

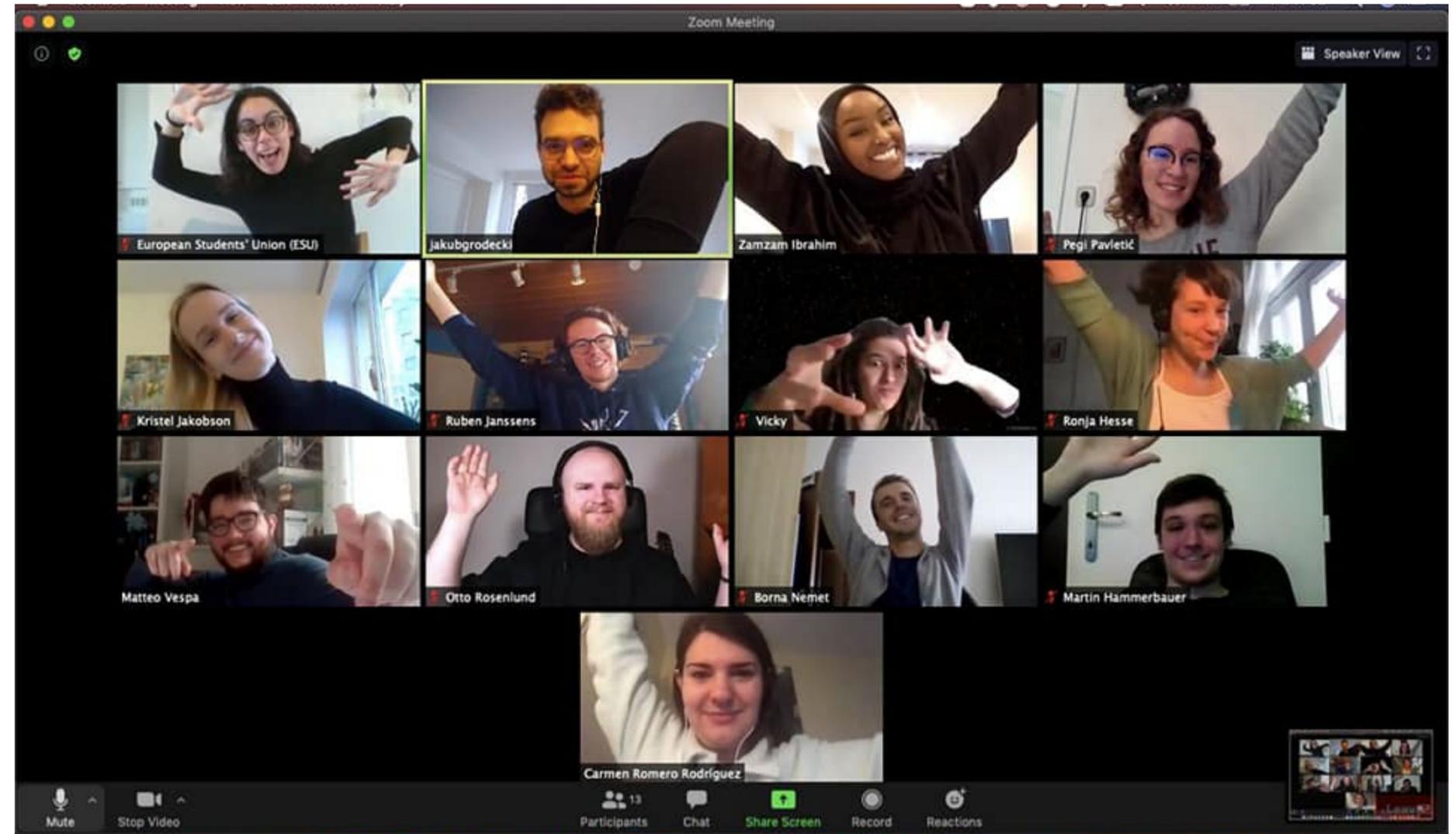
**TOGETHER,  
MOVING  
FORWARD**  
>>>



# EUROPEAN STUDENTS' UNION (ESU)

- 1982
- 45 National Unions of Students in 40 European Countries
- 20 million students!

»» Represent and promote the **educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students** at the European level towards all relevant bodies, in particular the European Union, Bologna Follow Up Group, Council of Europe and UNESCO.



# TOWARDS INCLUSIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT OF NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS IN PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

Stronger Together!



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union





# Our Project

- ◆ Student Engagement
- ◆ Problems and Challenges
- ◆ Needs and Potentials
- ◆ Conclusion



InclusiPHE

# Meet the Team





Baden-Württemberg Cooperative State University



Institute for the Development of Education (IDE)



European Students' Union



European Association of Institutions in Higher Education



Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST)



Knowledge Innovation Centre



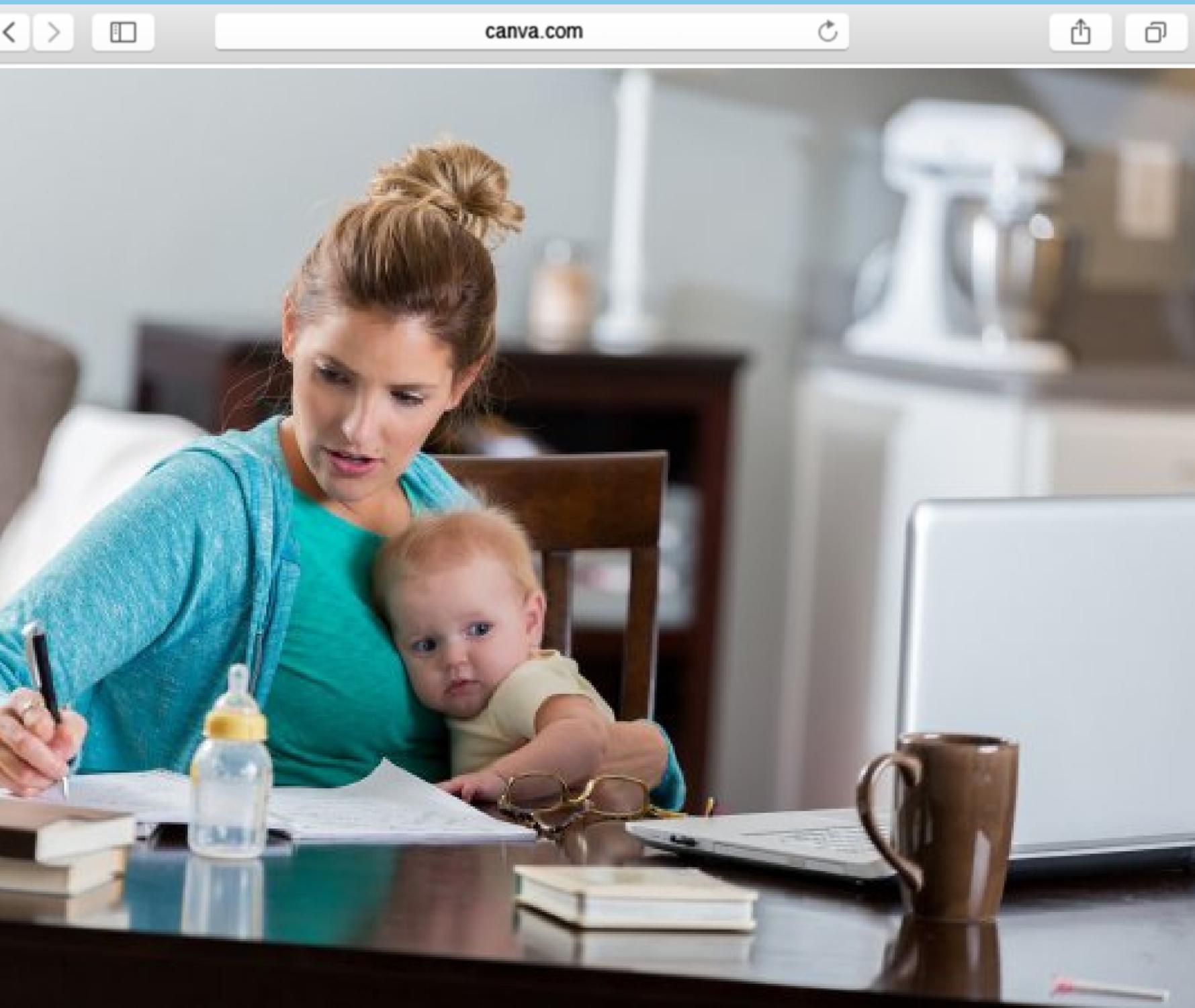
UC Leuven-Limburg



Mondragon University



# Our Goals



## Our Mission

To contribute to a more inclusive student environment by raising awareness for full student inclusion and providing PHEIs and their students' organisations with concrete ideas, tools and guidance on how to make student engagement fully inclusive.



## Let's Reflect

The world is changing, and so is higher education.

The challenges of tomorrow cannot solely be resolved with today's knowledge but by equipping all students with the necessary skills for doing so. However, this ambitious undertaking is not an obvious one. **It needs students to engage with their institutions beyond classes and lectures, to become a full part of their higher education institutions.**



## Diversity of Student body

in order for students to do so, they must feel like their institution is a place for all of them and for this, **all parts of the study journey must reflect the diversity of the student body.**

However, many students face specific challenges to becoming an integral part of the institution. In order to address these barriers, we must understand them and work towards representing all students on different levels. **All students must feel welcome in student engagement and representation in order to reflect barriers and challenges for making higher education institutions adapt and change.**

## Why?

Higher Education Institutions in Europe are experiencing a steady growth of an increasingly diverse student body. Especially the Professional Higher Education (PHE) Institutions, with their rather strong practical orientation, are attracting a large number of new student groups, the so-called non-traditional students (NTS).



**This is related to an ongoing process of expanding higher education, of opening access and of new labour market requirements asking for highly qualified graduates.**

**This also holds true for Professional Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) - they typically attract a more diverse range of students with a higher proportion of non-traditional students compared to more classical universities.**



## How do we get there?

In order to embrace this increasing diversity, higher education institutions need to adapt structurally and culturally to the needs of these students and to enable inclusion in the everyday study experience.



## Our contribution

The InclusiPHE project addresses this issue and tries to find ways of supporting non-traditional students in terms of student engagement and to break down structural and cultural barriers in order to create a more inclusive higher education environment inside and outside the classroom.



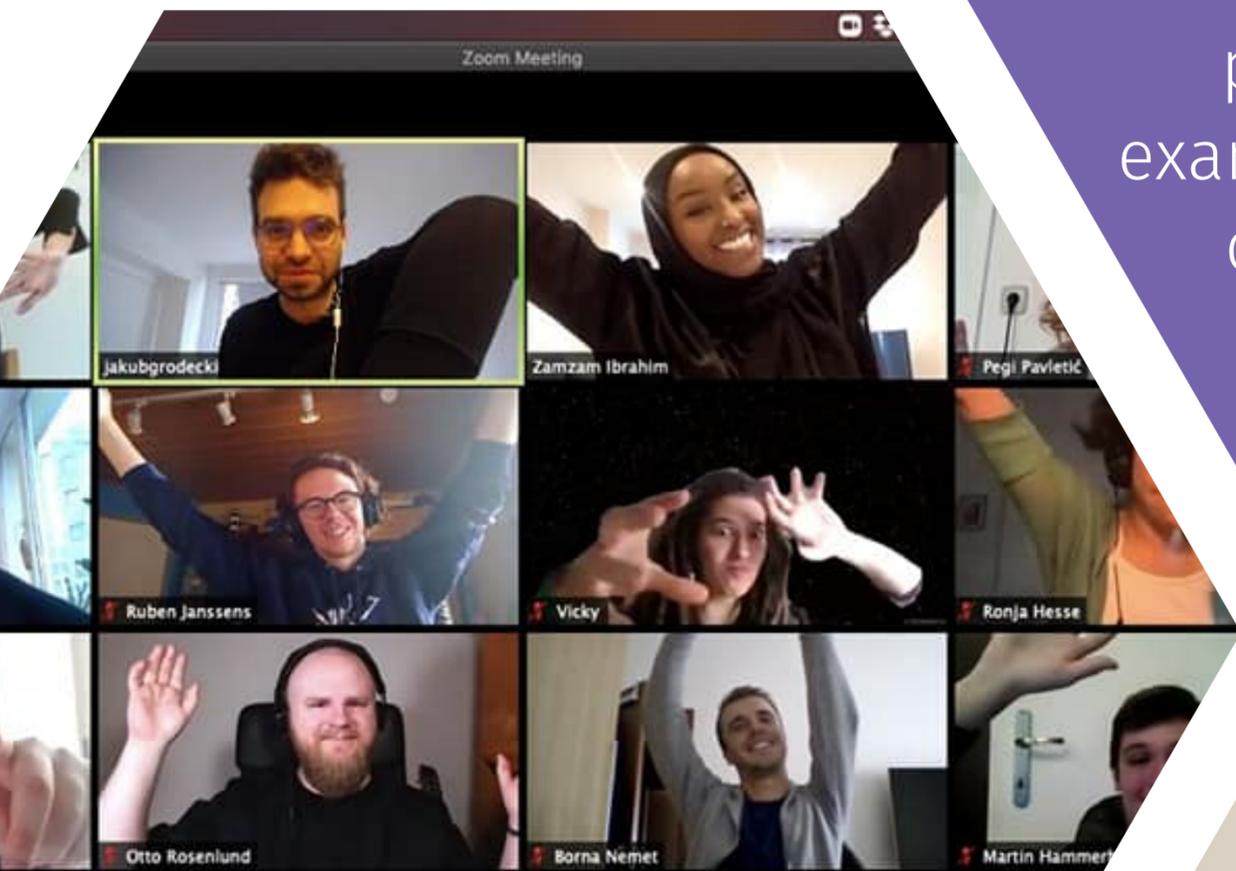


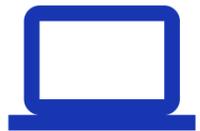
## Need Assessment

Before guidelines or recommendations for action can be designed, the barriers and problems need to be closely examined and analysed in order to derive the needs of the NTS.



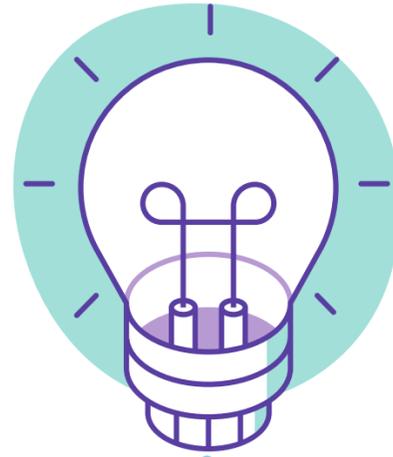
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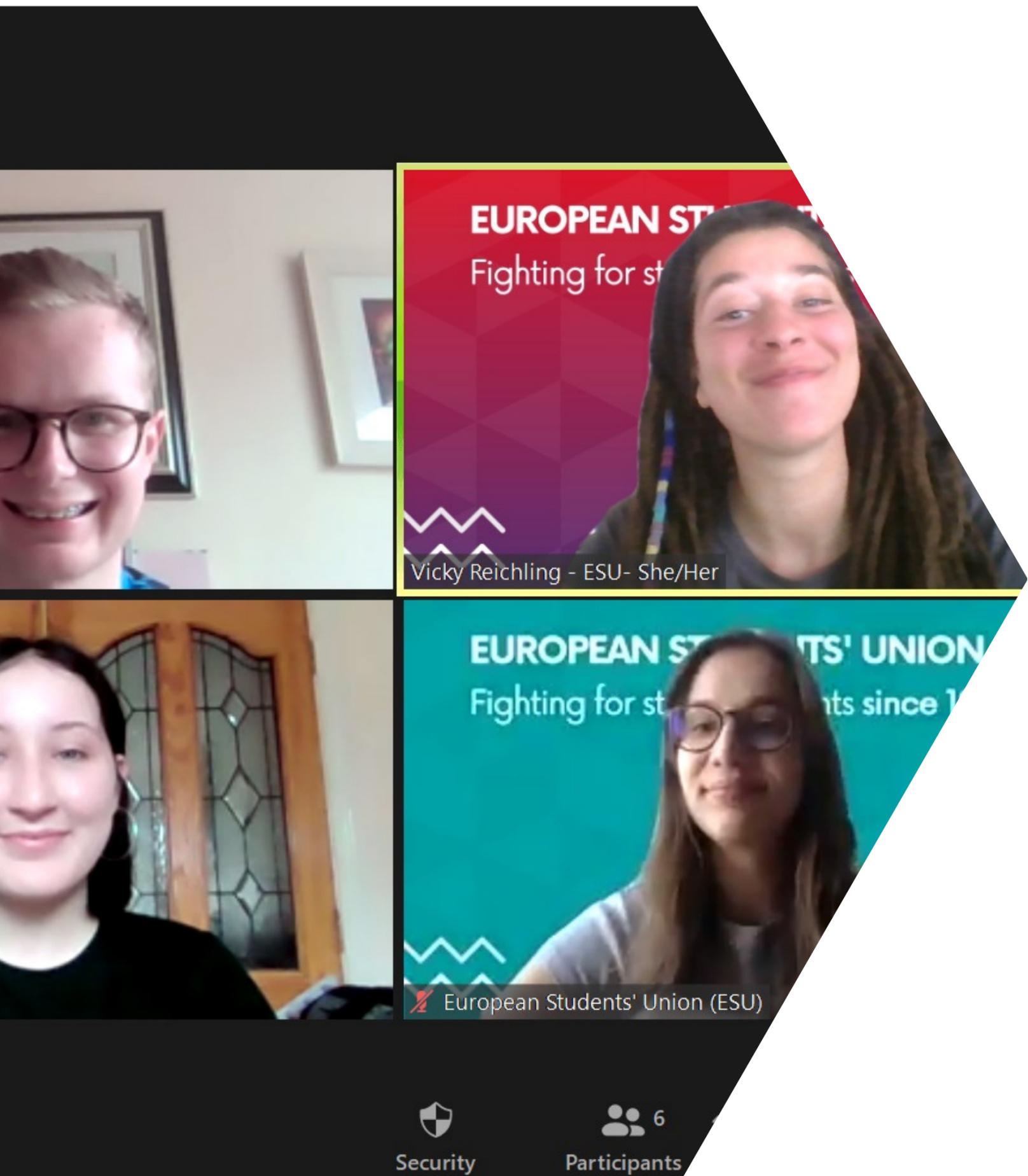


## Research Phase

- Identify the different types of non-traditional students
- Identify the different dimensions and levels of student engagement in PHE
- Identify the challenges and barriers for student engagement in PHE



- Identify the best practices for inclusive student engagement in PHE
- Identify the different perspectives on inclusive student engagement
- Identify ideas for inclusive engagement in broader society



# Multi-approach research

An internal research was conducted within the PHEs and partner organisations. Based on the results, **four PHE- internal and one international focus group** with a total of 34 experts discussed the identified topics in order to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and barriers for inclusive student engagement in PHEIs.

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# The non-traditional student

The term **non-traditional student** is context-dependent, can be permanent but also temporary or episodic and cannot always be traced back to exactly one diversity feature.



## Non-Traditional Students

Identified as belonging to at least one of three groups: underrepresented students, disadvantaged students or vulnerable students.

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Within PHE institutions, the following diversity characteristics were identified by the partners as being associated with non-traditional students:

Impairments, Migration background, Mature students, Gender imbalance, Gender identity, expression and sexual orientation, Socio-economic background of the parental home, Caretaking responsibilities, International background, Alternative education path, Re-entering studies.

# Problems and Challenges

## Similarities

Even though non-traditional students are a huge heterogeneous group, they report similar problems and barriers in terms of student engagement.

## Problem areas

Five problem areas could be identified and analysed more precisely.

International level

National level

Regional level

Institutional level

Campus / Faculty Level

Programme / Department Level

Course level

Student level

## Identified

- time and finance problems
- visibility problems of student
- engagement results and opportunities
- identification problems with the work
- and goals of student-led organisations
- image problems of student-led organisations
- accessibility problems of student-led organisations

# Needs and Potentials

Based on the challenges, different potentials could be derived to make student engagement and HEIs more inclusive.



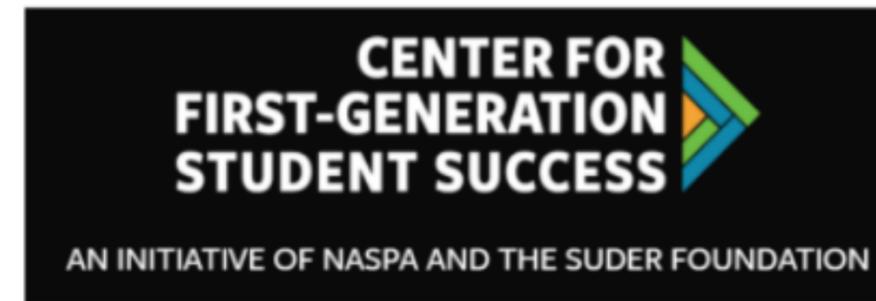
## Possible identified potentials:

Potential	Related problem area	Level	Responsibility	Structural or cultural
Different Participation opportunities	Identification Time and finance Accessibility	All Levels	Institutions Student-led Organisations	Structural
Visibility of Diversity	Identification	All Levels	Institutions Student-led Organisations	Structural Cultural
Support system	Time and finance	Institutional	Institutions	Structural Cultural
Contact Points between SO & NTS	Visibility Identification	Institutional	Student-led Organisations Institutions	Structural
Network between different levels of Student Organisations	Identification	All Levels	Student-led Organisations	Structural
Inform and professionalize teachers for different student needs	Identification	Institutional	Institutions	Cultural
Guidelines and policies for and from non-traditional students	Image Identification	All Levels	Student-led Organisations Institutions	Cultural Structural
Paying Students / Include Student Engagement in the curricula	Time and finance	Institutional	Institutions	Structural



# Good Practices

A few good practice examples for making NTS engage with their institutions and student-led organisations.



The Center for First-generation Student Success responds to ongoing and emerging policy issues that intersect with first-generation college student identities.



All the involved students have a multicultural background and together with researchers of UCLL they identified 10 barriers for students with multicultural backgrounds in higher education.



I Belong Programme supports third-country nationals and refugees in improving their language skills and knowledge of the Maltese history and culture,



**WHAT'S  
NEXT?**

Next InclusiPHE steps will be to address the potentials and good practices already identified

The InclusiPHE consortium will set up Strategies and Guidelines for Inclusive Student Engagement in PHE institutions and Students' Organisations and develop an online toolkit and training resources for Inclusive Student Engagement.



**The project tries to give practical  
recommendations for action:**

**the student-led organisations and the PHE institutions need to identify, reflect and reduce their structural and cultural barriers.**

**This process will be challenging, but it is essential for a more inclusive higher education.**



- Case Studies
- Strategies and Guidelines for Inclusive Students' Engagement
- Online toolkit and training resources

On process...





**The COVID-19 pandemic has had a large impact on all students' lives and study experience, sometimes affecting NTS even more. It has created new barriers to inclusive student engagement and to inclusive studying on a more general level - but it has also shown some new potentials and good practices. Our task will be to learn from this real-life experiment and to listen to students in order to support them with all additional problems and barriers, they may have faced - and to make all students succeed in their study journey.**



Stronger Together

