

Call for Contributions

56th eucen Annual Conference

Cagliari (IT), Wed 03 - Fri 05 June 2026

Empowering Futures: Lifelong Learning, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in a Changing World

Themes of the conference

In a rapidly evolving world, **Lifelong Learning (LLL)** is central to universities' missions to foster inclusive, adaptable, and forward-looking societies. Beyond personal and professional development, it is a fundamental pillar for **social progress, equity, and equality**, helping individuals and communities navigate economic, social, and technological change.

The 56th eucen annual conference, hosted by the **University of Cagliari (IT)**, provides a unique forum to explore how **university lifelong learning** shapes not only individual life trajectories but also the very fabric of our societies, economies, and collective futures. The conference will bring together **researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and university leaders** to examine innovative approaches, share evidence-based practices, and debate strategies for creating **more inclusive, equitable, and resilient learning ecosystems**.

This year, the conference focuses on **dismantling barriers to education** and fostering environments where all individuals – regardless of gender, background, socio-economic status, or other situations – can thrive. By promoting collaboration, cross-institutional learning, and the sharing of innovative models, the conference will act as a catalyst for **meaningful change**, inspiring new initiatives, policies, and practices that harness LLL as a driver of **diversity, equity, and inclusion (EDI)** across society.

Participants will have the opportunity to explore three interconnected strands, reflecting the multiple dimensions through which lifelong learning can **empower futures**: shaping society, equipping learners with the skills they need for a changing world, and designing tomorrow through policy, innovation, and inclusion.

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1. Shaping Society – Universities as catalysts for inclusive social transformation

Explore how universities can drive social equity and inclusion through lifelong learning. This strand focuses on dismantling barriers, fostering community partnerships, and promoting civic engagement to create resilient and democratic societies.

Your contribution could be linked to ideas such as:

- LLL as a tool for social equity and mobility
- Addressing systemic barriers through accessible education
- Community partnerships and widening participation
- EDI and gender equality in LLL policy and practice
- Universities' role in fostering civic engagement and democratic resilience

2. Shaping Skills – Equipping diverse learners for a changing world of work

Focus on preparing learners for a dynamic labour market. This strand addresses inclusive pedagogy, upskilling and reskilling, gender pathways in STEM, and frameworks that ensure all learners can thrive professionally.

Your contribution could be linked to ideas such as:

- Just and inclusive digital economy
- Embedding inclusive pedagogy in upskilling and reskilling programmes
- Gender pathways in STEM and leadership roles
- LLL frameworks to serve underrepresented groups
- Unconscious bias and barriers in professional development

3. Shaping Tomorrow – Designing Futures: Policy, Innovation and Equity in LLL

Investigate future-facing strategies for lifelong learning. This strand highlights innovation, digital and AI-based learning environments, cross-cultural integration, EDI-informed curriculum design, and LLL as a driver for the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Your contribution could be linked to themes such as:

- Future-facing strategies for inclusion
- Gender-responsive digital and AI-based learning environments
- Innovative models for integration and cross-cultural learning
- LLL as a driver for the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- EDI-informed curriculum co-design and learner voice integration

Categories of Contributions

We offer four kinds of contributions:

- i. Full paper only
- ii. Full paper to be presented in a parallel session
- iii. Poster for the 'static exhibit'
- iv. Poster for the 'speed poster' session

Guidelines for Abstracts

Contributions addressing the conference themes are welcome from researchers, practitioners, and all types of LLL professionals from around the world.

The Conference Scientific Committee is responsible for the selection of the submitted abstracts.

Please submit your abstract using the online form that you will find at

<http://eucenstudies.eucen.eu/current-call/>

- Deadline for submission of Abstracts: **15 March 2026**
- Notification of result to authors: **05 May 2026**
- Deadline for authors to register for the conference: **24 May 2026**

Abstracts must not exceed 500 words.

Papers: send your abstract and indicate that you want to publish your work in the [EJULL](#) of this conference. We will contact you with more details about this option. We accept 3 types of paper (please, make sure you understand the difference between them and have a clear idea of what type of paper you want to write):

- a. Research papers drawing on theoretical debates and/or empirical research, contextualised within current national and international policy debate, which develop the theoretical base of the field or report on significant research completed; Length: max. 3000-5000 words.
- b. Innovative Practice/Short papers including critical evaluations to share and discuss specific projects or practical approaches that either are in progress or have been completed; Length: max. 2000-3000 words.
- c. Discussion papers presenting informed opinion and reflection on current research and policy developments on university lifelong learning. Length: max. 1000-2000 words.

Paper presentation in a parallel session: beside the general information, authors must include points such as the aims/objectives, main perspective/ theoretical/conceptual framework, methods, research design, mode of inquiry, data sources or evidence, results and/or conclusions. Please note that the maximum duration of paper presentations will be approximately 20 minutes including questions and answers (presentation duration will be confirmed by 05 May 2025).

Poster Proposals: A poster proposal should include information such as: aims/objectives, main perspective/ theoretical/conceptual framework, methods, research design, mode of inquiry, data sources or evidence, results and/or conclusions. Authors will be informed about dimensions of the poster (if for the exhibit) or format of the slide and time available (if for the speed poster session).

All abstracts regardless of type of contribution should address the significance of the contribution in connection to selected conference theme(s). Accepted abstracts will be downloadable in PDF format from the conference website.

Abstracts are to be proposed and submitted by one person. **Up to three other people can be named as co-authors** in the abstract proposal. A minimum of one author must be fully registered to attend the conference. For each participant, a maximum of two abstracts, in which the person is named as main author or co-author, may be submitted. The abstract proposal must indicate which

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of the named authors will be presenting the paper. The author or one of the named co-authors is responsible for communicating with the **eucen** conference organisers about the paper. Please indicate who the nominated contact person is.

Please note that the conference language is English. Abstracts, papers, posters and presentations should be in English. Simultaneous translation will not be available.

Please note that once an abstract is accepted, the proposer(s) must register to attend the conference by the registration deadline of 08 May 2026. Only inputs from registered participants will be permitted to proceed during the conference.

Scientific committee

- Barbara BARBIERI, University of Cagliari (IT)
- Ester COIS, Universita degli Studi di Cagliari (IT)
- Silvia DE SIMONE, University of Cagliari (IT)
- Marina MONDO, University of Cagliari (IT)
- Alice SGUALDINI, University of Cagliari (IT)
- Katrin MANNIK, Tallinn University (EE) and the Steering Committee of **eucen**
- Eva CENDON, University of Hagen (DE)
- Carme ROYO, **eucen** Barcelona office

Organising committee

- Ester COIS, Universita degli Studi di Cagliari (IT)
- Barbara BARBIERI, Universita degli Studi di Cagliari (IT)
- Carme ROYO, **eucen** Barcelona office (ES)
- Lisi GUTIERREZ, **eucen** Barcelona office (ES)

Please contact spol@unica.it or events@eucen.eu for questions about the **Conference**.

Please contact journals@eucen.eu for questions about the **Call for Contributions** (abstracts and the possibility to submit full papers)