommended to recently graduated professionals.

This association has recognized the importance of fostering and enabling righteous career paths for Penn State students - its future alumni and its foundation. With its services this association certainly mitigates the transition of students and alumni from education to the labour market and therefore represents a model that should be followed in our project.

### 3. Case study on European Marine Research Network and Marie Curie alumni association

#### European Marine Research Network

The European Marine Research Network is a consortium of research institutes and universities in Europe working on the marine environment. The initiative of this network dates back to 2014 and it is in 2018 that it obtains the status of a non-profit association. The legal model is mixed in coordination with the Institute of Research for Development (IRD) and the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). Overall, this network allows to identify structures and people working in the marine environment, to diagnose issues and solutions for the marine environment in Europe and to request funding for projects.

Currently, the EuroMarine network includes 66 institutes from 20 European nations (including the University of Cadiz and the University of Western Brittany). We did not have information on the total number of students and alumni (as all members of the institutes and universities can be counted as part of an alumni network). As a federation of many institutes, the EuroMarine network is not an alumni network per se. The members of the network are research institutes and universities. This network includes two types of members. The full members, who contribute financially to the network's annual budget, have the right to vote and can receive funds each year through calls for projects. And the invited members, who do not contribute financially, do not have the right to vote but can participate and speak at the general assemblies; and do not receive project funding.

The objectives listed on their website are:

- The visibility of the marine science community at the national, European and international levels
- Recognition of the important role of marine science in society
- Maintaining Europe's position as a world leader in marine sciences.

Until last year, the network relied on 100% internal funding through contributions from consortium organisations. Since last year, the network has turned to external funding to strengthen its program of activities and grants.

The minimum membership fee for each research institute or university is about €3500 per year in 2020. Higher voluntary contributions are accepted. The website indicates a largest donation of €40,000 per year. Advantages for members are numerous as indicated on the network's website. We will retain the following main ones:

- Build professional relationships
- Develop strategic relationships and collaborations
- Access information resources and network activities (workshops, summer schools, etc.)
- Use the network secretariat and its communication tools to disseminate information to the community and present scientific achievements.
- Eligibility to EuroMarine funding

### Marie Curie alumni association

Independent and international non-profit association of researchers from all over the world whose common point is to have received funding from the European action program "Marie Curie". A first association existed since 2012 and its work facilitated the creation of a new association in 2014 by the European Commission. The objective of the association is to improve the flow of knowledge between different countries, sectors of the economy and scientific disciplines.

The number of declared members is around 20 000 with 149 different nationalities represented. There is a strong potential for growth since more than 100,000 researchers have benefited from the European "Marie Curie" action program and this number is constantly increasing. Moreover, the network has been accepting for some time now the supervisors of the doctoral and post-doctoral students who have received funding. They are more and more numerous to join the network. All age profiles are represented in the network and an important part of the active members are seniors.

The organisation itself has no salaried staff but about 150 active volunteers. The responsibilities and the power of representation of the association are carried by a board of 11 elected persons, all volunteers. Meetings are organised 4 to 5 times a year in person. Five of them form the management committee and meet at least once a month, half online, half in person. The association works a lot online since its members come from all over the world.

The financing of the association is of several types: donations, paid participation for certain events and activities, and a significant financing from the European Commission for 4-5 years renewable. The association aims at self-financing with fundraising from sponsors. The association finances a company that helps with communication, budgeting, reimbursements and expenses, and manages administrative and computer support.

Membership is free. Many benefits are available to members, including:

- Access to the member directory
- Professional and Educational Development Discounts
- Lifelong learning discounts
- Micro-grants
- Networking events
- Mentoring Programs
- Free access to courses and webinars

Support for young researchers in their professional careers: a common aspect of the SEA-EU DOC project  
Within the EuroMarine network, a working group entitled Orienting Young Scientists of EuroMarine (OYSTER) was initiated in early 2018 by young PhD and post-doctoral researchers from research institutes or universities members of the EuroMarine network. Information on this initiative was disseminated via the EuroMarine newsletter and allowed the arrival of new young researchers (after verification of their motivations) in the working group. Today there are about twenty from thirteen different countries working on this project.

Within the EuroMarine network, a working group entitled Orienting Young Scientists of EuroMarine (OYSTER) was initiated in early 2018 by young PhD and post-doctoral researchers from research institutes or universities members of the EuroMarine network. Information on this initiative was disseminated via the EuroMarine newsletter and allowed the arrival of new young researchers (after verification of their motivations) in the working group. Today there are about twenty from thirteen different countries working on this project.

This project comes after the results of a first survey showing that young researchers feel a lack of information on jobs outside the academic world and a second survey distributed to 462 students and young researchers concerning their work and their work-life balance. The objectives of the OYSTER group are to answer the numerous questions of students and young researchers, to help them in their early career and to give a vision of alternative jobs to the academic world. The OYSTER group and the SEA-EU DOC project have common objectives and could "feedback positively".

Financed in part by the EuroMarine network and in part by a bank, the needs of the OYSTER group vary according to the activities to be organised.

The same observation can be made for MCAA: "More and more people want to get out of the academy and of course know nothing about the world outside the academy, if this is what you have done all your life". A future publication of the MCAA in collaboration with the start-up KAZI (Belgium) will focus on identifying the expectations of researchers on their employment in companies and the expectations of companies on the researchers they employ. The first results indicate a significant gap between the expectations of the two sides. The conclusions of this study will be used to propose ways to best prepare researchers for a successful career outside the non-academic world.

## **DECENTRALISED NETWORKS: HOW TO INTERACT WITH MEMBERS**

### **Nested according to geography or members' interests: Chapter and working groups**

The MCAA operates on several levels of organisation. At the first level are the national or regional branches, known as Chapters, of which there are about thirty, each with between three and thirty active members. At this level of organisation, informal activities and social interactions "work well for PhD students". It also allows "the development of more complex activities such as meetings, seminars and local meetings". Thematic topics are an opportunity to network around a research field.

The second level of organisation includes 6 or 7 groups working around major topics of common interest. The topics are wider, such as "scientific diplomacy", in order to reach a large number of researchers. Meetings are usually held online, as members come from all over the world.

At these two levels of organisation, small groups or task forces work on very specific points of a project, an activity or a topic of common interest.

## Activities

In the MCAA it is the members who organise the activities, "often activities that bring them experience on their thesis or research topic. Everyone benefits: they can put it on their resume, other interested members can participate". For example, a mental health mentoring program for researchers was developed by a young PhD student working on this topic. "In themes that normally interest researchers and career development, political science, research funding...there are some of the most active people who give quite a few hours to the association".

A major conference is organised annually in a different country. On this occasion, the association collaborates with a university in the country hosting the conference by making its premises available. At least 500 to 800 people attended the last conference in Austria. Travel expenses are funded by the association for anyone having already obtained funding from the European action program "Marie Curie". The most organised activities (> 11 activities per year) by the MCAA are workshops, networking events and informal social events. These activities are found at the Chapter level. A member who is motivated to create an activity sends his or her "proposal either just to the Chapter mailing list, or to all members of the network via the Marie Curie website". The annual activities budget of the France Chapter is around €2000 but currently "most of the events such as webinars are done online and are therefore very cheap or even free to organise".

Conferences, fundraisers, charity events, and assistance with job opportunities/job searches are infrequently organised (between 1 and 5 activities per year).

Internship placement is not applicable to this network.

A company paid by the association facilitates the implementation of the activities by creating the computer supports, graphics, managing the budget etc...

There are many collaborations, especially in the field of career support for researchers. For example, with EURODOC, the MCAA has worked on a declaration for sustainable careers of researchers (Annexes).

The OYSTER group, financially supported by the EuroMarine network, organises an annual workshop, this year it was done online and at no cost to them. The group also participates in international conferences on the marine environment and awards for young researchers, including the International Conference for YOUNG Marine Researchers (ICYMARE) and the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF).

OYSTER will soon offer a mentoring program that is currently under development. Periodic contact will be established with the mentors and mentees, with a survey every three to five months, to get their feedback and make the project evolve. The profile of the mentors, illustrated by a small biography, should be published very soon on the EuroMarine website. For this project, all the EuroMarine researchers have been contacted, some of them have already accepted to participate in this project.

Activities should be put in place for researchers who are still in academia and who would like to leave. A recent workshop allowed researchers who "left the academic world but remained researchers" to come and talk about their experience. Other initiatives on this subject are in the pipeline.

## Communication tools

Each year an invitation to join the MCAA is sent by the European Commission to the researchers who benefit from its "Marie Curie" action program. The MCAA sometimes directly contacts some researchers to propose them to join it.

In order to feed the communication with the socio-economic sector, "companies can post ads on the MCAA website".

The preferred communication tools to communicate with members on a daily basis are: other social networks, private groups and the MCAA dedicated website. To communicate weekly, the MCAA uses LinkedIn. It uses the mailing list and the newsletter monthly. Each year a magazine is printed.

At the chapter level, communication is done a lot through tweeter and LinkedIn.

Communication within the groups is done by email or via private Slack groups. Face-to-face meetings are rare for a global network.

The OYSTER group uses Tweeter and the private Slack group on a daily basis. The private group is useful for the organising members of the group who work on the project via different channels depending on the working groups. Since 2019, they have their own Twitter account, "at the beginning of 2020 we were at 200 followers, today there are more than 800". "Tweeter gives a lot of visibility [to their activity] and not only to EuroMarine members. ». On this platform it is necessary to be "reactive" and "5 minutes per day" minimum seems to be enough. During the launch and relaunch of their survey they realised that Tweeter "is very useful in the academic world" by observing the booms in the number of respondents associated with these ads. To Maria Lopez-Acosta, a colleague once told "You won't find a postdoc if you don't tweet." Only according to her, this network is "little used in France" and adds that "LinkedIn is perhaps more useful for the non-academic world."

The EuroMarine network uses (among others) a dedicated website, tweeter and a newsletter. The OYSTER group would also like to create its own newsletter and a dedicated website to distinguish and improve the visibility of their activities, currently accessible via a tab on the EuroMarine website.

For their mentoring activity, "a website will [soon] automate the contact between the young researcher and the mentor." For now, everything is done manually by email, thanks to the working group. About emails, Maria says: "we have too many per day, sometimes the emails get lost in the mass" while for Tweeter (and LinkedIn) "you can sort the information more easily, with very scientific news".

## Challenges encountered

In their responses to the questionnaire, both global organisations indicated a lack of staff. MCAA additionally indicated difficulties in following up with alumni and a lack of interest from members (rated at 3 on a scale of 5). OYSTER additionally indicated a lack of funding and difficulties in reaching a broad audience.

For the MCAA, Fernanda Bajanca explains, "We are a volunteer-run association that is growing very fast, which requires many hours of dedication. The commitment is very variable and the turnover is high. ». The association is still looking for "a winning formula" to meet these challenges.

## Blue Economy

A priori, the members of both global organisations work in the blue economy areas proposed in the survey. The blue economy is a promising area of work, like the "green deal themes [which] are very popular in the European Commission," explains Fernande Bajanca. In addition, Maria Lopez-Acosta explains that the next ten years have been declared by the United Nations as the "Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development", initiating many "working groups on this topic" in OYSTER.

The MCAA indicated that it is particularly linked to marine, maritime and coastal domains via the themes of living and non-living marine resources as well as Marine Renewable Energies (MRE). The MCAA added that it is linked to "all activities related to and derived from research, and may include [all the themes proposed by the questionnaire]. ».

OYSTER has indicated that it is linked to the themes of living and non-living marine resources, MRE, port activities and coastal tourism. OYSTER also specifies that it is linked to all marine sciences according to the work themes of each member, the proposed or organised activities.

For Thomas Bonnard, "the theme of marine biology is very interesting", it "speaks much more [in a biotechnology project] when we say that we were inspired by bacteria to make a contrast agent, it is attractive" and gives visibility "to Europe".

## Weaknesses and strengths

With the help of the interviews, we were able to identify weaknesses and strengths for these two global networks.

In a living global network, there are many "possibilities", in the different levels of organisation, the multitude of information disseminated, the possibilities of actions, etc., and "one can quickly get lost". These networks function on the commitment of volunteers and their motivation to organise activities and events, "if nobody is motivated, nothing happens". Managing such networks and organising events can be "time consuming". Some communication channels such as the newsletter and the dedicated website were sometimes considered not very active.

However, in these global networks, a multitude of profiles and themes are represented, "everyone finds their interest". It is an opportunity to "compare experiences, discover different worlds of research and institutes. "It opens up horizons". Twitter and LinkedIn allow to reach this large audience of researchers with very different profiles.

Both networks are very much rooted in Europe through their funding, membership and activities. Members feel "connected to the workings of the European institutions" and learn "how European funding is decided", notably through "positive lobbying to demand more funds in the next European funding round".

Being part of these networks therefore provides "a greater understanding of the larger issues". It also "facilitates contact with people and generates interest". Indeed, for the alumni of the European action program "Marie Curie", the network gives "a very good image, an image of excellence, and shows that you are good in your field".

Within the MCAA, a company helps with "budgeting and business creation" which has the merit of allowing "motivated people to do what they want to do". People "volunteer because they know they can dig deeper", go further with their idea.

### Conclusion

The two global networks we analysed have funding, membership and activities related to Europe. We have seen that they have common study topics with those of the SEA-EU DOC project. Two universities of the SEA-EU consortium are part of the EuroMarine network. All these advantages should allow future collaborations with the SEA-EU consortium, and in particular on the subject of helping PhDs to be better prepared for the non-academic world of the SEA-EU DOC project.

## 4. Case study on Cal Alumni Association (CAA), University of California, Berkley

With nearly 150 years of history and over half a million members worldwide, the Cal Alumni Association (CAA) is one of the best-known alumni organisations in the US. They have developed a huge and extensive network of local U.S. chapters (including more than 30 clubs in California alone), as well as numerous professional interest groups (e.g., art, engineering, public service, and so on) across the country.

CAA's development is closely supervised and guided by a board of 15-18 directors. Although CAA is a non-profit organisation, they have adopted several semi-corporate practices. The board has adopted a dedicated CAA strategic plan for 2018-2022, with a priority to attract all Cal alumni worldwide to become active members of the association, being engaged with the University for life.

CAA has developed various arrangements to attract and support alumni, not only former full-time students, but also people who have attended any university campus for at least one quarter or have accumulated 12 or more University of California (UC) credits. Thus, the Cal Alumni Association is made up of a variety of individuals, and doctoral graduates are only part of it.

The organisation offers many benefits to its members, including access to the UC library, a variety of discounts (e.g., UC Extension courses, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Bay Area Career Center), useful and attractive lectures and workshops (UC Alumni Career Network: May 2021 - Advancing your career through volunteerism on board leadership, June 2021 - Navigating the hiring process as an experienced professional), on-campus events, and even organised trips to attractive destinations.

Events organised by CAA are not exclusive and all members are invited. So there is no special offer for doctoral graduates. However, some of the approaches adopted may prove to be particularly effective for high-level professionals such as PhD graduates. Three of these are particularly interesting. The first is the Hire UC Alumni Career Fair, the second: a dedicated dashboard aimed at enhancing career opportunities. The UC Berkeley Career Center, focusing on transferring career experience from alumni to students, is also an interesting activity.

Hire UC Alumni Career Fair aims to connect graduates and students with potential employers. The fair is being organised this year at the end of April (28-29 April). It is, of course, virtual (video, audio and chat communication) and ranges from group information sessions with up to 100 participants to private 1:1 interviews. The fair attracts a wide range of employers, from well-known brands to start-ups (consulting, education, engineering, finance, healthcare, marketing, media, sales and technology), government agencies, the military and non-profit organisations. It is worth mentioning that 10% of the participants were PhD holders from different fields of study.

The Berkeley Virtual Career Network helps both Cal alumni and students create and improve their professional networks. The network recommends new connections, offers an option of sending messages or requesting meetings based on personal, professional goals. It is accompanied by an exclusive LinkedIn group for Cal alumni.

Moreover, alumni are welcome to engage with the UC Berkeley Career Center. The Center organises special meetings of interested students with alumni working in certain areas (in February 2021 - Digital Marketing & Media; Art, Architecture and Design; in March 2021 - Sports Industry, Biotechnology, Esports and Gaming Industries). During the meetings, alumni share their knowledge and experience, giving students the opportunity to expand their knowledge of a specific career path. Additionally, it helps participating alumni to make new professional contacts and find a valuable future employee.

CAA supports students and the University, but as a self-funded organisation, it engages in a variety of fundraising activities. Among the most profitable is a special camp in the Sierra Nevada called Lair of the Golden Bear - in 2019 it provided the organisation with almost 1/3 of its annual income. More than 20% comes from various investments, while nearly 10% of CAA's budget is profit from Cal Discoveries Travel, a dedicated tour operator. Membership dues are only about 6% of revenue. The diversity and cost-effectiveness of these activities is impressive, as they brought in nearly \$22 million to CAA in 2019. Moreover, more than 75% of this sum was spent on various programs supporting UC students and alumni, and 23% covered all general and administrative expenses.

The CAA's diverse activities and its financial resources contribute to its success. More than half a million members of the organisation is undoubtedly an impressive achievement and makes the organisation worthy of SEA-EU-DOC attention.

## 5. Case study on International Ocean Institute (IOI) alumni

The International Ocean Institute (IOI) is a world leading independent, non-governmental non-profit organisation conducting training and capacity building in Ocean Governance with the aim of creating knowledgeable future leaders. IOI trains young and mid-career practitioners in contemporary approaches to coastal and ocean management, with an emphasis on the moral, ethical and legal values in Ocean Governance (equity and peaceful uses of the ocean).

In 1972, the IOI was founded by Professor Elisabeth Mann Borgese and its establishment was a milestone in the struggle to promote the concept of *Pacem in Maribus* (peace in the oceans) and the conservation of the ocean and its resources so that future generations can share in their benefits. The IOI enjoys special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and consultative status at some of UN's Specialized Agencies, and works to uphold and expand the principle of the common heritage as defined in the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea.

The mission of the IOI is to ensure the sustainability of the oceans as the “source of life”, and to uphold and expand the principle of the common heritage of mankind as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

As a knowledge-based institution the IOI offers a number of training courses on ocean governance and related issues at national, regional, and international levels. It also accesses and produces publications of current scientific, legal and policy developments and participates in the development of national and international ocean governance agendas.

Over the years, the IOI training programmes in ocean governance have resulted in a critical mass of IOI Alumni and a global network of trained and empowered leaders and practitioners in ocean governance. Since its foundation, IOI has trained hundreds of young practitioners, particularly from developing countries and countries in transition, and contributes towards a growing global network of trained and empowered leaders fully conversant with the latest developments in ocean governance. IOI course participants acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for effective ocean governance. They are empowered to apply contemporary approaches to coastal and ocean management, with an emphasis on the moral, ethical and legal values in ocean governance (equity and peaceful uses of the ocean).

IOI believes passionately in the potential of the IOI Alumni. Members are talented and motivated thinkers and doers in the many fields of ocean governance and empowered to make the changes needed to achieve equitable and sustainable global development and ocean governance grounded solidly in the social, economic and environmental spheres.

The IOI Alumni Portal provides an online forum for the rich community that IOI comprises - a place where IOI alumni can foster lasting relationships and create a network that reaches well beyond the Training Programme cohort.

Members have access to the alumni directory that is searchable by year/class/group, by name, or by occupation. There is also the possibility to search for friends and make new connections with the online community.

The portal also provides Message Boards where members can exchange news, experiences, videos, documents, and other meeting opportunities. This can also be used just to keep in touch and updated with what is going on in ocean matters. Members can post in, and subscribe to, as many, or as few, of the forums as required. There is also the feature to get email notifications when the message board is updated.

The LinkedIn Profiles, other social media, and the website are updated on a monthly basis. A number of lectures and workshops, networking events, and informal social events are organised every year.

The number of members is about 2500. Membership is free of charge and most of the funding comes from donations. Being an international organisation, IOI also keeps track of the students that are outside of Malta. Through their collaboration with the economic sector and other international entities, they have been very successful in assisting the alumni members with job opportunities.

More information on the International Ocean Institute can be obtained from: <https://www.ioinst.org>

## 6. Case study on University of Helsinki alumni association

The alumni association of the University of Helsinki has a history as long as its alma mater - dating back to 1640. The alumni association brings together not only former graduates and current students of the University, but also researchers and employees of the University as well as honorary members who have not studied at the University of Helsinki. In 2021, the association had over 7000 members. The association is governed by the Board of the Alumni Association, consisting of 12 members elected for two years. by the annual general meeting of the Association.

Noteworthy is the good and close relationship between the association and the alma mater. The association cooperates and supports its alma mater in many areas, not only supporting students and graduates but also through its involvement in fundraising and engagement in projects that support the University's strategic objectives, e.g. an application drawn up within the Alumni Association which led to the tradition of Master's conferment ceremonies being added to the Finnish list of intangible cultural heritage in recognition of the significance and unique nature of the tradition. The list is associated with UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The conferment of master's degrees is a unique Finnish tradition, which has continued uninterrupted at the University of Helsinki since the 1640s. The Association members belonging to the Promootio ystävät ("Conferment friends") group drew up the application).

To support its operations, the Association accepts donations and legacies, owns property necessary for its operations, conducts fundraising, and establishes funds and foundations. Within its means, the Association has created the Alumni Fund that supports talented and active undergraduate students with annual scholarships. Through scholarships, the Alumni Association wants to offer future professionals opportunities that cannot be realised through scholarships alone. Alumni scholarships have been awarded since 2002.

Within **academic volunteering of alumni** - as agreed with faculties and the University's senior Management, the Association's office has, as one of its responsibilities, to find suitable experts for various volunteer tasks. The tasks undertaken by members of Alumni Association included strategic planning, corporate cooperation, mentoring, commenting, lecturing, recording information, proofreading, and reviewing contact details. The Alumni Association's office coordinates the volunteer work and supports all volunteers who commit to the task for one year, at the end of which they can request a volunteer work certificate. Members of the Alumni Association completed more than 800 hours of volunteer work in 2017 and the same number in 2018 - in partnership programs, working groups, faculties, and at events.

The alumni association arranges events and supports the university by passing on the knowledge and work experience of alumni to the university, with the Nordic Business Forum 2019 being a fine example. During that event, the Alumni Association independently organised a livestream event in Tiedekulma where the alumni and students could follow the event and see world class speakers and presentations by successful influencers. In 2019, speakers included Apple founder Steve Wozniak and UN Ambassador for Peace George Clooney.

Being aware of its goal which is maintaining relationships between the University of Helsinki and its alumni as well as between fellow alumni, the Alumni Association are establishing Alumni Clubs outside Helsinki and outside Finland. The clubs operate independently, but with the solid backing of the Alumni Association. The Association and the University have supported the clubs in organising their first events, finding local alumni and creating club rules. The local clubs are highly important to the University and the clubs are primarily intended for alumni networking. Alumni can use the clubs to make new friends or to reconnect with old ones, to maintain their Finnish skills or to create new business opportunities. Local clubs around the world are intended to help students succeed in the international job market and spread the word about the University of Helsinki. The local clubs currently have a total of more than 400 members.

The Alumni Association regularly conducts surveys to better understand the views and opinions of alumni through questions related to the University of Helsinki, membership in the Association, and current events, as well as to identify trends in attitudes.

The association is very active and undertakes several activities that may be of value to the objectives of the SEA-EU DOC project, such as:

- supporting the employment of students and the development of their career skills through various projects – e.g., **the Ambassador programme** which has been developed based on the model used at Harvard University. Under this programme, Alumni Ambassadors are sharing their own experience with students to help them to prepare for work. The Ambassador program aims specially to help young students who have not yet built work-life networks. The Alumni Ambassador program uses the LinkedIn platform to connect students and their mentors anytime that works for them. Alumni who apply to this programme must commit to responding to the messages they receive from students, even if it is to tell them that they do not currently have the time to help them. Students who register with the service are given a password the Ambassador will recognize to let them know that they are with the program. Students will find Ambassadors from the Alumni Association website. Analysing the assumptions of this program from the perspective of the SEA-EU-DOC project, **alumni mentors** might help doctoral students establish contacts with employers and be introduced to students who could be potential future employees.
- The Alumni Association and Career Services have also set up a network for international students and alumni who want to be employed or have already gotten jobs in Finland.

## 7. Case study on NF-POGO Alumni Network for the Ocean (NANO) and Max Planck Alumni Association (MPAA)

### NF-POGO ALUMNI NETWORK FOR THE OCEAN (NANO)

#### General information

The Partnership for Observation of the Global Ocean (POGO) was founded in 1999 by directors of oceanographic institutions around the world as a forum to promote and coordinate the observation of the global ocean. POGO's membership includes most of the world's leading ocean science and technology institutions. POGO's vision is to have, by 2030, world-wide cooperation for a sustainable, state-of-the-art global ocean observing system that serves the needs of science and society. The POGO Secretariat is located in Plymouth, UK.

The NF-POGO Alumni Network for Oceans (NANO) was established as a joint effort between the Partnership for Observations of the Global Oceans and the Nippon Foundation. The Nippon Foundation (NF) was established in 1962 as a non-profit philanthropic organisation, active both in Japan and abroad, based in Tokyo, Japan. Since 2005, the Nippon Foundation has been funding various training programmes coordinated by POGO and both organisations work closely together to achieve common goals.

NANO is an informal organisation - a global network of former scholars of NF-POGO capacity development programme on ocean observation - and managed by the Partnership for Observation of the Global Ocean (POGO) secretariat Germany. It is not directly related to universities.

NANO is related to Marine living resources, Marine non-living resources and observational oceanography.

#### Mission/Vision

The idea of building a Network of Alumni was first suggested by the Nippon Foundation, as a means of keeping track of the career progression of the Alumni and to provide them with further support after their training. The NF and POGO organised a Network Planning Meeting in October 2010, at the Royal Society in London. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Nippon Foundation and POGO, as well as alumni and trainers of the NF-POGO training programmes. The meeting laid the foundations for the establishment of the network of former scholars that was to be called the NF-POGO Alumni Network for Oceans (NANO). It defined the principles and potential structure of the Network, discussed plans for a major Alumni Meeting and ideas for joint research projects that could be carried out by the Alumni.

The goals of the network are to:

- (1) Maximise the benefits to the alumni from the training they have received;
- (2) Facilitate active contacts among the alumni and with the training faculty;
- (3) Promote joint research activities that build on the training.

#### Structure of NANO

The general management of NANO is overseen by the POGO Secretariat, which maintains a database of former NF-POGO scholars and a website, and is responsible for communication with potential funding bodies. The Network is composed of Regional Coalitions (at the present stage, five), each fully coupled to the global network and each managed by a Regional Project Leader or several Co-Leaders. The activities of the Regional Coalitions include regional research project coordination, workshops, networking and information exchange.

## Methodology

The data for this global alumni organisation was partly taken from its website and is the result of the online questionnaire that this organisation also filled out.

## Staff & Membership

NANO is organised by one paid staff member and by around 20 unpaid volunteers. They currently have around 350 alumni members from 65 countries of all continents. The membership is free of charge. Membership benefits offered by the organisation are: access to alumni directory; maximise the benefits to the alumni from the training they have received; to facilitate active contacts among the alumni and with the training faculty; and to promote joint research activities that were built on the training. NANO does not receive any revenues from service provision.

NANO recognizes two categories of membership, according to the following criteria:

(1) Full membership: NANO Alumni: Past or present scholars of trainings delivered under the NF-POGO Partnership;

(2) Associate membership: NANO Friends: Senior ocean scientists who provide advice and/or contribute to NANO initiatives; NANO Collaborators: Young researchers who provide assistance with NANO initiatives.

## Rights of Members

(1) All members are invited to participate in NANO initiatives;

(2) Travel grants and other financial support are primarily for full members (NANO alumni), although in some cases may be used to support associate members where their contribution is necessary to meet NANO objectives;

(3) All members may actively participate in NANO activities and promote the expansion of the research and outreach actions;

(4) All members are invited to subscribe to a mailing list which regularly informs them of POGO and NANO activities and other subjects of interest;

(5) Alumni and associate members are invited to register at the NANO in order to have full access to its content. NANO urges registered members to keep their profiles updated, as general information is used to compute statistics as well as to plan actions designed to meet the interests of the majority of members.

## Communication

They use different communication tools: dedicated alumni website is used weekly, mailing list monthly, LinkedIn and digital newsletter are used on an annual basis. They also use other social media tools (mainly Facebook) on a daily basis. Furthermore, alumni surveys will be conducted every 5 years and they call for contributions to their newsletter, twice a year.

## Activities and events

Lectures/ workshops, networking events and conferences will be organised 1-5 times per year, whereas assisting with job opportunities/ job search will be conducted >11 times a year.

This global alumni organisation cited lectures/ workshops, assisting with opportunities/ job search, student placement/ internships and web-search being particularly successful activities and conferences were experienced as neutral activities. They don't organise activities targeting doctorate alumni in particular, but their target is put of all of their alumni members and most have Ph.D. degrees.

NANO has also hosted a webinar series since 2019 where members are invited to present a 30-min talk on their subject of interest. The NANO Webinar series is recorded and available on YouTube later. Last webinar had over 70 participants.

They offer different program types on their website: Centre of Excellence (CofE), regional training programmes, visiting Professorships and shipboard training.

### **Collaboration / Strengths**

Collaboration with International organisations (6-10 times per year) as well as data mining in social media (at no cost) to track the careers of their alumni is very successful. Furthermore, NANO collaborates >11 times with the university of origin of alumni members.

On their website they provide job opportunities worldwide.

### **Weaknesses**

NANO alumni members are only moderately engaged with work performed by the alumni organisation. Tracking alumni and lack of interest by the alumni is challenging in developing and running the alumni organisation.

### **Statement**

At first, the global organisation looked large and very active. On closer research, however, it appears that it is still developing and, in my opinion, is not (yet) one of the best global alumni organisations.

## **MAX PLANCK ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (MPAA)**

### **Background information about Max Planck Society (MPS)**

MPS contributes to shaping the future, both at home in Germany and worldwide. It assumes responsibility and continues to develop its international cooperation accordingly. On the one hand, it pursues the goal of strengthening the European Research Area, and on the other, it promotes global networks and partnerships in scientifically emerging countries. At the same time, the Max Planck Society strengthens the research landscapes of scientifically emerging countries. It operates as a worldwide network based on international cooperation and projects. They are involved in more than 3,000 projects with over 6,000 international partners in over 120 countries. International collaborations increase scientific performance and productivity. 33.3 percent of the approximately 21,187 employees come from abroad. The group of scientists is even more international, with 54.6 percent coming from abroad. 38.0 percent of Max Planck directors are non-German citizens. More than half of the doctoral students (58.4 percent) come from abroad.

To Alumni Initiatives/ Associations belong MPAA and different Max Planck Alumni Clubs (e.g. for Biophysical Chemistry; Society of Friends and Former Associates of the Biophysical Chemistry; Club of Plasma Physics; Friends of the Hamburg - Institute for Comparative and International Private Law e.V. ...)

MPAA is an integral part of MPS with alumni, because it represents an independent platform of collaboration, worldwide networking and individual career services. Membership is for free and available to everyone who has worked with MPS for more than 6 months – that includes staff who are still active.

## General information MPA/ Structure

The Max Planck Alumni Association (MPAA) is a non-profit organisation pursuing public-benefit purposes. The association is legally independent from the Max Planck Society, and it is registered at the Court of Charlottenburg with registration number VR35235B. The association was established on 27 July 2016 and it has its seat in Berlin.

All scientific researchers as well as visiting scientists who spent a research residency at one of our institutes of a minimum of six months; all graduates, doctoral students, fellowship holders and postdocs as well as non-scientific staff belong to alumni.

The MPAA acts as an umbrella organisation, leaving space to its members to self-organise in internal, independent communities named **Groups** (often called Chapters in alumni organisations). Groups are internal communities of members sharing affiliation to the same Institute (MPI Group), city or geographical region (Regional Group), or sharing a common interest (Shared Interest Group). Each Group is equivalent to an independent association: its own membership, general meeting, board, funds and statute. It does however not need to be registered at the court, since bureaucracy and accounting is centralised for all groups. The different types of groups are "MPI Groups and Association", "Regional Groups", "Shared interest groups" and "Networks". There are currently around 96 groups/associations; 10 regional groups: Munich, Stockholm, Warsaw, New York City, Berlin, San Francisco, Cambridge, Moscow, Washington DC, Goettingen, 2 shared interest groups: Max Planck Alumni Entrepreneurs (Max Planck Alumni Entrepreneurs of former Max Planck scientists who ventured into entrepreneurship) and MPAA Empowered Women.

Members can also organise in **Networks**, simplified and informal thematic communities, not featuring a statute or a general meeting. There are different network groups: The MPAA Career Network is a closed LinkedIn group organised by the Max Planck Alumni Association (MPAA) - Its members share the Max Planck Society. It is open to all alumni and current academics of the Max Planck Society; MPAA Ukraine Network; MPAA Oceania Network; MPAA China Network; MPAA Middle East Network; MPAA Northern America; MPAA Network on Socio-Economic Physics; MPAA Humanities and Social Sciences Network and MPAA Fundamental Questions.

Each Group elects its **Assembly** delegates, to participate at the Assembly of the association. At the Assembly, delegates present and discuss the needs and activities of all Groups. The Assembly is the governing organ of the association. It is in charge of any major decision, such as change in the mission and vision of the association, the planning of activities and priorities, election of Board members, amendments of the statute and dissolution of the association.

**The Board** is responsible for the supervision and the execution of the decisions of the Assembly, the development of infrastructures, bureaucracy and accounting, public relations, and fundraising. The Assembly elects two Board members per year. The Board appoints two members per year, per special merits and experience, to complete the skills of existing Board members and to be able to operate with competence at any time.

**Committees:** The Programs and the decisions of the Assembly are directly executed by Standing Committees, each supervised by a Board member. Each Standing Committee supervises a department, composed of volunteers on a more sporadic basis. Periodic activities (like the organisation of yearly events) and pilot projects are instead realised by temporary Ad-hoc Committees.

### **Vision/ Mission**

The association is envisioned as a highly international, modern and active community promoting and supporting innovative thinking, knowledge and experience exchange, and is the largest alumni organisation for a non-university research institution. The mission of the organisation is to:

- Facilitate its members to stay in contact with their former Institute, and be updated on the activities of the Society,
- Foster the free access to knowledge, promote science communication to the public, and favour interdisciplinary exchange as part of the philosophy of the Max Planck Society,
- Provide its members with services and support, e.g. access to online journals after they leave the Institute, an eduroam connection, etc. Support its members in the transition between academia and the job market, through the collection of information on different career paths, the realisation of mentoring programs, fostering and ensuring a constant interchange between alumni/ae and scientific staff and
- Realise an electronic database of all alumni and alumnae of the Max Planck Society, and provide its member with the necessary infrastructure to keep in contact.

### **Activities and events**

Max Planck alumni usually feel a sense of community to their former institutes. Therefore, every institute has a contact person in the form of an Alumni representatives who will inform people about its institute's activities. Some institutes have already been actively involved in local activities for a long time, organising meetings, sending out their institute newsletter and setting up alumni association and groups. Activities are grouped into: Volunteer, Mentoring, Max Planck Alumni Ambassadors, Max Planck Alumni Stories, Open a Group or Network and Lifelong learning.

MPS supports events with and for alumni and alumnae in manifold ways, including but not limited to the support of early career researchers. In example, the annual Max Planck Symposium for Alumni and Early Career Researchers in our Harnack-Haus of Berlin, or various Career Days at Institutes or locations are noteworthy.

### **Communication**

There are different network groups: The MPAA Career Network is a closed LinkedIn group organised by the Max Planck Alumni Association (MPAA) - Its members share the Max Planck Society, one of the world's leading research organisations, as a common career pillar. It is open to all alumni and current academics of the Max Planck Society; MPAA Ukraine Network; MPAA Oceania Network; MPAA China Network; MPAA Middle East Network; MPAA Northern America; MPAA Network on Socio-Economic Physics; MPAA Humanities and Social Sciences Network and MPAA Fundamental Questions.

MPAA is using beside regular email contact several different Social Media tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and also refers to the on the homepage of the Netiquette.

## 8. Case study on Erasmus Mundus Association (EMA) and Erasmus Student Network (ESN)

### Introduction

A total of 19 global alumni organisations were identified as part of the SEA-EU-DOC project. Among those, the University of Cadiz chose to focus on the structure and functioning of two organisations integrated within the Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Alliance (ESAA). ESAA assembles the EU funded associations for students and alumni, including the Erasmus Mundus Association (henceforth, EMA), the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), the garagErasmus Foundation, and the Oceans Network. The aim of this alliance is to offer a dynamic platform for networking, professional development, and intercultural learning, but also for promoting European Higher Education and worldwide cooperation. The two organisations chosen were ESN and EMA. Being associations for students and alumni of the Erasmus+ program (ESN) or the Erasmus Mundus Master and Doctoral programmes (EMA), they can provide the necessary experience and knowledge to build up an organisation that fulfils the SEA-EU-DOC objectives.

### Description of the document

This report contains the main findings of:

- A case study conducted on the ESN with the aim of learning from its experience as an international alumni organisation. This study has been conducted on a two-step basis: firstly, open sources of information about the ESN were consulted; secondly, an interview with a representative of the organisation was held to deepen in some aspects of interest for the SEA-EU DOC Project.
- The information contained within the EMA web page, focused on their structure and functioning as an international alumni organisation.

### Rationale within the SEA-EU DOC Project

SEA-EU DOC is a beneficiary project from the Erasmus + 203 Key Action, focused on improving both the professional and entrepreneurial future perspectives of PhD students of the SEA-EU Alliance, with an especial focus on those PhD holders related to marine and maritime studies.

The Intellectual Output 3 of the SEA-EU DOC Project intends to build up an organisation that serves graduates in marine science as a networking platform with other graduates, with research projects of their interest, as well as with companies and entrepreneurial initiatives. To achieve such an outcome, it is essential to constitute a solid basis, and this is only attainable by learning from the previous experience of alumni networks both at the national level in every project partner's country and at the international level. The University of Cadiz has conducted a brief analysis of two international associations, namely, the Erasmus Student Network, an organisation composed of voluntary people who were beneficiary of Erasmus mobilities during their studies, and that work to build up a community of Erasmus beneficiaries to share experiences, advice and professional opportunities, and the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association, an international non-profit organisation built with the main objective of helping Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees (EMJMD) students and alumni across the world, by offering an international, professional, and personal network.

### Methodology followed in this case study

This analysis has been conducted on a two-step basis:

- Firstly, open sources of information available about the ESN and EMA were consulted to portray the basic features of the organisation.
- Secondly, the information retrieved on the ESN was shared with a representative of the organisation in Cadiz, and several questions were asked to provide additional information from inside the organisation with regards to their personal experience and future perspectives.

### Description of the Erasmus Student Network

#### What is the ESN?

The ESN is an association that assembles Erasmus scholarship beneficiaries from all Europe, officially founded in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1990. Its constitutions responded to the many challenges that arose at the beginning of the implementation of the Erasmus mobilities among bachelor's students.

The creation of a network of Erasmus beneficiaries that could help each other had three main advantages:

- 1) new beneficiaries could take advantage of their peers' previous experiences,
- 2) the European Community could receive in an efficient, systematic way feedback from beneficiaries, and
- 3) the organisation gave the opportunity to adopt a bottom-up approach in future reforms and improvements of the Erasmus programme.

#### What does it work for?

The ESN works for improving the experience of both visiting and homecoming students who are Erasmus beneficiaries:

- For visiting students, the association provides information about the existing exchange programmes and then gives them support in order to facilitate their social and practical integration.
- For homecoming students, the association works towards the constant improvement of the Erasmus experience, thus offering them the opportunity to take an active role in the evaluation of their experience as former exchange students and the assessment of current needs and challenges for future beneficiaries.

#### Who takes part in it?

According to their 2019-2020 Annual Report, the ESN is composed of 15000 active volunteers that provide services to 350 000 international students across 1000 higher education institutions. There are 530 local sections (each based on a different university) in 42 countries, which means its outreach goes beyond the EU countries. In the 2019/2020 period, the association's income (most of which comes from public funding) amounted to 1 193 137 euros, whereas its expenditures reached 1 103 573 euros, mostly spent on paying staff, maintaining its headquarters and organising events and meetings.

At the international level of the organisation, the General Assembly is the highest decision-making organ, and its rules are applied by the statutory bodies (International Board, Arbitration Board and Audit Commission), whereas the non-statutory bodies (Secretariat, Committees, Project Teams, Liaison Office) provide administrative support to the organisation. At the national level, there is a national organisation that assembles all the local sections, each one attached to a higher education institution.

### How does the ESN work?

The ESN focuses its work on six main causes:

- Social inclusion
- Education and youth
- Environmental sustainability
- Health and well-being
- Culture
- Skills and employability

These causes inspire its lines of action:

- **Services for students.** The ESN website displays comprehensive information on the Erasmus mobility programme, as well as advice and support for students to find internships, accommodation and other services in their hosting institution.
- **Dissemination activities.** The 2019-2020 Annual Report shows the means employed by the ESN to reach its audience: websites, both their own and affiliated ones (esn.org, esncard.org, erasmusintern.org); and social media pages and profiles (the organisation is currently present in Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn).
- **Policy research.** The ESN is rooted on a firm commitment to influence the development of the Erasmus mobility programme, and this is shown in their intense activity conducting policy research that contributes to building the programme from a bottom-up approach. In this sense, the ESN produces position papers on relevant topics, research (mainly with the annual ESNsurveys) and the Erasmus Impact Study.

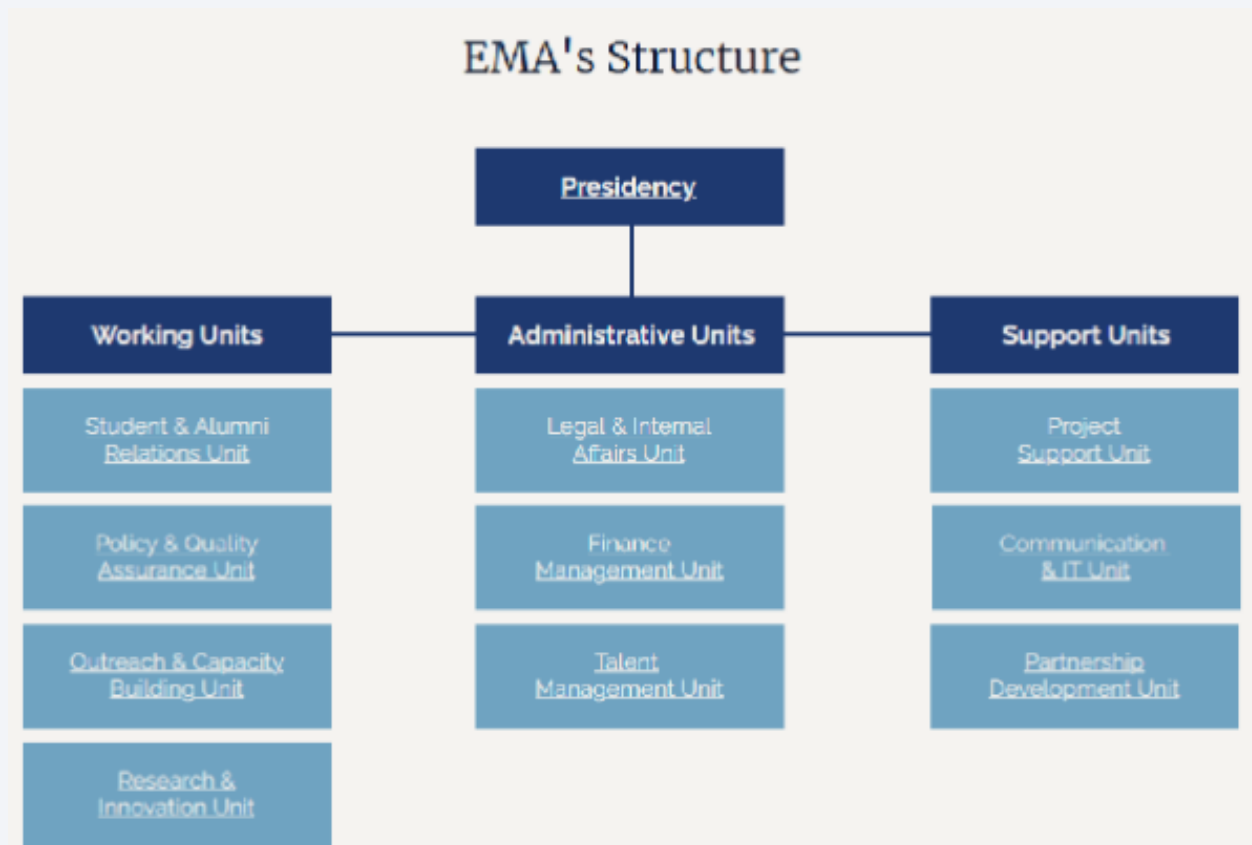
Once the basic features of the ESN have been described, knowing an insider's opinions on the functioning and inner workings of the organisation is convenient to achieve the objectives of this study. In this sense, both an outside description and an inside view of the ESN may provide useful insights that may guide the SEA-EU DOC alumni network to thrive and attain its goals more successfully.

### Description of the Erasmus Mundus Association

#### What is EMA?

EMA is the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association, which was founded in 2006 as an initiative of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) with the aim of helping Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees (EMJMD) students and alumni worldwide, by offering an international, professional, and personal network. In 2014, the Erasmus Mundus Programme became part of Erasmus+ and EMA joined the Erasmus+ Students and Alumni Association (ESAA). It is funded by the European Union and has been registered as an international non-profit organisation under the Belgian Law (EMA AISBL) since 2016.

It is structured as in Figure 1 below:



**Figure 1: EMA's structure (Source: <https://www.em-a.eu/structure-and-history>)**

EMA's Presidency is leading the Management Board and the Association. It is led by an elected President, who is the primary representative of EMA and is responsible to provide strategic leadership, internally and externally, and to coordinate all the activities undertaken by the association. He/she is in charge of defining the EMA short- and long-term goals in consultation with the Management and Advisory Boards, acting as a team. The current EMA President is Katharina F. Heil, who holds an Erasmus Mundus PhD from the Universities of Edinburgh (UK) and KTH (Sweden) since 2017. The Vice President is responsible for providing administrative leadership and coordinates the administrative and supportive activities. The current Vice President is Marsela Husen, who completed an EMJMD in Research and Innovation in Higher Education in 2016.

#### What does it work for?

EMA operates as a channel of communication between students, alumni, universities, and the European Commission with regards to the Erasmus Mundus Programmes. It's main objectives as an organisation are:

- To become a forum for networking, communication, and collaboration
- To provide its members with opportunities to contribute to EMA, to their EMJMDs, and to society through the personal skills that they have acquired during their participation as EMJMD students.
- To represent the students and alumni of EMJMDs and provide them with a place to share their ideas and expertise.
- To empower the changemakers of tomorrow
- To support and foster research, innovation, and cooperation.

Their members are EMJMD students and alumni who act as ambassadors of the Erasmus Mundus programmes around the world by spreading the idea of an international education. In fact, one of EMA's goals is to increase the visibility of the European Higher Education System and the Erasmus Mundus programmes. This is achieved through the Country Representatives (CRs) and the programme Representatives (PRs):

#### **COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES (CRS):**

The CRs are EMA volunteers from one specific country, who are in charge of representing EMA in that country and act as the main contact point between EMA and those Erasmus Mundus prospects, alumni, and students from that country. Currently, EMA has 41 CRs worldwide. Their main roles within that country are as follows:

- To promote the Erasmus Mundus Programme as a European Higher Education programme of excellence
- To engage Erasmus Mundus Alumni by making events or by introducing them to the EMA website, community portal and social media accounts
- To assess prospective students, by solving their doubts, giving advice, sharing experiences, or helping them to get in contact with people from the Erasmus Mundus programme.
- To act as an ambassador and contact point for EMA at the national level, by serving as the contact person for locals interested in EMA.
- To encourage the development of a community network of graduates and students in that country, so they can share information and combine efforts to plan activities of common interest.
- To establish collaborations with other CRs in a region (i.e., within the same or neighbouring countries) to exchange best practices and work together.
- To support job placement and professional development of EMA members by organising career-oriented events and conduct marketing within the national labour market.
- To assist newly selected Erasmus Mundus students, by organising pre-departure orientation seminars or initiating them virtually in cooperation with EMA and/or the European Commission/EU Delegation of that country.

#### **PROGRAMME REPRESENTATIVES (PRS):**

The PRs are EMA volunteers who have been selected as representatives of their respective EMJMD programmes. Their main role is to act as the contact person between the students, alumni, and course coordinators of EMJMD and EMA. Their main responsibilities are only EMA-related and include the following:

- To communicate and advise: they are responsible for updating the blog and Facebook page, where they share news, meet students and coordinators to help them with their issues, etc.
- To organise social events, such as a welcome event for new students, international themed dinners, movie nights, weekend trips, etc.
- To promote the Erasmus Mundus programme, buy presentations about their Erasmus Mundus course, creating promotion videos, writing about their experience in the newspaper, etc.

There are currently 38 active PRs worldwide. As an example, the elected PR for the EMJMD in Water and Coastal Management (WACOMA) since January 2021 is Victor Outeiro Almeida, a student from the USA who is currently enrolled as a WACOMA student (2020-2022).

## EMA's General Assemblies

The General Assembly is an annual event held by EMA to get together and work on the association's strategy. Over the last years, EMA members of more than 170 countries worldwide and representatives of academia, the European Commission, and other partner organisations gathered at the General Assembly. It usually lasts for two to three days and offers a forum to do networking, to contribute to the development of higher education programmes in Europe, to find collaborators and initiate projects, and to learn from one another, as well as to discuss the development of the association itself.

Besides, an election process is carried out during the Assembly every two years, where a new president and vice-president are elected.

## EMA's Projects

EMA holds many different projects, most of which are directly led by EMA members, also known as Project Leaders (PLs). All the projects are inclusive in all aspects, follow the EU framework and are aligned with EMA's core principles. There are currently four types of projects, although the association is open to new ideas:

- **EMA Outreach Projects:** they are shorter projects that normally last for just a few days or weeks. They are directly supervised by the EMA outreach unit and can include outreach activities, webinars, symposiums, or social media campaigns.
- **EMA Networks (Community Projects):** they are longer projects that can last from months to years. They are collaborative projects organised by groups of interest within EMA, and can be focused on a specific theme like gender equality, women empowerment, etc. Examples of ongoing projects are the EMA Podcast (<https://www.em-a.eu/project-emapodcast>), EMA Cookbook (<https://www.em-a.eu/project-emacookbook>), EMA GENIE (<https://www.em-a.eu/project-ema-genie>), etc.
- **EMA-ESAA Projects:** they are EMA projects funded and coordinated by ESAA and thus, PLs must ensure that they comply with the ESAA rules.
- **EMA-Erasmus+ Projects:** they are funded projects focused around EMA's core principles where EMA can either be the coordinator or form part of a consortium. One example of an ongoing project is Accept & Respect (Key Action 1), that started in October 2020 and will finish in September 2022. It is funded by the Erasmus+ Programme (Project Reference: 2020-2-BE05-KA105-002995) and aims at promoting equality and non-discrimination among young people.

## EMA Partnerships

EMA represents a large community of highly educated, ambitious, and multilingual students and alumni from different Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes and as such, it is part of the Erasmus+ Student and Alumni Alliance (ESAA), along with the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), the garagErasmus Foundation, and the Oceans Network.

EMA also partners with EMJMD courses to give each other mutual support, among others, by:

- Promoting the EMJMD on EMA's social media channels and website
- Offering a presentation and Q&A session for students about EMA at the start of the academic year (first semester of each cohort of students)
- Providing the EMA's monthly newsletter to the EMJMD students
- Nomination or selection of a PR

Furthermore, EMA also pursues long-term corporate partnerships with companies, institutions, and profit or non-profit organisations that could financially support EMA by funding projects, events or initiatives, that could increase the EMA recognition or that could create added values for their members. For example, some corporate partners offer a reduced price for EMA's members to acquire their products or services; some provide free access to online trainings and workshops; some provide merchandising or financial compensation for getting promoted through EMA's channels; etc. In return, the corporate partner gets promoted through EMA's website, newsletter and social media channels, and has access to a network of highly educated young people.

### EMA Memberships

EMA members are generally students and alumni from Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes, including the EMJMDs and the formerly Erasmus Mundus Joint PhD Degrees. However, and with the aim of becoming more inclusive, they have extended their membership base to include four types of membership:

- EMA Ordinary Members: they are students or alumni of any Erasmus Mundus Joint Programme, so in order to get accepted as a member, the candidate has to prove their acceptance or completion of an EMJMD programme.
- EMA Affiliate Members: they are students or alumni of a Master or PhD program who have been beneficiaries of any of the EU mobility grants (Erasmus+ 2020 Key Action 1, Bullet 1, or any of the previous actions) to attend a European University.
- EMA Honorary Members: they are any natural or legal persons who have made a significant contribution to the success, reputation, and pursuit of EMAs objectives and hence, have been nominated by the Management Board (with a two-third majority vote) and have been accepted by the General Assembly.
- Those interested in becoming a member of EMA can apply through their community portal (<https://members.em-a.eu/>).

### EMA Documents

The EMA web page includes a section where all their important documents are accessible. They include:

- Legal documents, such as their statutes and internal regulations.
- Yearly reports and action plans, like the financial report or the ones highlighting their planned and completed activities.
- The EMA policies, including a crisis management policy, the electoral policy and guidelines, the policy against disinformation, and the volunteer and personnel policy.
- The annual graduate impact surveys, which consist of online surveys conducted among students and alumni of Erasmus Mundus programmes to analyse the long-term impacts of participating in these programmes and to get insights on career development and individual's personal growth.
- Other documents of interest to the EMA community

### Identification of issues common to the ESN or EMA organisations and the SEA-EU DOC students' network

The wide and varied online presence of the ESN and EMA allowed for the creation of a summarised description of the organisations, in terms of structure, funding, objectives and lines of action. Taking this as a starting point, three coincident points were identified, where an eventual SEA-EU DOC student network could learn from the ESN and EMA's experience in dealing with students at the international level.

1) **Bottom-up relations.** The international dimension of the organisations makes necessary the coordination between the local and the top level. Whereas the ESN and EMA require local, national, and top organisational levels to be coordinated, in a SEA-EU DOC student network only a local and an Alliance-level would be involved, thus allowing more simplicity to the structural scheme. In any case, the multi-level structure will pose challenges in terms of democratic governance and multilateralism. To overcome potential issues, the decisions taken by the EMA Presidency are always carried out in consultation with the management and advisory board.

2) **Short and long-term effects of the organisation's work.** Any organisation which is composed of students will have a work period limited to the durations of such students' degrees. In this respect, it is convenient that students' networks provide an added value to the students' future careers even after they leave their universities. In this sense, EMA members can benefit/participate from its short-term (e.g., the Outreach projects) and long-term projects, do networking with its corporate partners, or receive job offers.

3) **Forge of a common identity.** Related to the previous aspect, the long-term effect of the student's participation in the organisation shall increase the student's sense of identity, so that their belonging to the organisation -no matter its duration- may influence on their identity as part of a human group. This could be achieved through getting involved in long-term projects or participating in the association's general assemblies and elections, following the EMA example.

### Interview with a participant of the Erasmus Student Network

Once the basic features of the ESN have been described, knowing an insider's opinions on the functioning and inner workings of the organisation is convenient to achieve the objectives of this study. To obtain this view, the ESN Section at the University of Cadiz was contacted, and a meeting with a representative of the association was set on Monday 19 July at 10:00. The interviewed person was Joaquín Collado, current President of the Cadiz Section at the ESN. The interview took about one hour, and its structure was based on the previous scheme of common features for both organisations.

### Bottom-up relations

Asked about the existing relations between the three organisational levels of the ESN, Mr. Collado explained that there are Local Sections, National Boards and the International Board. Most daily work - assistance to Erasmus beneficiaries, contacts with the local University- is conducted by the Local Sections; National Boards are contact points for all Sections in the same country; the International Board engages with the European institutions and makes the high-level policy decisions. In addition, there are Sectoral Committees focused on specific topics (e.g., gender equality, climate change, etc.) both at the national and the international level.

People associated with the ESN may have three different types of relationship with the organisation: associates -every person who contacts the organisation and obtains the ESN card-, collaborators -every person who engages in some activities within their respective Local Section-, and members -every person who takes part in the structure of the organisation, taking roles with different degrees of responsibility-.

Mr. Collado was asked about procedures for decision-making in the association, and more specifically about the ways used by the ESN to solve disagreements between different levels or members. He answered that transparency is key: that is the reason why the organisation uses mailing distribution lists, where discussions on different topics are channelled and by which all members can be informed of the arguments behind every decision finally made by the organisation.

Conflict solutions can only be assured, followed by Mr. Collado, when rules of procedure are known beforehand and when communication channels are constant and open to all participants, who are prone to accept other people's decisions if they feel that their own differing opinions still have been heard by the decision makers.

### Short and long-term effects of the organisation's work

When asked about the initial relations between the ESN and its participants, Mr. Collado said that they usually unfold in two phases: at the beginning, an Erasmus beneficiary gets to know the ESN Section at their receiving University; once the beneficiary has gone back to their country of origin, and inspired by a wish to continue their relationship with the Erasmus experience, they get in contact with the ESN Section at their own University.

Then, Mr. Collado went on, relations with the organisation tend to last about 2 or 3 years; depending on their own circumstances, they get to different degrees of involvement in the organisation. When the members' professional careers kick off, their involvement in the organisation usually decreases.

In this regard, stated Mr. Collado, there are visible long-term effects of relations with the ESN: people who have taken part in it tend to be more prone to have more international experiences, for example, by extending their education in other countries or by job seeking abroad.

### Forge of a common identity

Directly related to the answer to the previous question, Mr. Collado continued explaining the forge and dissemination of a common identity among participants in the Erasmus programme and the ESN. In this respect, he argued, the ESN intends to create a sense of belonging among people who are beneficiaries of the Erasmus programme.

**People do not have an Erasmus scholarship;** instead, they are Erasmus people, could be the motto of such a funding programme and the inspiring principle of the ESN. Living an Erasmus mobility, and taking part in the ESN, are seen as a human experience that enriches beneficiaries beyond the mere academic outcome they get from the experience itself.

### Learnings from the ESN that are applicable to the SEA-EU DOC students' network

To close the interview, Mr. Collado was asked for advice he could provide to an organisation with the features of the intended SEA-EU DOC students' network. He suggested four lines of action that could be of help for this association:

- **Long-term relations between students and receiving institutions.** Doctoral students engaged in mobilities and taking part in this network should be able to maintain their academic and professional ties with the Universities with which they have been working beyond the lifespan of their doctoral studies. This can create a genuine sense of community and belonging.

- **Reinforcing the human aspect of the learning experience.** Doctoral students usually go through very similar experiences at the personal level, a circumstance of which this students' network could take advantage. Involving participants in collaborative activities, through which they may engage with people in their same circumstances, may provide them with tools to face challenging circumstances more successfully.
- **Ex post feedback.** As it happens in the ESN, feedback from participants may help to improve the functioning of the organisation, as well as the service and experience that it offers to its members. This way, the organisation's general interest will be able to meet the participants' individual interests.
- **Inter-organization symbiotic relations.** Developing ties with pre-existing associations, such as the ESN itself, may help the SEA-EU DOC student network to achieve their own purposes both effectively and efficiently. The similarity between targets (students in higher education institutions) and the scope (the European Union) of both organisations offers a valuable opportunity for inter-organization collaboration.

## Survey on the alumni organizations in SEA-EU countries

The objective of this survey is to analyze relevant alumni organizations in order to improve their collaboration with alumni and alma mater and overall impact and the performance of alumni organizations. The survey will identify best practice examples and common causes of failure, which will provide support in defining the best possible model for the development of the alumni network within the SEA-EU alliance. This activity is implemented by the Erasmus+ project SEA-EU-DOC (<https://sea-eu.org/sea-eu-doc>).

European University of the Seas (SEA-EU) alliance consists of 6 coastal universities and 32 associated partners that pull together their complementary expertise and share an integrated, long-term strategy for education, committed to offering outstanding education and research. The alliance is formed by the University of Cádiz (Spain), University of Brest (France), University of Kiel (Germany), University of Gdańsk (Poland), University of Split (Croatia), and University of Malta (Malta).

---

### \*Required

#### 1. Informed consent: \*

In accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, by accepting to fill this questionnaire, you give your consent for your answers to be stored for data collection and treatment purposes (only summarized aggregated results will be published; no individual answers will be published). All responses are anonymized and all personal data will be deleted within 90 days after the research by the project ends. Results of this research will be published. All interested participants will be informed of the outcomes of the research. The research results will be also published on the project website <https://sea-eu.org/sea-eu-doc/>. Giving your consent in taking part in this survey, you give consent to the details described above.

*Tick all that apply.*

☐ I consent

### Baseline information

#### 2. The official name of the alumni organization: \*

---

3. Link to the alumni organization website if available:

---

4. Contact e-mail address: \*

---

5. Role of the person completing the survey: \*

---

6. Country (in case of global alumni member, please refer to the country of your chapter): \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ France  
☐ Malta  
☐ Croatia  
☐ Germany  
☐ Spain  
☐ Poland

7. Type of organization (select all that apply): \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Association  
☐ Alliance  
☐ Foundation  
☐ NGO  
☐ CSO  
☐ University  
☐ I don't know  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the relation of the university of origin and your organization (select all that apply): \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Founder  
☐ Co-founder  
☐ Granter (Funder)  
☐ No direct relation  
☐ I don't know  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. The approximate number of alumni members: \*

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Number of staff members of alumni organization (does not refer to unpaid volunteers): \*

\_\_\_\_\_

11. The approximate number of unpaid volunteers (regularly engaged in the implementation of the alumni organization activities):

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Source of funding (select all that apply): \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ University financing or co-financing  
☐ Membership fees  
☐ Donations  
☐ Charging attendance at the events/activities  
☐ Service provision  
☐ I don't know  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

13. If the alumni organization receives revenues from service provision, please describe what kind of services generate revenue to the alumni organization:

---

14. Please select the membership benefits offered by the organization (select all that apply): \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Access to university literature
- ☐ Access to university licences and software
- ☐ Participation at university events
- ☐ Access to alumni directory
- ☐ Special discounts for professional and educational development (book stores, online platforms, magazines, etc.)
- ☐ Special discounts at shops, travel agencies and sports clubs
- ☐ Special discount for lifelong learning courses
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other: 

---

15. Membership fee (select all that apply): \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Free of charge
- ☐ Unique annual membership fee
- ☐ Various annual membership fees (different fees depending on the package)
- ☐ Monthly or quarterly membership fees
- ☐ Single-use fee (charge per service or event)
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other: 

---

16. If the organization applies various membership fees, please describe the fee structure and what services/benefits do they cover:

---



---



---



---



---

### Communication and activities

17. Frequency and type of communication tools used with the alumni: \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Never	On daily basis	On weekly basis	On monthly basis	On annual basis
<b>LinkedIn</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Other Social Media</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>University web-page</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Mailing list</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Dedicated alumni website</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Newsletter (digital form)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Alumni magazine (printed version)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Private groups (Whatsapp, Viber, Slack, etc.)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Other</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. If you have selected "Other" please elaborate:

---

19. Which of the following options do you use to track the careers of your alumni and how particularly successful you find them to be? \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Successful	Neutral	Unsuccessful	Not applicable
<b>Web searches</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Data mining in social media (at no cost)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Data mining in social media (paid)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>National statistic surveys</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>University data bases</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. In case you use some other options as well, please specify which:

---

## 21. Type and frequency of activities implemented by alumni organization per year: \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	0 activities	1-5 activities	6-10 activities	>11 activities
<b>Lectures/workshops</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Conferences</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Networking events</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Informal social events</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Various charity events</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Fundraising events</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Student placement/internship s</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Assistance with job opportunities/job search</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 22. Please indicate how often do you collaborate with the following stakeholders per year: \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	0 activities	1-5 activities	6-10 activities	>11 activities
<b>University of origin</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Economic sector</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>International organizations</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Other alumni organizations</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. Which of the following activities do you rate as particularly successful for your alumni organization? \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Successful	Neutral	Unsuccessful	Not applicable
<b>Lectures/workshops</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Conferences</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Networking events</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Informal social events</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Various charity events</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Fundraising events</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Student placement/internships</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Assisting with job opportunities/job search</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. How successful do you consider your collaboration with the following stakeholders: \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Successfull	Neutral	Unsuccessful	Not applicable
<b>University of origin</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Economic sector</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>International organizations</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Other alumni organizations</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. Please provide one or several examples of your successful activities and collaborations, that you consider good practice for alumni work:

Please consider any of the following: conferences, lectures/workshops, networking events, fundraising events, collaborations with the university of origin, economic sector, international organizations or other alumni organizations. In case you can provide a link to such activity, that would be enough too.

---

---

---

---

---

26. How engaged are your alumni members with work performed by the alumni organization: \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Disengaged

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

Highly engaged

27. Do you organize activities targeting doctorate alumni? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Included in the general events
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

28. In case you do, please specify what kind of activities:

---

---

---

---

---

29. Please estimate (even roughly) with how many alumni members that reside outside of your country, are you still in contact with: \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ >10%
- ☐ 11-30%
- ☐ 31-50%
- ☐ >51%
- ☐ I don't know

30. Please provide recommendations for the improvement of collaboration with the university of origin: \*

---

---

---

---

---

31. Please indicate the eventual challenges and difficulties in developing and running the alumni organization (select all that apply): \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Lack of financing
- ☐ Lack of personnel
- ☐ Tracking alumni
- ☐ Lack of interest by the alumni
- ☐ Competition with other networking platform
- ☐ None
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

32. Please indicate how you tried to overcome these challenges. Please do not consider the unusual covid-related challenges, so limit to years prior to 2020. \*

---

---

---

---

---

33. Do you consider your alumni organization or alumni members in any way related to Marine, Maritime and Coastal thematics (including tourism)? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

34. If your answer to the previous question was yes, please indicate which one (select all that apply):

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Marine living resources
- ☐ Marine non-living resources
- ☐ Marine Renewable energy
- ☐ Port activities
- ☐ Shipbuilding and repair
- ☐ Maritime transport
- ☐ Coastal tourism
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

35. We would greatly appreciate any other aspects that you have encountered in your alumni organization (positive and negative) that would help us in our analysis. All your information will be treated confidentially. Thank you!

---

---

---

---

---

#### Closing questions

36. Would you be interested to receive the results of this survey via e-mail? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

37. Would you be interested to discuss more in detail the activities and needs of your alumni organization? \*

If you answer „yes“ we will contact you at the email address given in this form.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

