



4EU+ 1CORE Workshop

Academia and Sustainable Food Sector

Event Report



**Univerzita
Karlova**



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ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386



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1CORE Funding

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About the Project

The workshop titled Academia and Sustainable Food Sector was organised by Charles University as part of the One Comprehensive Research-Intensive European University project [1CORE], which is funded by the Erasmus+ Programme (task 4.5 Disseminating the values of a green, digital and resilient 4EU+ Alliance).

The 4EU+ Alliance consists of eight comprehensive, research-intensive public universities: University of Warsaw, Charles University, University of Milan, University of Geneva, University of Copenhagen, Sorbonne University, Heidelberg University, Paris-Panthéon-Assas University.

The alliance shares a common vision: to create a genuinely integrated European university system that established a new standard for cooperation in education, research, innovation, and outreach.

Event Agenda

Introduction

09:00-09:30 Short Intro Presentations

- Method and Instructions - Samuel Sámel
- Presentation ProVeg - Marie Šantrochová
- Presentation COŽP - Iva Zvěřinová

1st Block - Challenges & Gaps

09:45-10:45 Roundtable 1: Gaps

11:00-11:30 General Assembly

2nd Block - Findings & Solutions

12:00-13:00 Roundtable 2: Solutions

13:15-13:45 General Assembly

Conclusion

13:45-14:00 Final Remarks and Conclusion of the 1CORE Workshop

Presentation Partners



Marie Šantrochová

Marie Šantrochová works as a nutritional therapist with a focus on veganism and vegetarianism. She organizes workshops and lectures on nutrition at ProVeg Czech Republic. In addition, she is a Veggie Challenge coach.

Presentation title: "Why focus on a sustainable food sector?"



**Centrum pro otázky
životního prostředí**
Univerzita Karlova



Iva Zvěřinová

Iva Zvěřinová works in the fields of environmental economics and sociology, focusing on public preferences and consumer behaviour. At the CU Environment Centre, she works on Czech and European projects.

Presentation title: "Ways to modernize curricula and strengthen cooperation between the universities, industry, and NGOs for a more sustainable food system"

Moderator & Facilitators



Moderator

Samuel Sámel

A Sustainable Development Officer at Charles University, co-managing sustainability-related European projects. He also has previous experience in public affairs and consulting, as well as in moderating events and discussions.



Facilitator (University Representatives)

Anna Robková

Experienced in copywriting, PR, and currently working for Studenti IKSŽ. As a student of Journalism at Charles University, she has been trained to communicate and facilitate a wide range of topics.



Facilitator (Student Representatives)

Darina Strnadová

Currently working for Ecology and Economy focused online media project Ekonews. She has an interest in the topics of sustainability and fair cultural environment. She is currently a student of Journalism at the Charles university.



Facilitator (Ext. Partners Representatives)

Kryštof Prehlík

As a student of Journalism and Education, he has gained experience in moderating debates in a variety of settings, including academic seminars, student forums, and community events.

Workshop Support Team



Nikola Rusová

She is working as a Sustainable Development Manager where she leads several university-wide projects related to compliance with ISO and ESRS standards. She also has an extensive managerial experience from several public sector companies.



Alexandra Kocúriková

Working as a Sustainable Development Officer, she has been responsible for CSR, project management, keeping accounts as well as holding promotional activities. She is a skilled CSR communicator with an experience from various corporate sustainability work positions.

Workshop Objectives

- ☒ Bring together experts and students from various backgrounds to share their insights on improving education on sustainability.
- ☒ Recognise what existing gaps, barriers, and challenges are standing in the way of creating a functioning industry-education cooperation.
- ☒ Discuss what ideas, solutions and measures need to be taken into account to prepare graduates for current food industry.
- ☒ Enjoy fruitful debates created by our guests from the food industry, NGO, academia and the student environments.

Short Textual Summary

How can we effectively establish cooperation between universities and the food industry and create ideal study conditions so that our universities educate top experts for the food sector of the 21st century? This was exactly the question we focused on during our 4EU+ 1CORE Workshop: Academia and the Sustainable Sector.

The workshop, held on the 12th of November 2025, brought together 24 representatives of the food industry, NGOs, university administration, academia, and students.

Based on elements of Delphi method, participants joined two rounds of facilitated round tables in three groups: External stakeholders, University workers, and Students. The groups discussed gaps and solutions for the workshop topic. After each roundtable, a plenary session followed where all participants discussed roundtable topics together.

Short Photo Summary



Challenges & Gaps

Students

Students think that current study programs suffer from limited cooperation between faculties and fields, so students mostly learn only what is specific to their own program. Students also find it complicated to search for relevant job experience, and lack a comprehensive database.

There is no structural standard, and thus, quality depends heavily on the quality of a lecturer. The curricula are often outdated, overly theoretical, with weak links to companies and insufficient practical experience.

Too little attention is paid to legislative and financial aspects of the industry, and the development of soft skills and storytelling is also inadequate.

Challenges & Gaps

University Representatives

University representatives think that students often lack essential knowledge relevant for sustainability-related industry, as the topic is not sufficiently integrated across faculties and the university as a whole.

Teaching is fragmented into isolated subjects that do not build comprehensive understanding or critical thinking, with too little emphasis on soft skills.

Constructive communication with industry is also considered weak, and complex administration with inadequate funding redistribution further complicate progress. There is a clear need for open dialogue between fields and generations, as well as for high-quality motivated teachers.

Challenges & Gaps

External Partners

External partners point out structural weaknesses within companies claiming that even during internships, students often end up doing only routine administrative work, losing the potential for relevant skills-building.

Graduates lack soft skills, contextual and holistic thinking, as well as sales skills needed in the private sector, and there even is an insufficient number of graduates in the Czech Republic.

Partners admit that universities face a shortage of teaching staff to expand education. But should still improve relevant promotional activities of their sustainability-related outputs to the public.

At the same time, universities should focus more on storytelling and training students to turn raw data into meaningful, persuasive narratives.

Gaps - Commonground

Across all three groups, a shared picture emerges: education is too theoretical, fragmented, and poorly connected to real practice, leaving students without the soft skills, practical experience, and holistic understanding they need.

Cooperation between faculties, fields, and industry is weak, communication is insufficient, and there are not enough qualified teachers to ensure consistent quality.

Both universities and external partners agree that stronger integration, better engagement with industry and society, and more modern, context-rich teaching are essential.

- Lack of practical, real-world experience
- Insufficient soft-skills development
- Fragmented or outdated education
- Need for better cooperation and communication
- Shortage of qualified teachers and inconsistent quality
- Need for stronger connection with industry and society

Findings & Solutions

Students

Students suggest expanding cooperation frameworks. For example, more Erasmus+ opportunities to help students gain international experience. Students also emphasize that improving soft skills and storytelling skills in education would improve chances of establishing oneself in the labour market.

There is also an idea to establish a joint sustainability Board of industry experts, university staff, and student representatives to safeguard the quality and standards of teaching.

The effective use of social media would help to communicate relevant sustainability and labour market information among students.

Findings & Solutions

University Representatives

University representatives, to improve soft skills, suggest giving students more presentation and practical tasks. They also propose developing long-term projects that address environmental, social, health, and economic impacts.

They also support the idea of creating a comprehensive database about internship conditions.

There is a suggestion to provide teacher training and stronger promotion of sustainability in the food sector among staff, which might promote unpopular or complex measures that need to be implemented at the university level when necessary.

Findings & Solutions

External Partners

Partners propose creating a sustainability council to ensure the quality and consistency of teaching, as well as establishing a basic framework of cooperation between university departments and companies to make internship expectations more transparent.

They also suggest that project-based learning should connect students with small companies where they could provide consulting to get practical experience.

Teaching basic statistics, as it is a key skill also among food industry companies, would also be a valuable advancement in education.

Solutions - Commonground


All three groups propose that sustainability needs to be integrated more systematically into teaching, supported by stronger cooperation between universities and industry.


Every group also stresses the need for more practical, project-based learning and quality internships, with transparent conditions.


What is notable is the fact that all three groups had an idea of establishing internship database to make the process more transparent. Students and External partners agree on establishing an expert Board to gatekeep sustainability-related education standards.


- Stronger and structured cooperation between universities and the food industry, including an internship database
- More practical learning and transparent, high-quality internships
- Better development of soft skills, including storytelling
- Improved teacher training and consistent, modern sustainability-focused curricula guarded by a newly established Board

Recommendations

 Set up a transparent database containing vacancies and internship opportunities for students, in cooperation with companies.

 An expert Board on sustainable teaching practices should be established to ensure high-quality standards of sustainability-oriented courses.

 More practical, less theoretical, teaching approach should be utilised to improve soft skills among graduates.

 Establish a structured cooperation between universities and companies from the food sector to better know each other's situations and needs.

Conclusion & Lessons

Guest selection was done correctly. Each group had a smooth discussion and the general assembly sessions also had a fruitful, sometimes even heated, debate among stakeholder groups.

Before the workshop, there was a lack of similar events which could guide a debate on cooperation in the food sector. We are most thrilled that all stakeholder groups found the format purposeful and interesting. It was also notable that identified gaps as well as solutions were similar among all groups.

As a negative, better room selection for roundtables. Even though our facilitators guided our guests to their rooms, the premises of the 14th Century Karolinum are not very well suited for several parallel sessions. Each group needed to walk through a maze of different halls to get to their assigned room.

Final Comments

Anna Robková

Facilitator

"I believe sustainability is a topic that needs to be discussed openly and in a proper manner. Being able to facilitate a discussion that allows for this was a great opportunity for me."



Ladislav Jelen

Youth Empowered, Coca-Cola HBC

"We are very glad to have been invited to the workshop as representatives of the food industry. Through our Youth Empowered project, we strive to create the best possible conditions for young people to succeed in the labour market. Activities like these, aimed at improving the design of study programs, contribute greatly to this goal. The topic of sustainability, which ran through the entire workshop, is one of our core values, and we are glad to see it resonating within the academic sector as well."



Karolína Karešová

SOR Chemie

"I received the invitation through the Department of Chemistry, where I study. At first, I didn't expect to feel as confident about sustainability in the food sector as my colleagues, since I mainly focus on its educational side. But the experience pleasantly surprised and inspired me.

Across all discussion groups, students, staff, and professionals, we identified key goals we care about and inspired one another while looking for solutions. The open and respectful atmosphere supported productive discussion and gave everyone space to share the challenges they face at the university.

I'm leaving the workshop with valuable insights and a better understanding of sustainability at Charles University, in areas I hadn't noticed before during my studies. The experience left a very positive impression and confirmed that, although there is still room for improvement, there are people in our surrounding who truly care about sustainability and actively move us in the right direction.

Thanks to the organizers and colleagues. I'm grateful to have taken part."



4eu+



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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