



# Support services for student entrepreneurship in higher education

## *Community for Educational Innovation (CEI)*



May 19, 2025

# Agenda

**15:30**    **Welcome**

**15:40**    **Intervention 1:** From vision to action: Fostering entrepreneurship culture in academia  
*Sara Proença*

**16:00**    **Intervention 2:** International students' perspectives on innovation in higher education  
*Rita Dias*

**16:20**    **Intervention 3:** Experience of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Lab & the StartLab.Brussels  
*Thomas Crispeels*

**16:40**    **Interactive Debate**

**16:55**    **Closing Remarks**

## OBJECTIVE

Explore the services that higher education institutions put in place to help students transform their entrepreneurial ideas into concrete initiatives.

## KEY TOPICS

- Implementation of support services
- Students' perspectives on innovation
- Experiences in start-up labs



# Support services for student entrepreneurship in higher education

- **Support services** for entrepreneurship provide resources, mentorship, and infrastructure to help students transform entrepreneurial ideas into successful ventures.
- They are **extra-curricular/co-curricular** offerings, complementing the academic curriculum, and help bridge the gap between theory and practical application.



**Incubators and accelerators**

**Mentorship schemes**

**Networking opportunities**

**Seed funding and access to capital**

**Business centers**

**Entrepreneurship/venture labs**



# Challenges in implementing support services

## **Fragmentation of services**

Scattered services across departments create inefficiencies and limit effectiveness

## **Funding**

Reliance on short-term funding, which can limit long-term planning

## **Scalability**

Expanding support services to accommodate more students requires planning and resources.

## **Institutional prioritisation**

Cultural and institutional changes that prioritise practical, hands-on learning alongside theoretical education





**Sara Proença**

**Polytechnic University  
of Coimbra, Portugal**

## **Intervention 1**

# **From vision to action: Fostering entrepreneurship culture in academia**

- Professor at the Polytechnic University of Coimbra (PUC), Portugal, since 2003. Teaching experience in entrepreneurship and economics.
- Director of the INOPOL Entrepreneurship Academy, a unit aiming to promote innovation and entrepreneurship and to foster the creation and growth of new startup and spinoff companies.
- Experience as Pro-President of PUC for innovation and entrepreneurship (2019-21)
- PhD in Economics from Lisbon School of Economics and Management, University of Lisbon.

# From Vision to Action: Fostering Entrepreneurship Culture in Academia

Sara Proença

Director @ INOPOL Entrepreneurship Academy

Polytechnic University of Coimbra (PUC), Portugal

19 May 2025



The Polytechnic University of Coimbra (PUC) was created in 1979, by the decree-law which established the dual system in Portuguese Higher Education: **UNIVERSITIES and POLYTECHNICS**

PUC ranks on the top positions of Polytechnic education and is one of the largest Portuguese higher education institutions (HEI).

**6** SCHOOLS

**+12.000** STUDENTS

**+800** TEACHERS

**+500** STAFF

**+60** BACHELORS

**+50** MASTERS

**+70** POSTGRADUATE COURSES

**+25** TECHNICAL COURSES



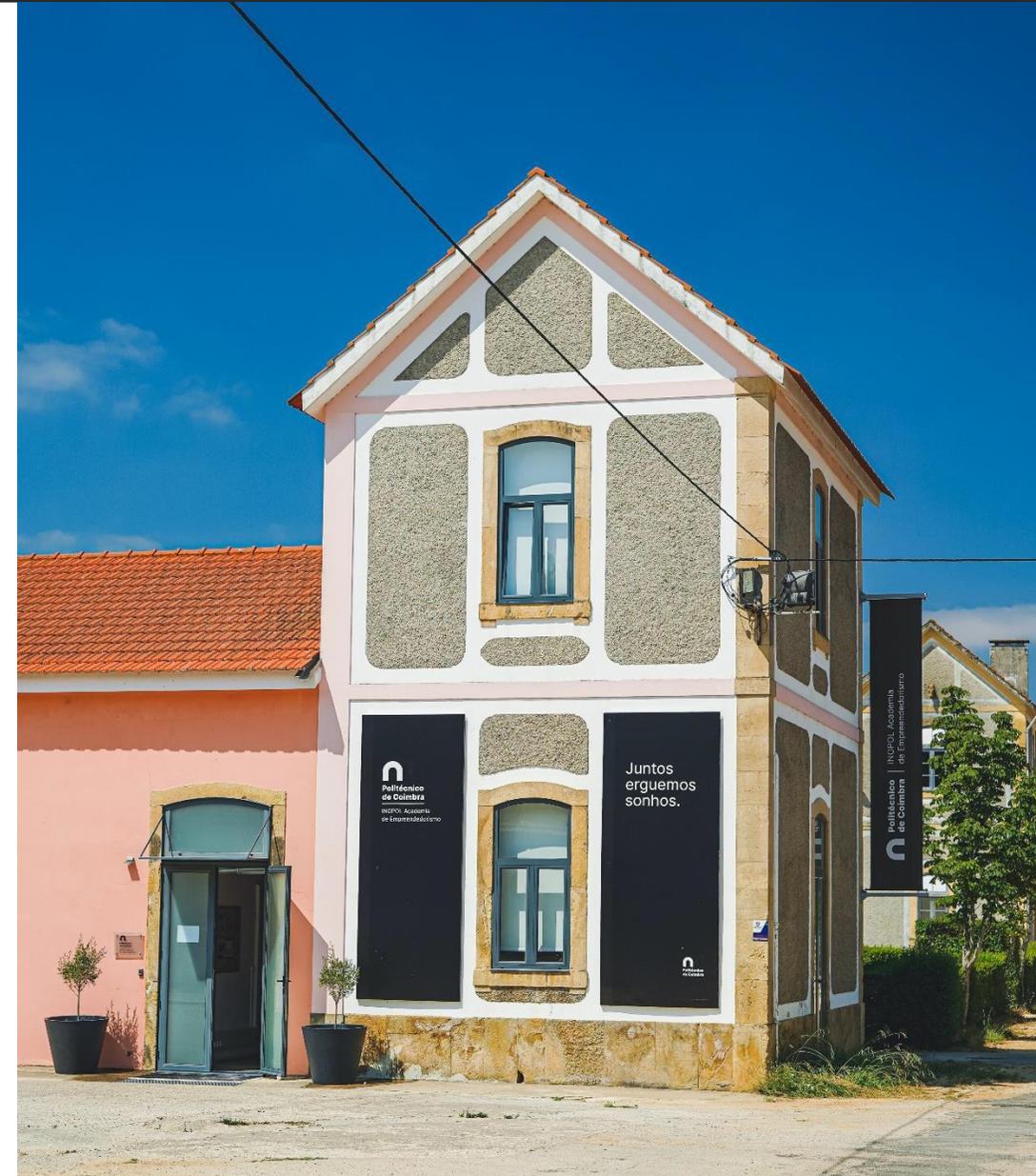
# INOPOL Entrepreneurship Academy

Polytechnic University of Coimbra



# Our mission

- **PROMOTE**  
*A culture of innovation and entrepreneurship*
- **FOSTER**  
*The creation and development of knowledge-based, innovative startups and spinoffs*
- **STIMULATE**  
*Knowledge transfer and valorisation*
- **BOOST**  
*The employability of PUC's graduates*



# What we do?

- Early-stage support for **innovative business projects**
- **Knowledge valorisation** support
- Physical and virtual **incubation** of ideas, projects and startups
- Strengthening the link between the **scientific and technological ecosystem** and the **business world**
- Fostering integration in entrepreneurship & innovation **networks and projects**
- **Employability** and **career services**



# Our Team



**Sara Proença**  
Director



**João Carreira**  
Innovation, Entrepreneurship &  
Incubation



**Letícia Santos**  
Employability & Career Services



**Lara Portugal**  
Knowledge Transfer



**Diana Garcia**  
Knowledge Transfer  
& Incubation

# Our target



Teachers



Researchers



Students



Alumni

Multidisciplinary  
programs and projects

Support in technology  
transfer processes

Training

Assistance in  
intellectual  
property matters

Mentoring  
and coaching

Networking  
initiatives and  
events

Business ideas' competitions,  
ignition projects and proofs of  
concept

Funding opportunities and integration in innovation &  
entrepreneurship ecosystem

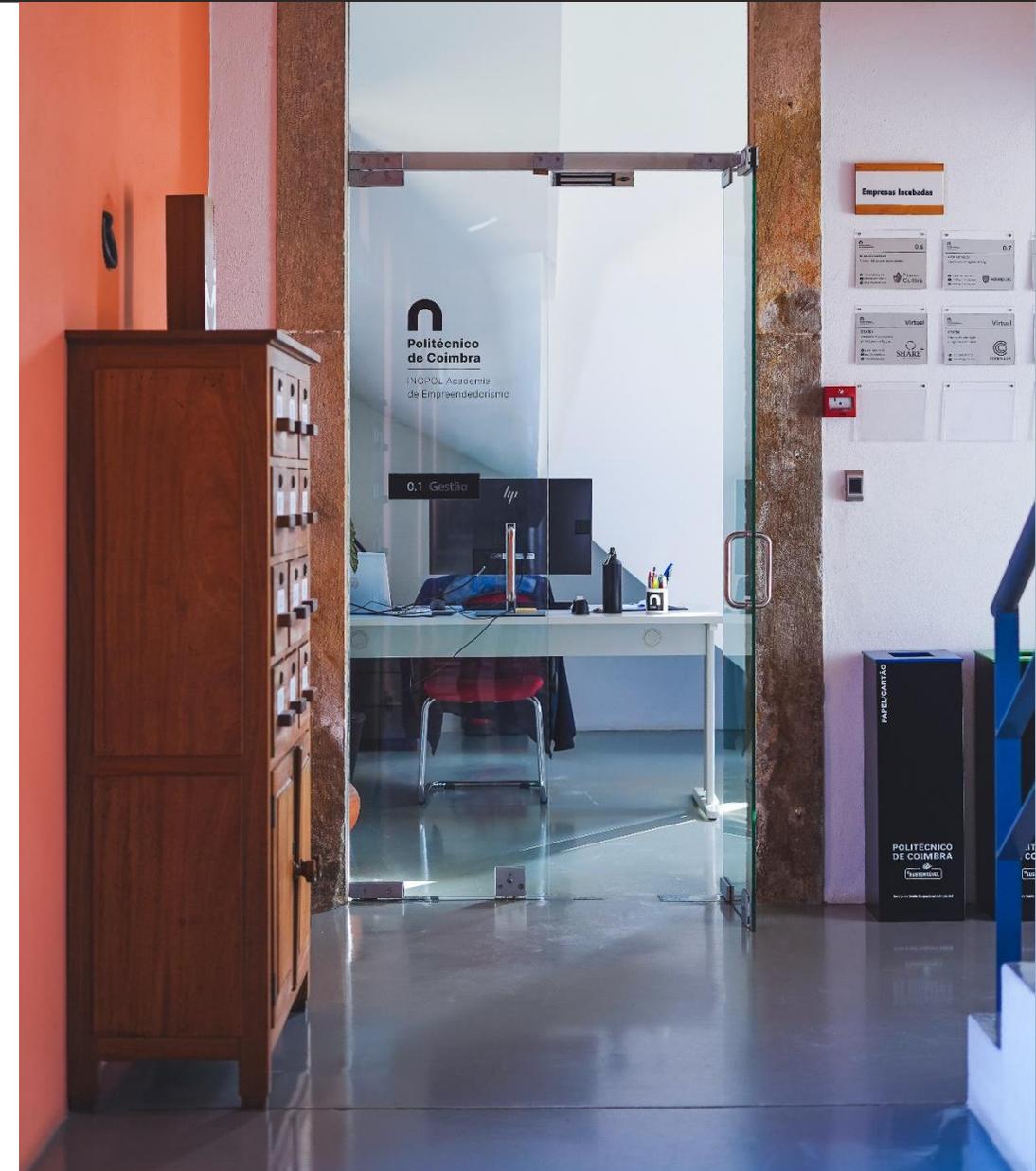
# INCUBATION

1	↑
Salas	1.1 - 1.3
0	→
Gestão	0.1
Sala de Cowork	0.2
Sala de Reuniões	0.3
Salas	0.4 - 0.7
Copa	
WC	



# Services

- **Workspace** for installation (12-30m2)
- **Logistics services** (reception, meeting rooms, pantry, videoconference, mailbox, Internet, cleaning, printer)
- Support in **business plan development**
- **Intellectual property and legal assistance** (technology transfer contracts, patents or brands' registration)
- Privileged access to **R&D units and laboratories**, partners' network and funding opportunities
- Access to **training, workshops and events**
- **Marketing and communication** support



# Applications

- **Permanently** open
- Submission of Application Form
- Screening and review by **Evaluation Committee**
- **Assessment Criteria:**
  - degree of innovation
  - technological maturity
  - potential market
  - economic and financial viability
  - complementarity with other incubated companies and PUC ecosystem
  - team CV
  - expected impact on regional development



# Startups ecosystem

## Physical incubation (7)



## Virtual incubation (17)



## Cowork incubation (2)



# KNOWLEDGE VALORISATION



# Knowledge Valorisation

## • Intellectual Property (IP)

- ✓ Provision of information on IP and applicable legal framework
- ✓ Assistance on IP database searches
- ✓ Support on the preparation of applications for different types of IP (patents, utility models, brands)
- ✓ Formalisation and management of IP rights' allocation processes

## • Technology Transfer

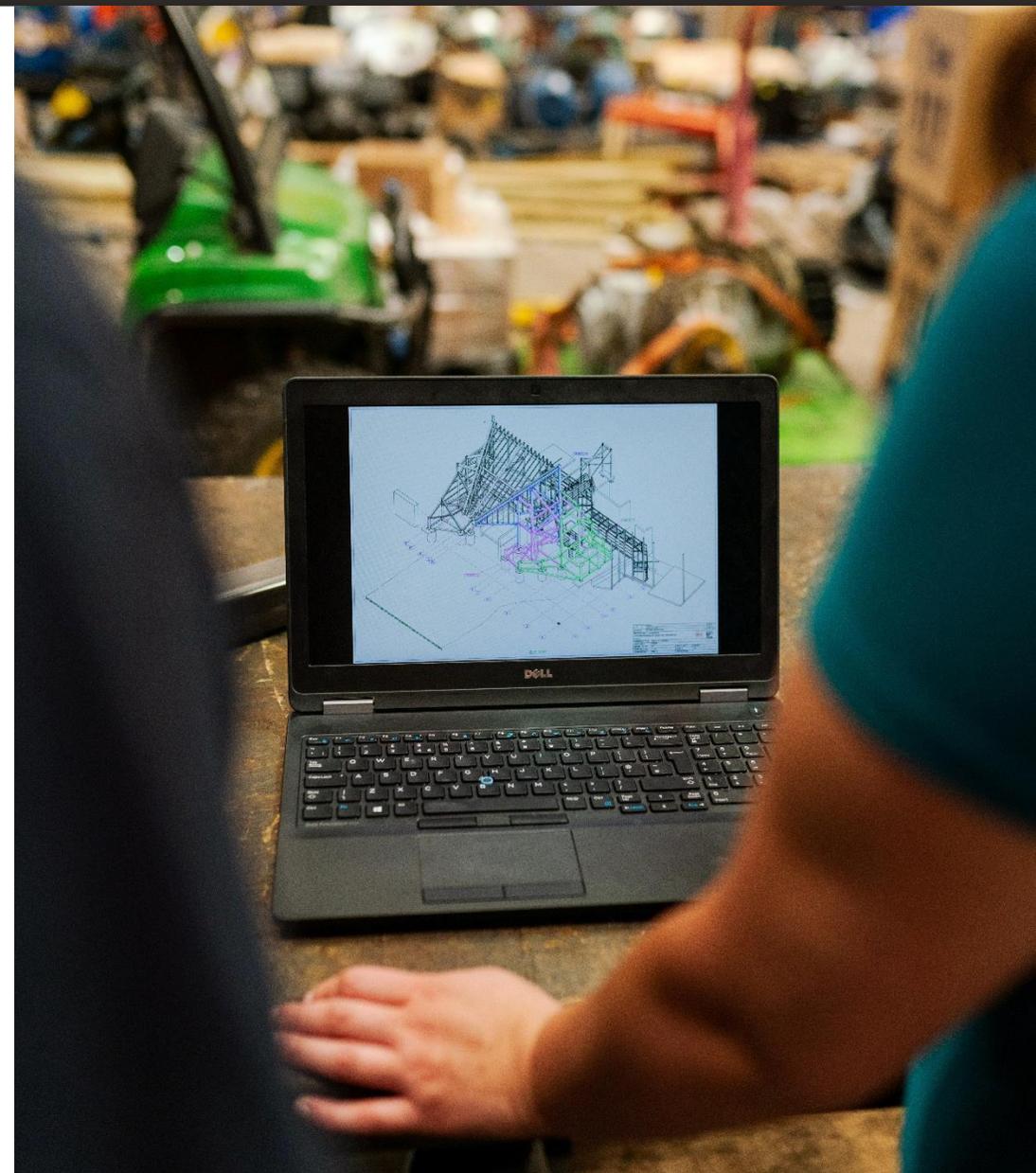
- ✓ Support on the diagnosis of intellectual property assets
- ✓ Templates for technology transfer agreements
- ✓ Assistance on technology licensing processes
- ✓ Support on the creation of spinoffs

Knowledge generated  
within PUC



Licencing  
agreements

Sale of  
invention/creation



# PROJECTS & INITIATIVES



  
Portuguesa  
de Comércio,  
Indústria e  
Serviços

Juntos  
erguemos  
sonhos.

  
Portuguesa  
de Comércio,  
Indústria e  
Serviços

# POLIEMPREENDE

*The largest network for the promotion of entrepreneurship in Portuguese polytechnic higher education*

- 21 polytechnic institutions
- 1 annual edition
- Promotion of innovative new businesses and valorisation of knowledge generated within the academic community
- Awareness-building sessions, capacity training workshops and mentoring
- Regional phase + National event
- Monetary prizes + ECTS (Diploma Supplement) + free incubation @INOPOL

## Target audience:

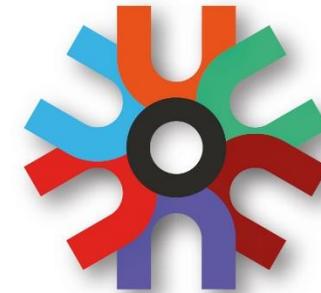
- Students, graduates, teachers and researchers
- Other individuals, if members of teams with polytechnics' students and/or graduates



# JOB SUMMIT IPC & SCIENCE2BUSINESS

A dynamic event designed to offer the IPC community and the public:

- Unique opportunities to **connect with top companies** and recruiters across diverse industries
  - **Networking** with experienced and inspiring professionals
  - Exposure to **innovative and high-impact projects** shaping the future
- ✓ **Summit Stage** – engaging panels and hands-on workshops
  - ✓ **Job Meet** – direct connections with hiring companies
  - ✓ **Science2Business** – building bridges between academia and industry
  - ✓ **Networking & Coffee** – casual meetups and great conversations



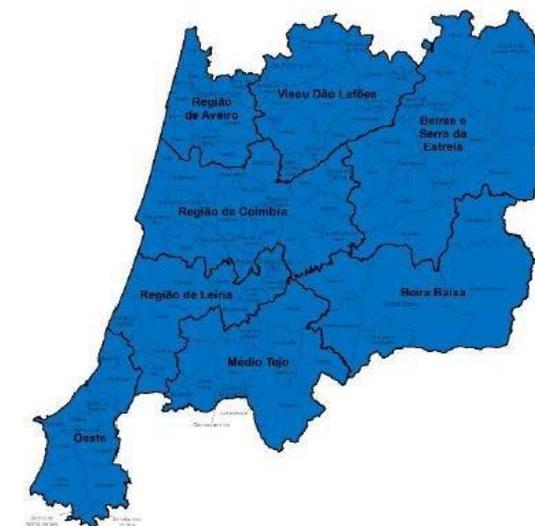
**JOB SUMMIT IPC  
&  
SCIENCE<sup>2</sup>BUSINESS**



# INOVC

*Innovation Ecosystem for Knowledge and Technology  
Transfer in PT Center Region*

- Co-promotion project with 23 partners (10 HEIs + 3 S&T Parks + 10 CKTVT).
- Program aimed at enhancing the valorization and transfer of knowledge and R&D and Innovation outputs to the regional economy by strengthening the Regional Innovation Ecosystem.
- Awareness and stimulation actions for R&D, regional networking meetings, international benchmarking missions, company visits and visits from companies to HEIs/R&D centers, events, technology fairs, identification of R&D challenges, business idea competitions, ignition grants and proof-of-concept initiatives, and a regional technology brokerage network.



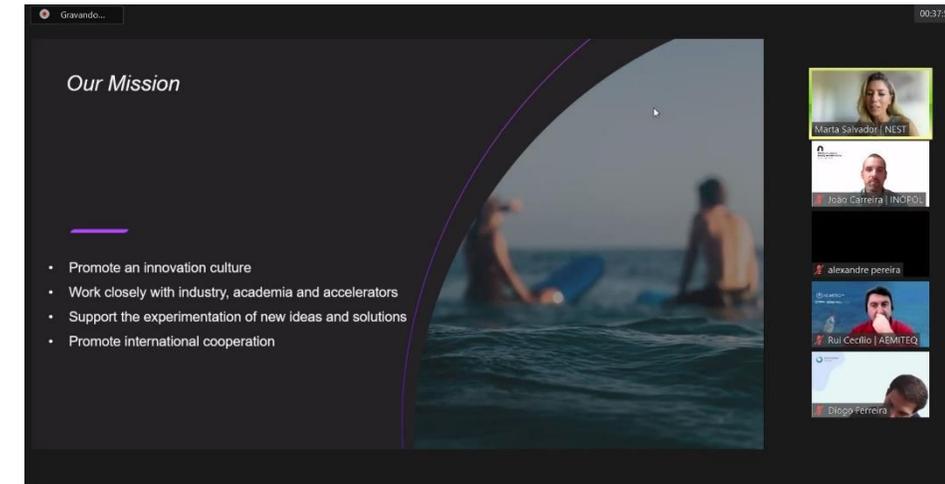
# LET'S TALK

*Webinars on key topics of innovation and entrepreneurship*

- Learning / training sessions for awareness-building and skills development
- Monthly editions

## Target audience:

Entrepreneurs, students, teachers, researchers & partners from the innovation ecosystem



# NETWORKS & PARTNERS



## Our numbers *(jul/21 - dez/24)*

**224** actions to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, employability

**143** business/entrepreneurial projects supported

**7.123** students, graduates, teachers, researchers and staff trained

**62** intellectual property registrations

**10** startups and spinoff companies promoted

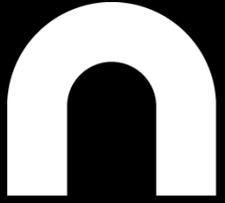
**35** companies/projects incubated

**46** partnerships

**13** network or consortium projects/programs

**2,6M€** competitive funding raised





**INOPOL**

# **Entrepreneurship Academy**

Polytechnic University of Coimbra



Campus Politécnico de Coimbra  
Av. Mário Silva, Bencanta 3045-601 Coimbra



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[www.inopol.ipc.pt](http://www.inopol.ipc.pt)



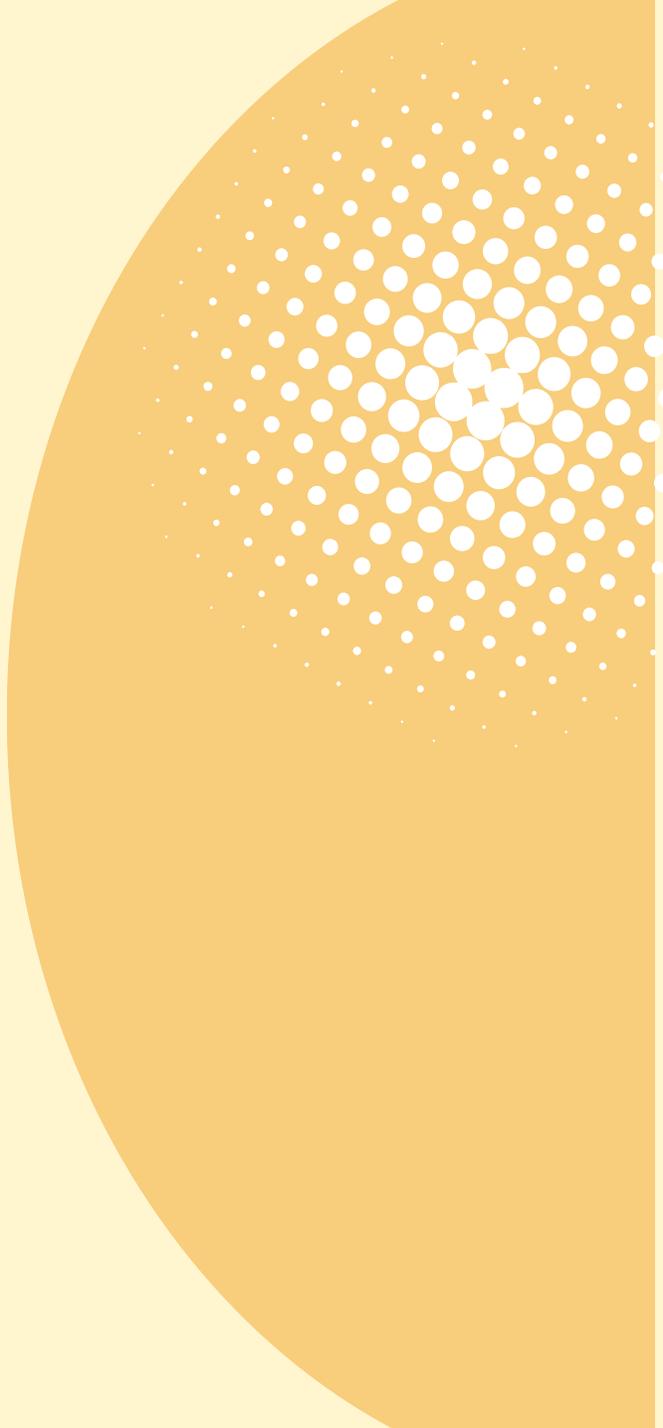
[inopol@ipc.pt](mailto:inopol@ipc.pt)



**LINKEDIN**



**INSTAGRAM**



DO YOU HAVE  
ANY  
QUESTIONS?



**Rita Dias**

Erasmus Student  
Network (ESN)

## Intervention 2

# International students' perspectives on innovation in higher education

- President of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), responsible for the coordination of the organisation, external relations, policy, and advocacy. Her priorities include increasing participation in learning mobility and promoting civic engagement and youth participation through Erasmus.
- Professional experience at the United States Embassy in Lisbon and at the Political Observatory in the Association for Political Studies and Scientific Research.
- Bachelor's in political science and international relations, University of Beira Interior, and a Master's in public policy, ISCTE–University Institute of Lisbon, with an Erasmus exchange at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium.

# International students' perspectives on innovation in higher education



*Community for Educational Innovation Webinar*



# Who are we?

ESN is the key student volunteer organisation in Europe dealing with learning mobility



# Our network in numbers

15,000+  
volunteers

1000+  
HEIs

46  
countries

350,000+  
students

*Enrichment of society through international students*



# Our work in international education

- Mobility opportunities for students - Erasmus+
- European University Alliances
- European Degree

## How to we do it?

- KA2 Projects
- Research
- Policy
- Advocacy





# ETI LABS - The Erasmus Talent & Innovation Labs





## ETI LABS - The Erasmus Talent & Innovation Labs

The **ETI Labs** project aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and the demands of the labour market by creating stronger cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) and businesses.





## Partners

The project is led by Erasmus Student Network, in collaboration with EURASHE, Association of European Regions, ESSCA School of Management, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, MCI Management Center Innsbruck, and ALGEBRA University College.



# Main Goals & Outputs

- Create sustainable cooperation models between universities and businesses through the development of **Erasmus Talent & Innovation Labs** → allow students to engage in challenge-based learning, directly addressing real-world issues posed by companies;
- Fostering **competencies in critical areas** such as digital transformation, sustainable development, and social entrepreneurship, all while enhancing the employability of Erasmus+ participants.



# Main Goals & Outputs

- **Science & Innovation Shop Framework** → support university-business collaboration
- **Talent & Innovation Labs** → offering hands-on learning experiences for students
- **Quality Standard for Erasmus Traineeships** → integrated into the ErasmusIntern platform
- **Online Hubs** → sharing best practices and learning resources
- **Policy recommendations** → guide future education-to-business collaboration at the European level





# The ETI Labs Project just started!

January 2025 - December 2028





# Erasmus Careers



# Project concept

**General Objective:** Ensure **competences** that are gained on **mobility** contribute to the **career prospects** of Erasmus+ participants.

## Specific Objectives:

- Competences gained by students and trainees during their mobility abroad are identified. (WP2)
- A better understanding for the learning that takes place during the International Student Lifecycle (WP3)
- The competences gained by students during mobility are better understood and recognised by employers (WP4)
- Students understand the impact of international student mobility on their career path (WP5)
- Competences gained abroad are recognised and integrated in Education policies (WP6)





Check all the project outputs in

[project.erasmuscareers.org](https://project.erasmuscareers.org/)  
/



# Policy & Research



# Our Publications



# ESNsurvey

The voice of the Erasmus Generation



Co-funded by  
the European Union

 **ESN**  
Erasmus Student Network

# What is the ESNsurvey?

A **student-led** research initiative running since **2005** focused on **mobility** and the **Erasmus+** programme.



Co-funded by  
the European Union



# The ESNsurvey

turns data into action  
and action into change.



Co-funded by  
the European Union



# This year's edition:

- The **XVI** edition: **12 May** - **31 July**
- Takes ~**25 mins**
- Available in **multiple languages** to ensure accessibility for all students



Co-funded by  
the European Union



# What makes this edition special?

## → New sections on:

- European Degree
- Improvement of the teaching and learning section
- Improvement of the skills related questions
- More options fitted for the European University Alliances

## → Comparative potential across:

- Countries
- Other Programmes (Erasmus+, SEMP, Turing, etc.)
- Institutions and Alliances



Co-funded by  
the European Union



# What makes this edition special?

## → Introduction of the Graduate Track:

- For students who went abroad before August 2023
- Understand the trends in career development following mobility experiences
- Support the understanding of how the Union of Skills and Erasmus are connected



Co-funded by  
the European Union





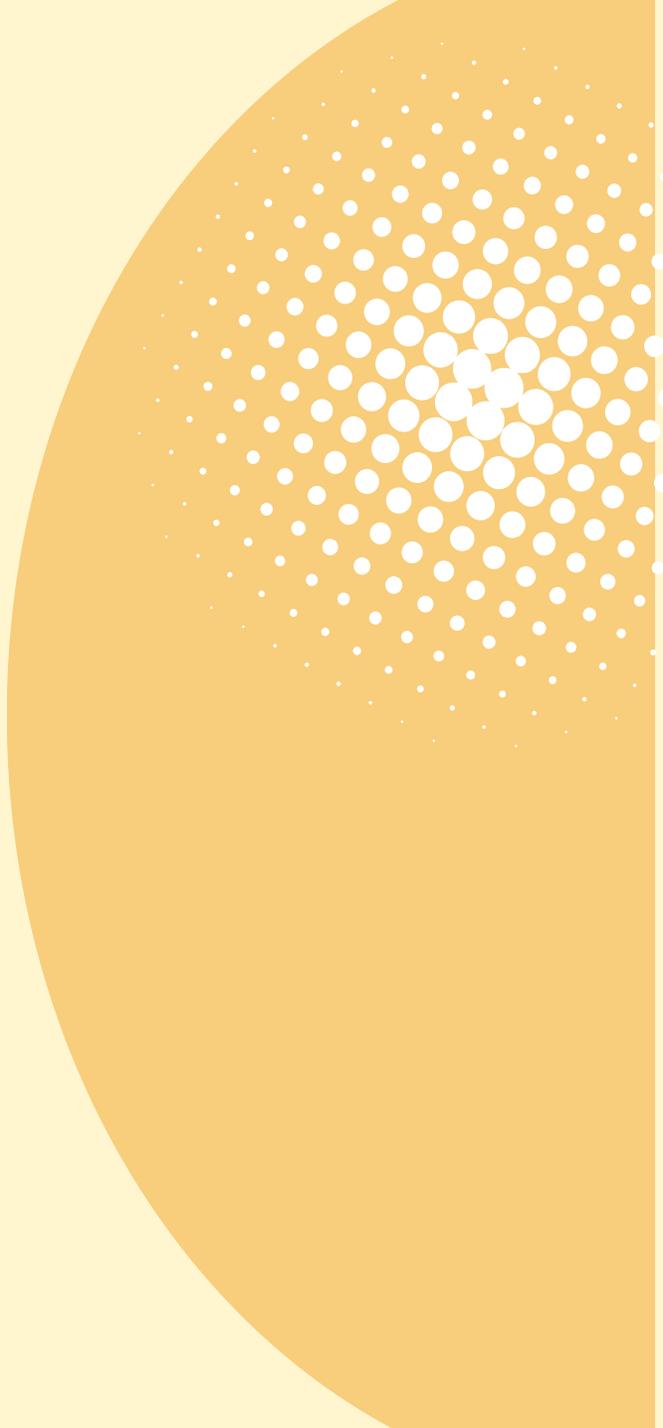
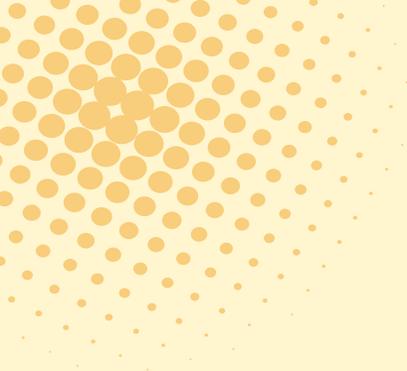
Erasmus Student Network

president@esn.org

President| ESN AISBL

*esn.org*





DO YOU HAVE  
ANY  
QUESTIONS?



**Thomas Crispeels**

Vrije Universiteit Brussel,  
Belgium

### Intervention 3

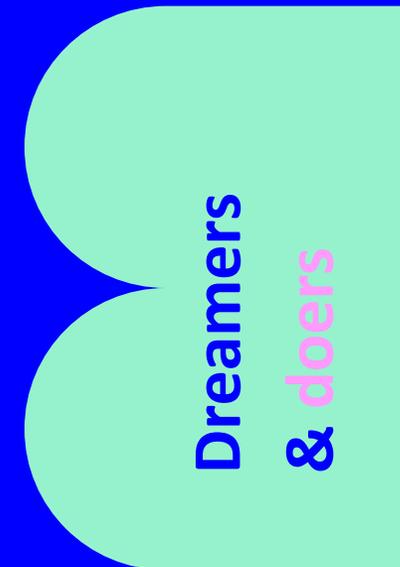
## Experience of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Lab & the StartLab.Brussels

- Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation and chair of the Brussels Entrepreneurship and Innovation Lab at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and teaches courses on technology entrepreneurship and innovation in the life sciences.
- Director of StartLab.Brussels, the Brussels pre-incubator for first-time entrepreneurs.
- PhD Applied Economic Sciences: Business Engineers, Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

# StartLab brussels

Support Services for Student Entrepreneurship in Higher Education

Prof. dr. Thomas Crispeels  
Webinar, 19th of May 2025



**950+**

Entrepreneurs  
Empowerd



# Our foundations

- **2024:** 8th year of operations for StartLab Brussels, 3rd year as a multi-university pre-incubator on a shared location
- **Purpose:** we empower first-time entrepreneurs to shape a brighter future
- **Vision:** We believe entrepreneurs have the power to create a brighter societal and environmental future
- **Mission:** Startlab Brussels coaches, trains and connects bold entrepreneurs to build impactful startups, driving innovation and positive change



# Our offering



**Coworking Space**



**Workshops & Masterclasses**



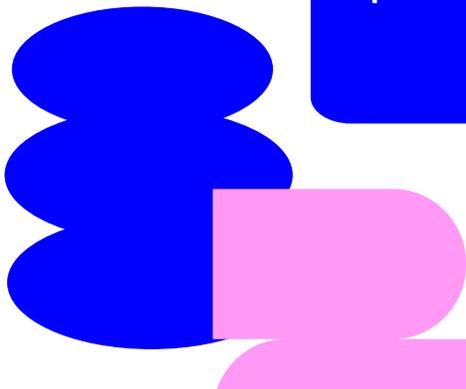
**Networking Events & access to a vibrant community**



**Coaching sessions & Advisory Board**



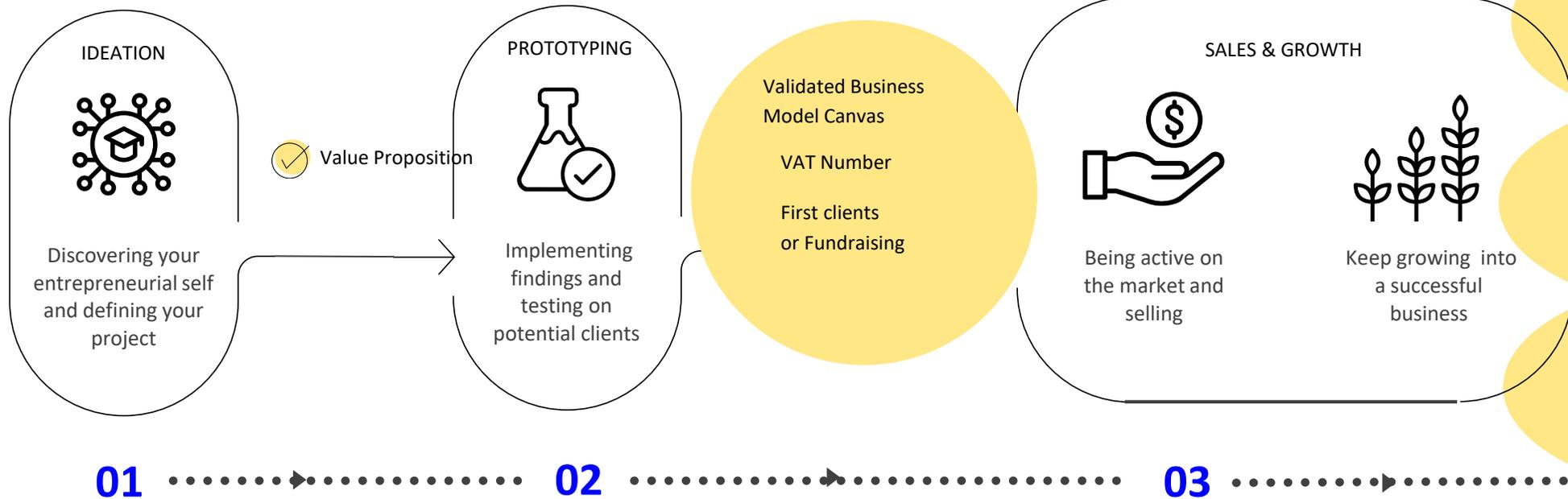
**Access to exper**



# Our Program

## TEST.LAB

## LAUNCH.LAB



# Our New Program

## Startlab4Researchers

- Launched in **October 2024, 16 projects.**
- Under the supervision of the **Tech Transfer** Team of the VUB
- Tailored for **academic researchers** in **transforming their innovative ideas/solutions from research to market-driven solutions.**
- Focus: Identify practical applications, adopt a market-driven approach, safeguard intellectual property.



# Meet the Team!



**Thomas**  
Co-Founder



**Olivier**  
Co-founder



**Caroline**  
CEO



**Eléonore**  
Head of Program



**Maarten**  
PM SLB4Researchers



**Jeremy**  
Facility officer



**Agathe**  
Marketing & Community  
officer



**Lea**  
Head of Marketing  
& Events



**Julie**  
RH & Admin  
Manager



**Jesse**  
PM Manager  
TESTLAB



**Victoria**  
PM Manager  
LAUNCHLAB

# Our key figures

Since our creation in 2016...



Since the beginning, we have welcomed more than 950 entrepreneurs to our community. They all have one goal in common: to have a positive impact on society. Every year we support countless projects. We guide them through the 2 steps program and help them launch their business.



Per year, we support approximately 300 entrepreneurs from A to Z. This represents approximately 180 projects!



This is the number of active companies launched with the support of StartLAB.BRUSSELS. **29%** conversion rate.



Founders have hired from 1 up to 36 employees after launching their companies!

\*companies or sole proprietor

\*companies or sole proprietor

# Our key figures

## Focus on 2024

 **262** Projects incubated (**94** new projects in 2024)

 **382** Entrepreneurs supported (**140** new incubees in 2024)  
**45% women.**  
34% of Students  
60% of Young graduates (-30yrs.)  
5% of + 30yrs.

 **26** Businesses created

 **34** Created jobs!!  
Founders included





**Apéro Pitch**  
 Beauté, Cosmétique  
 & Bien-être

15+  
 EVENTS

PITCH XXL



**SUMMER REUNION**

27.06.2024 - 6.30 PM

**Cofounders Event**

Daoust - 2024-2025 - Présentation

Panel discussion  
 28 March  
 6:30pm  
 9:30pm

StartLab  
 Brussels

Ready to forge powerful partnerships that last? Whether you're considering teaming up **or** have already embarked on a journey, laying strong foundations is key!

Interested? Join us!



FOOD, DRINKS, AND NETWORKING WITH STARTLAB INCUBEES, COACHES, EXPERTS, ALUMNI, AND PARTNERS

@VUB - U RESIDENCE



**Thomas Daenen**  
 Panel Animator  
 & Legal Experience

**Laurent Mikolajczak**  
 Seasoned entrepreneur  
 & Coach

**Jerome Derycke**  
 Start-up Experience

**Guillaume Massard**  
 Start-up Experience



BEYOND.  
 LAW FIRM

Lileo  
 A taste is here

MEET MY JOB

Jee Founders  
 Building Ambitious Impact







I made it into the...

StartLab.Family

Our Stories

# Our Start-ups

## Lileo

*A mom is born*

By Anastasia Luyckx & Jérôme Derycke



Discrete and **hands-off breast pump**

### Key dates

- 2020: Join Startlab Brussels
- 2021: Lauréats of MedTech Accelerator Jury awards 2021
- 2021: First support from Innoviris and the Brussels-Capital region through a grant.
- 2025: First sales!

## nolla

By Gauthier Bodart

Nolla is an **eco-friendly cosmetics brand** aimed at developing innovative and enjoyable products to use, while preserving the environment.

- 2020: Join Startlab Brussels
- 2021: Lauréats of MedTech



Our Stories

# Our Start-ups

## VOC memo

By Tanguy De Saffel, Clara Martini, Lucas Prieels



Vocomemo is a **voice recorder** designed to enhance **Alzheimer's** patients autonomy and ease the mental load of caregivers by offering a discreet, easy-to-use solution with an intuitive app for setting up personalized audio reminders, helping the patients orient themselves in time and space.

THE  
JAMES  
DYSON  
AWARD

#SOSHE 2023  
FESTIVAL

## LUCID

By Jean Seyl !



Lucid designs and develops **clothing** made from materials that are respectful of both the **environment** and people. The production is done as locally as possible to support the **local economy** and strengthen the resilience of our industries.



Our Stories

# Our Start-ups



By Mathilde Wittock



Belgian artist and designer  
Transforming **used tennis balls**  
into designer furniture.

## HEMPHUIS

By Darya Shkarupina & Artem Tsymbalov

Hemphuis uses hemp-based  
remediation to **clean** and  
restore **contaminated soils**



Our Stories

# Our Alumni



By Méline Djender



This **agency** connects **students** with small businesses, offering them opportunities to work on **communication projects** and gain hands-on experience in areas like social media, video, and design.



By Coraline de Spirlet

Unago is the first **recruitment agency** for individuals with a **criminal background** in Belgium.



Our Stories

# Our Alumni



By Diana Borcescu & Maxime Jacobs

Inmersives is a **multi-sensory, 4D device** designed to enhance the **wellbeing and health** of individuals, especially **patients** in elderly care homes, specialized institutions, or those experiencing anxiety and depression.



## MEET MY JOB

By Guillaume Massard

The **job offer platform** for people looking for **sens-full jobs**



# Contact us



**Startlab Brussels**

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1040 Etterbeek  
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(+32) 02 880 63 00**

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**Olivier Witmeur**

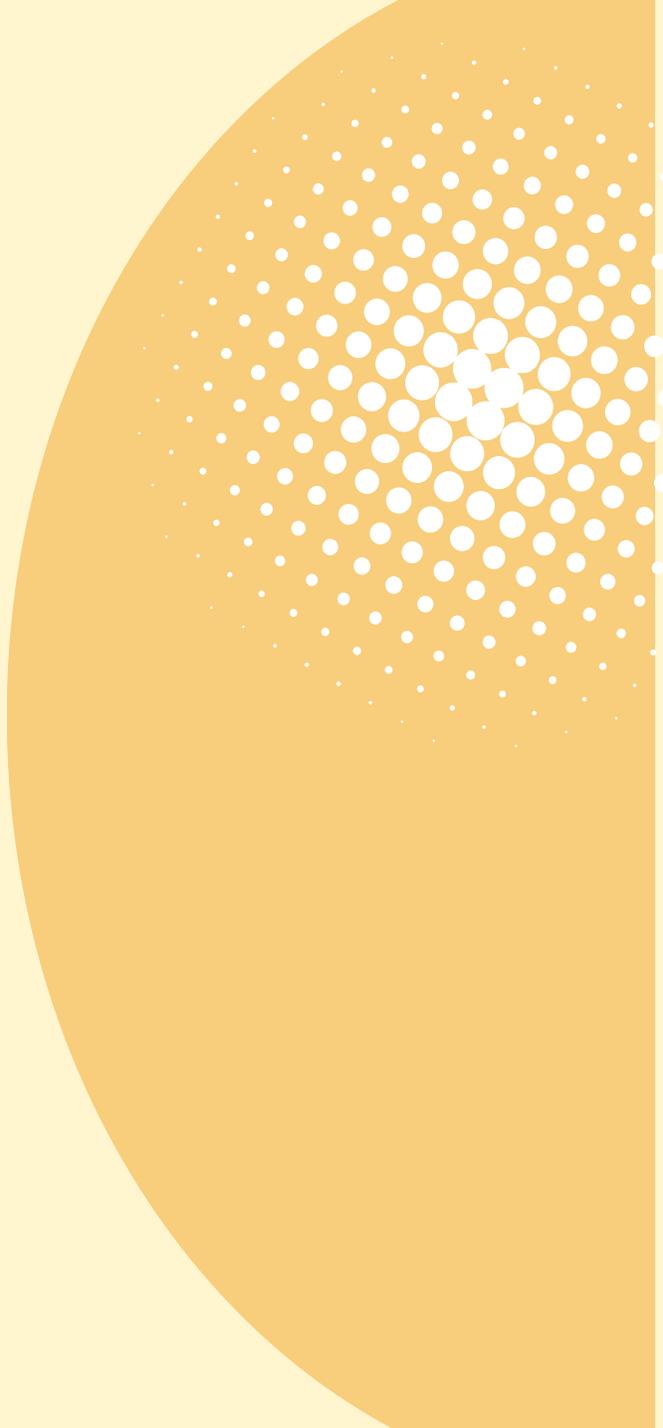
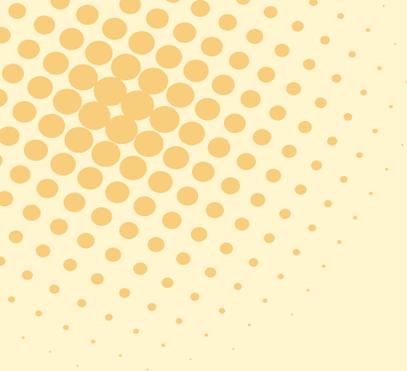
olivier.witmeur@ulb.be

**Thomas Crispeels**

thomas.crispeels@vub.be

# THANK YOU





DO YOU HAVE  
ANY  
QUESTIONS?

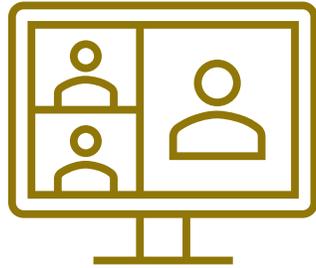
## WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR GOOD PRACTICES!

- **Share your practices** on ‘Support services for student entrepreneurship in higher education’
- **A short insight** into innovative practices
- To be presented in the **CEI report about the activities from Thematic Strand 1**

[https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/GoodPractices1\\_2](https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/GoodPractices1_2)



# Upcoming events



## WEBINAR

Entrepreneurial skills and competences throughout life

**June 26, 15:30–17:00**



## STUDY VISIT

From Ideas to Action – Advancing Entrepreneurial Education

**June 18 – 19, 2025, Barcelona (Spain)**



**Thank you!**

**CEI**  
● ● ● ●

[cei@ppmi.it](mailto:cei@ppmi.it)