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1ST EUROPEAN USR CONFERENCE

The final event of the UNIBILITY project and first European Conference on university social responsibility was held on the 22nd of September 2017 in Barcelona (ES). The event was co-organised by the [Postgraduate Center of the University of Vienna](#), [eucen Network](#) and the [University of Barcelona](#), which hosted the event in the premises of its Faculty of Economics and Business.

The Conference saw the participation of approximately 80 people from different European countries (Spain, Austria, Ireland, Romania, Slovenia, Portugal, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Lithuania) as well as from other parts of the world: Australia, Colombia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.



After a welcome by Ramon Alemany, Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Business of the University of Barcelona, an introduction to the [UNIBILITY project](#) and the topic of university social responsibility was given by Katharina Resch, project coordinator of UNIBILITY. A Key note session followed, with the presentation of the latest GUNi Network's report entitled "[Towards a Socially Responsible University – Balancing the Global with the Local](#)" by Josep Vilalta (GUNi Network) and the presentation of the [ENRRICH project](#) by Valentina Tassone (Wageningen University and Research Centre).

The attendees then split into parallel workshops, organised in smaller rooms and facilitated by the project partners, on the topics of *Strategic Perspectives on USR*, *Reporting and Accounting on USR*, and *Good Practices of USR*.



The second Key Note session saw the presentation of the main project result – the [UNIBILITY Guidelines for universities engaging in social responsibility](#), done by Mark Wallace and Maria Slowey from Dublin City University (IE). The second key note was by Bernie Quillinan and Rhonda Wynne (University of Limerick and University College Dublin), who enthusiastically presented the experience of [Campus Engage Ireland](#).



After a second parallel workshops session, the participants gathered again for a final plenary focused on the topic of *USR strategic management perspective*. Among the panellists Maurici Romero, Head of Office for Internal Control, Risks and Corporate Social Responsibility and Controller of the University of Barcelona,

who explained the way the University of Barcelona manages its USR mission and commitment.



All the presentations given in the Key Note sessions and in parallel workshops will be soon made available on the UNIBILITY project website at [this](#) page.

The UNIBILITY consortium would like to thank all the speakers, the presenters and the attendees for their active participation in the event and is already considering the organisation of a second European Conference on university social responsibility next year: stay tuned!

GUIDELINES FOR UNIVERSITIES ENGAGING IN USR

The UNIBILITY *Guidelines for Universities Engaging in Social Responsibility* are the final product of the UNIBILITY project. The writing of the *Guidelines* was a group effort: staff from each UNIBILITY partner worked on different sections, while the editing of the document was undertaken by Mark Wallace (Higher Education Research Centre, Dublin City University) and Katharina Resch (Postgraduate Center, University of Vienna). The resulting document represents a cross-European perspective on the social responsibility of universities.

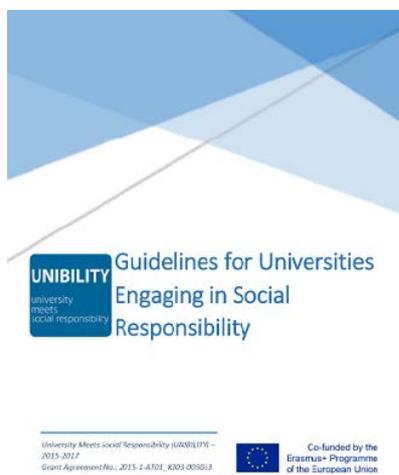
In the Introduction to the document, the relevance of USR within the current context is dealt with. Thereafter, the *Guidelines* are divided into four principal sections:

- Key principles of the USR process
- Training key staff members
- Reaching out to relevant stakeholders
- Involving students in USR

Each of these sections deals with an important stakeholder in the USR process:



management; teaching and research staff; business and NGOs; and students, respectively.



Among the *Key principles* outlined in the document is the notion that USR should develop a management model, rather than relying on individual initiatives. Such a model will allow USR to become truly transversal in the institution, and will enable a long-term dialogue with both internal and external stakeholders.

Developing a management model will also require a specific training regime in USR, and this is dealt with in the *Training key staff members* section. This section includes a suggested program for staff training, which draws on the UNIBILITY staff training week organised in the University of Vienna in May 2016. (See also UNIBILITY's [Training Material](#).)

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Reaching out to relevant stakeholders offers pointers towards an outreach strategy for universities, describing challenges faced in efforts to build partnerships with businesses and NGOs, and responses to such challenges. This section also includes good practice examples and ideas, some of which are drawn from the events hosted by the partner universities as part of the UNIBILITY project.

Involving students in USR aims to define the essential features of successful service learning (which for the purposes of the UNIBILITY project was defined broadly to include any work done by students in a student capacity with community members, whether it involved academic credits or not). A logbook template used during the UNIBILITY service learning projects to allow students to reflect on their experiences is also reproduced in this section.

The *Guidelines for Universities Engaging in Social Responsibility* have been disseminated to relevant university staff, students, policy makers and community groups, and are freely available in PDF format on the [project website](#). They were also presented at the 1st European-USR Conference, in the University of Barcelona on the 22nd of September.

The *Guidelines* have been published under the ISBN number: 978-3-200-05328-1.