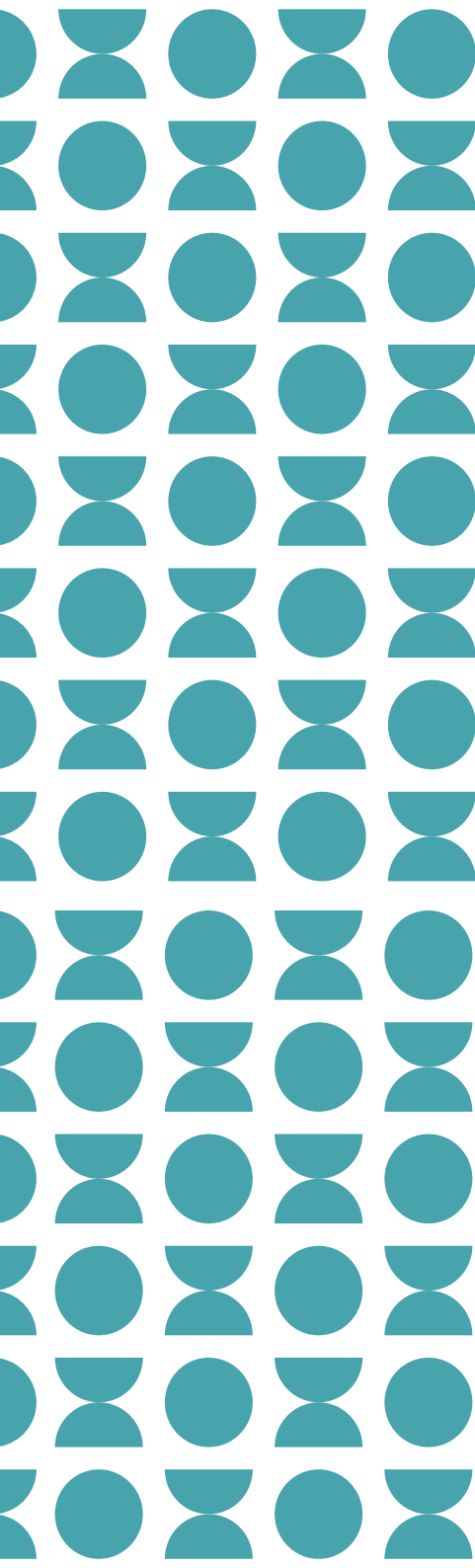




ACE²  **Applied
Connected
Entrepreneurial &
Engaged**
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY



Flavour School

AGRITOURISM

Local traditions

and impact in the communities



Learning together across Europe –
creating impact, connection
and understanding.



**SCAN
ME!**

For Agenda Programme

ACE²-ED

This notebook belongs to

Name: _____

Home university: _____

Email: _____

Course: Flavour School: Agritourism and Local Traditions and Impact in the Communities

Host university: Constantin Brâncuși University of Târgu Jiu

Dates: 26–30 October 2026 (on-site)

*“Let every page of this notebook tell
the story of your European journey.”*

Welcome words

Embracing the Values and Vision of the ACE²-EU Alliance



João Moutão

President of Santarém Polytechnic University
ACE²-EU Project Coordinator

PORTUGAL

“

Dear participants, welcome to the ACE²-EU micro-learning programmes – the heart of our innovative approach to challenge-based, real-world learning that directly addresses the pressing issues facing our society today.

Through these programmes, you will join multidisciplinary knowledge creation teams comprising students, academic staff, researchers and external stakeholders, all united in using active learning approaches to develop practical, applied solutions to future challenges, including the digital and green transitions, social inequality, economic transformation and technological innovation.

Your participation in this programme represents the essence of our Applied, Connected, Entrepreneurial and Engaged methodology. You will actively co-create knowledge, develop innovative solutions and gain the skills and competencies needed to drive sustainable societal transformation in your regions and across Europe.

Embrace the challenge, connect across borders and create solutions for a sustainable future!

“One for all and all for each other.”

WELCOME WORDS



Chelo Pérez Ocaña

Educational Coordinator
Universidad Francisco de Vitoria (UFV)

SPAIN

“

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the micro-learning programmes of the ACE²-EU Alliance. You are about to embark on an extraordinary academic and human adventure that will take you beyond the walls of your own university and into a truly European learning experience.

These courses are not only about gaining knowledge or earning academic credits; they are about learning to think, create and act together. You will collaborate with students from nine different countries, each bringing unique perspectives, cultures and ways of solving problems. This diversity is your greatest asset – it is what transforms a challenge into an opportunity for innovation and growth.

Through the programme, you will work hand in hand with companies, institutions and organisations from across Europe, tackling real-world challenges linked to the most pressing issues of our time, from digital transformation to sustainability and social inclusion.

Remember, this is your journey. Take every opportunity to learn from others, to listen, to share, to question and to create. The spirit of ACE²-EU lies in you – in your curiosity, your courage and your ability to imagine a better world together. On behalf of all the academic teams of the Alliance, I wish you an inspiring experience full of collaboration, discovery and growth.

Welcome to ACE²-EU. Welcome to your European learning journey.

“You are not just learning about the future; you are helping to shape it.”

WELCOME WORDS



Luminița-Georgeta Popescu

Rector, Constantin Brâncuși
University of Târgu Jiu

UCB, ROMANIA



The mission of our Alliance is to equip our students, staff, researchers and stakeholders with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to collectively address future challenges. In this context, ACE²-EU is not just another university collaboration. It is an Alliance that provides innovative solutions to present and future challenges.

Through transnational dialogues, policy exchanges and deep cooperation, we have furthered European integration and cohesion, increased social engagement and made higher education more responsive and relevant to labour market needs, while promoting a common identity and common values, including academic values.

Our Alliance has also reinforced its commitment to European values and democracy by embedding these goals in our educational offerings, through activities that prepare learners and the wider society for active citizenship and inform them about the importance of the democratic process and of participating in it.

"ACE²-EU is an Alliance that provides innovative solutions to present and future challenges."

MEET

the teachers and external stakeholders

UCB Teachers



Elena-Loredana Stăncioiu

ASSISTANT LECTURER · COURSE COORDINATOR

Elena-Loredana Stăncioiu is an Assistant Lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering, Constantin Brâncuși University of Târgu Jiu, where she also coordinates the Educational Marketing and Institutional Promotion Department. Her academic and research activity is strongly focused on agritourism, rural tourism, quality management, Tourism 4.0, emerging technologies and the digital transformation of tourism. She is a PhD candidate in Engineering and Management at the University of Petroșani, with research centred on the development of agritourism through innovative and digital technologies. Her work explores how digitalisation, smart tools, artificial intelligence and new technological solutions can support the competitiveness, sustainability and visibility of agritourism destinations and rural communities. Her academic activity combines teaching, scientific research, institutional communication and project development, with a particular interest in connecting universities, students, local communities and the tourism sector. Through her research, she promotes sustainable agritourism, innovation and practice-oriented education as key drivers of rural and regional development.

ORCID: [0009-0004-1710-4217](https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1710-4217)



Ramona Cazalbașu

LECTURER, PHD

Ramona Cazalbașu is a Lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering, Constantin Brâncuși University of Târgu Jiu, and holds a PhD in Mines, Oil and Gas Engineering. Her academic and professional interests focus on environmental engineering, environmental protection, noise pollution, agritourism, rural tourism and higher education. She has extensive experience in teaching, scientific research, project management and student mentoring, with active involvement in national research projects and partnerships with the business environment, including projects focused on industrial waste recovery and sustainable development. Her work strongly emphasises practice-oriented and experiential education. She coordinates educational, cultural and professional development activities for students, including workshops, competitions, career guidance initiatives and agritourism-related projects. Through her academic and project work, she promotes strong connections between research, education, local communities and sustainable regional development.

ORCID: [0000-0003-1427-8604](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1427-8604)



Irina-Ramona Pecingină

LECTURER, PHD

Irina-Ramona Pecingină is a Lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering, Constantin Brâncuși University of Târgu Jiu, and holds a PhD in Engineering. Her academic and research interests include agricultural sciences, environmental protection, food microbiology, biodiversity, agritourism, and engineering and management in public catering. She has extensive experience in scientific research, teaching, project coordination and student mentoring, having authored specialised books, laboratory guides and scientific papers published in internationally indexed journals. She has coordinated national research and educational projects, including SMARTREE and SMARTREE 2.0, and is currently involved as an expert in the ACE²-EU European University Alliance. A strong advocate of practice-oriented education, she coordinates student competitions, workshops, career guidance activities and initiatives connecting students with employers and entrepreneurs. Since 2024, she has also served as a member of the Senate of Constantin Brâncuși University of Târgu Jiu.

ORCID: 0000-0002-2500-9533



Aniela Bălăcescu

PROF., PHD

Aniela Bălăcescu is a PhD supervisor in Economics at Constantin Brâncuși University of Târgu Jiu, Romania, with over 25 years of experience in higher education. Her academic journey combines teaching, research and mentoring, with a strong interest in understanding economic and social change. Her research focuses on regional development, digital transformation, entrepreneurship and the factors that contribute to resilient and sustainable communities. Throughout her academic career, she has placed particular value on collaboration, interdisciplinary dialogue and the exchange of ideas, working with colleagues from different academic and professional backgrounds through joint research, publications, educational initiatives and international academic activities. As a PhD supervisor, she is particularly committed to supporting young researchers in developing their ideas, strengthening their research skills and finding their own path within the academic community. She sees academic collaboration as more than an exchange of knowledge: it is an opportunity to connect people, disciplines and communities, to learn from different perspectives and to build professional relationships that can grow into meaningful and lasting partnerships.

ORCID: 0000-0002-2937-4917



Ecaterina Stan

PHD STUDENT

Ecaterina Stan is a Marketing & Product Director with 15 years of experience across IT, fintech, telecom and medtech in global markets. She has built and led teams, go-to-market strategies, products and growth engines, including contributing to the development of a business from zero to over \$94 million in just three years. She works at the intersection of marketing, technology, product and business, with a strong focus on automation, AI and scalable growth. In parallel, she is a PhD candidate in Economics at Constantin Brâncuși University of Târgu Jiu and has developed a course for ACE²-EU dedicated to student entrepreneurs, focused on data-driven decision-making.



Maria-Rocselana Verdeș

LECTURER, PHD

Maria-Rocselana Verdeș is a Lecturer at the Faculty of Education Sciences, Law and Public Administration, Constantin Brâncuși University of Târgu Jiu. Her teaching and research interests include pedagogy, teaching methodology, pedagogical practice, curriculum, educational alternatives, assessment theory and methodology, and English language education. She has participated in Erasmus+ teaching mobilities in Türkiye and Ukraine and is actively involved in developing innovative teaching and learning methods, international cooperation and educational partnerships. Her academic activity includes more than 46 scientific articles, as well as several books, dictionaries, course materials and workbooks in the fields of English language, legal and informatics terminology, mathematics and education. Her work promotes student-centred learning, intercultural exchange, international academic cooperation and the continuous improvement of teacher education and educational practice.

ORCID: 0000-0001-5951-1460

MEET THE TEACHERS

LAC Teacher



Aija Lūse

LECTURER · LATVIAN ACADEMY OF CULTURE

Aija Lūse is a lecturer and Director of the Master's study programme "Cultural and Arts Management" at the Latvian Academy of Culture (LKA). She is also a Communications Expert for the ACE²-EU European University Alliance and a Science Communication Specialist at the LKA Institute of Arts and Cultural Studies. She is currently a doctoral student in the doctoral programme "Arts". Her professional and academic interests include digital marketing and communication, storytelling, audience engagement, science communication and digital reputation. She has more than ten years of professional experience in communication, marketing and public relations in the cultural and higher education sectors.

UPS Teachers



Maria José Nogueira

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, PHD · SANTARÉM POLYTECHNIC
UNIVERSITY

Maria José Nogueira, PhD, is an Adjunct Professor at Santarém Polytechnic University, Portugal, and a researcher at the Comprehensive Health Research Centre (CHRC). With a background in Nursing, Human Ecology, and Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing, her work brings together health, education and an understanding of contemporary social challenges. Her multidisciplinary perspective contributes valuable expertise to educational and community-based initiatives, with a particular focus on people, well-being and the relationship between individuals and their social environment.

ORCID: [0000-0001-7412-2252](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7412-2252)

UPS Teachers (continued)



Perpétua Silva

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, PHD · SANTARÉM POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

Perpétua Silva, PhD, is an Adjunct Professor at the School of Education of Santarém Polytechnic University, with an academic background in Social Sciences. Her work is closely connected to Social Education and Community Intervention, with a strong focus on communities, social participation and educational practices. She is also involved in the coordination of the Master's in Social Education and Community Intervention and currently serves as President of the School Assembly.



Tatiana Ferreira

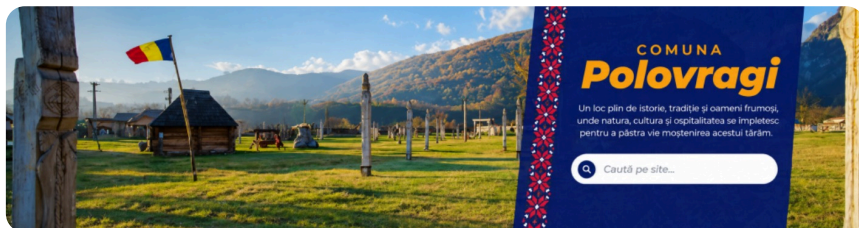
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR · SANTARÉM POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

Tatiana Ferreira is an Adjunct Professor at the School of Education of Santarém Polytechnic University and a sociologist specialising in youth studies and social research. Her research focuses on youth transitions to adulthood, education, employability, the labour market and public policies. She has extensive experience in research projects on youth policies at local, national and European levels and is also a collaborative researcher at the Research Centre in Quality of Life (CIEQV).

She is Vice-President and a full member of the European Rural Youth Observatory (EURYO), bringing a valuable perspective on youth, rural communities and social development.

ORCID: 0000-0003-1972-2575

External Stakeholders



City Hall Polovragi

Polovragi is a historic pastoral community in northern Oltenia, where sheep and cattle farming are still part of the local identity. Fruit growing, woodcarving, weaving and other traditional crafts complete a rural heritage that has been preserved for generations. Even the name Polovragi is surrounded by mystery – it has been linked to an ancient medicinal plant, to Slavic and Greek origins, and even to Geto-Dacian beliefs and healing practices. For agritourism, this makes Polovragi more than a rural destination: it offers a story built around shepherding, local food, craftsmanship, ancient legends and living traditions.



Gorj County Centre for the Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture (CJCPCT Gorj)

CJCPCT Gorj is a public cultural institution operating under the authority of the Gorj County Council. With 57 years of activity, the institution has undergone several forms of organisation, with its current structure established by Law No. 292/2003. It is responsible for preserving and promoting the traditional cultural heritage of Gorj County: coordinating cultural establishments, supporting cultural research and education, and promoting folk customs, traditions and crafts. The institution contributes to the cultural life of Gorj County by organising folk festivals and supporting traditional ensembles, and develops partnerships, editorial projects and research activities aimed at preserving and promoting the county's cultural identity.

MEET THE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS



Asociația Vatra Olteniei

Vatra Olteniei is an association dedicated to the sustainable development and promotion of Oltenia's cultural, tourism, economic and social heritage. Its activities focus on promoting local and regional tourism while preserving the region's traditions, crafts, gastronomy, folklore, natural heritage and historical identity.

Through projects, cultural events, tourism initiatives, educational activities and partnerships, the Association connects local communities, heritage and tourism, creating new opportunities for sustainable regional development.



City Hall Târgu Jiu

Târgu Jiu Municipality is the local public authority of Târgu Jiu, the capital of Gorj County and one of the main cultural and administrative centres of the Oltenia region. Situated along the Jiu River and close to the Carpathian Mountains, the city is an important gateway between the urban centre and the rural and mountain communities of Gorj. Târgu Jiu is internationally recognised through the legacy of Constantin Brâncuși and his monumental ensemble, which gives the city a distinctive cultural identity and places heritage at the heart of its tourism potential. The surrounding territory offers a rich combination of traditional villages, pastoral landscapes, local gastronomy, crafts, agricultural products, natural attractions and rural traditions – making the city a natural starting point for discovering the wider Gorj region and connecting cultural tourism with rural experiences, local food, nature and agritourism.



Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania (CCIR)

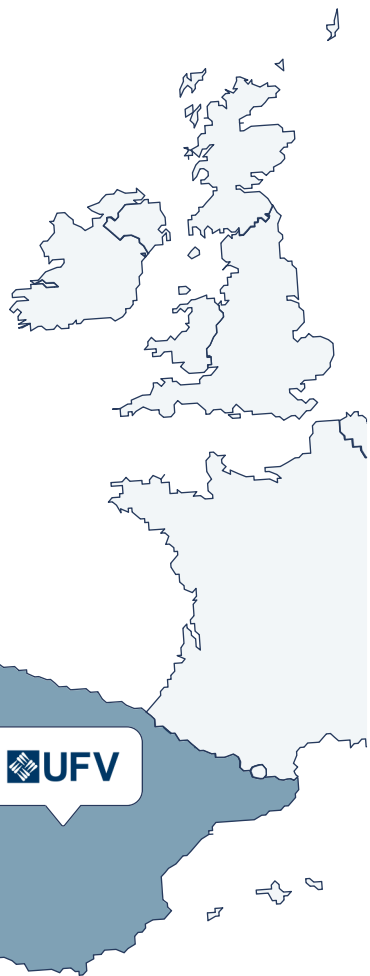
CCIR is a public-utility, non-governmental organisation representing and supporting the Romanian business community. Founded in 1864, it coordinates a national network of 42 county Chambers of Commerce and Industry, providing a strong connection between businesses, public authorities and international markets. Its activities include business representation, professional support, certification services, commercial arbitration, economic missions and international partnerships. In rural tourism and agritourism, CCIR connects entrepreneurship with local development: its business network can support SMEs, family businesses, tourism operators, farmers and local producers in transforming local resources into sustainable and competitive products and services.

Our members

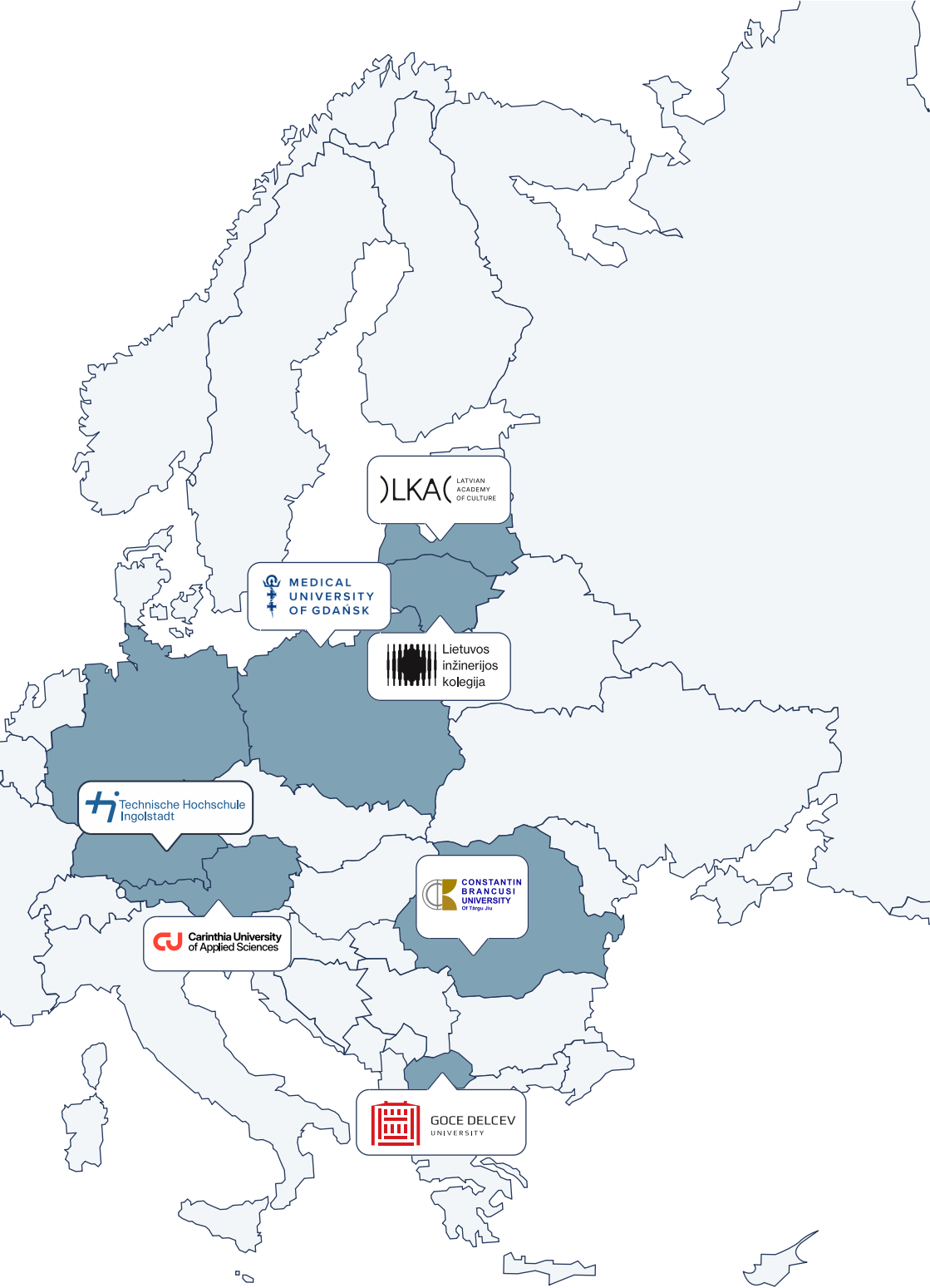
ACE²-EU is a dynamic Alliance of **nine** universities from nine different countries across Europe.

United by a **shared commitment** to **diversity** and **cooperation**, this network fosters academic excellence, innovation and cross-border collaboration.

By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise, **ACE²-EU** aims to shape the future of **higher education in Europe**.



Co-funded by
the European Union



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LATVIAN
ACADEMY
OF CULTURE

MEDICAL
UNIVERSITY
OF GDANSK

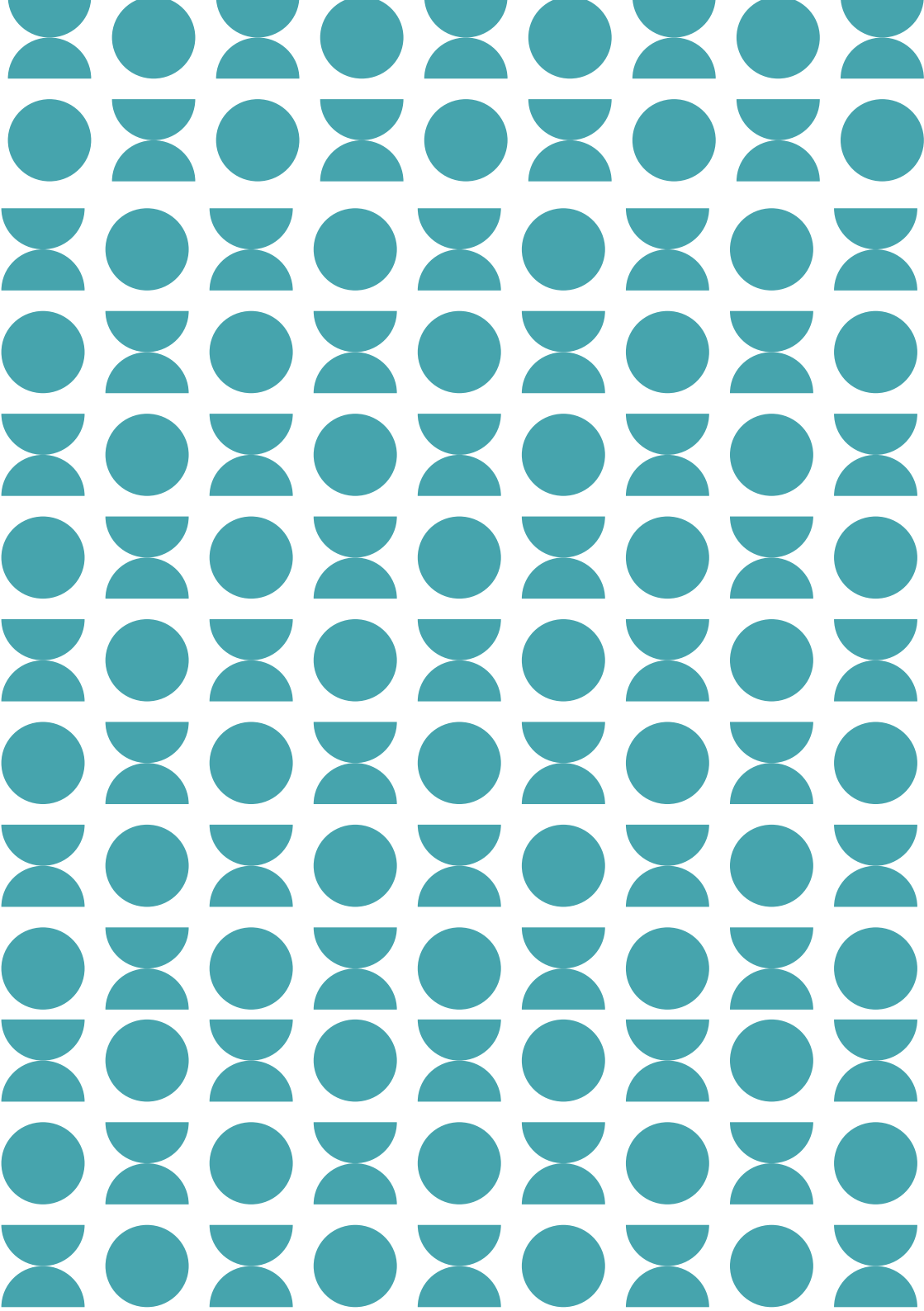
Lietuvos
inžinerijos
kolegija

Technische Hochschule
Ingolstadt

Carinthia University
of Applied Sciences

CONSTANTIN
BRANCUSI
UNIVERSITY
of Pitești

GOCE DELCEV
UNIVERSITY



ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

What is ACE²-EU?

The **ACE²-EU Alliance** (Applied, Connected, Entrepreneurial and Engaged European University) is a partnership of nine European universities working together to shape an innovative, inclusive and sustainable future for higher education.

OUR PURPOSE

In a world facing challenges such as climate change, digital transformation, social inequality and health crises, education must evolve. The ACE²-EU Alliance fosters collaboration across countries, disciplines and sectors so that **students, educators and researchers** can address real issues together.

WHAT WE DO TOGETHER

- We design **joint educational programmes**, such as the Applied Blended Challenges (ABCs), where students from different universities team up to solve real-world problems.
- We promote **shared research and innovation projects** that cross institutional and national boundaries.
- We develop a shared digital infrastructure – the **ACE²-EU e-Campus** – which connects all students and staff across the Alliance.
- We work with **external partners** (companies, public institutions, civil society) to co-create learning and societal impact.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

As a student in the ACE²-EU network, you gain:

- The chance to **collaborate with peers from other countries**, bringing together different cultural and academic perspectives.
- Access to **learning experiences tied to real challenges** (from companies or communities), not just theoretical work.
- A network and infrastructure that supports you across institutions – digital platforms, shared resources, joint activities.
- A role in shaping the future – not just learning about it.

Our Values & Principles

ACE²-EU (Applied, Connected, Entrepreneurial and Engaged European University) is a **European Alliance** of nine universities from nine European countries.



Transnational Cooperation

We forge connections across Europe and beyond, creating a network of collaboration that transcends borders.



Creativity, Co-creation & Innovation

We collaborate to co-create impactful, practical solutions for a sustainable future.



Inclusiveness & Equality

We embrace diversity and promote working, learning and research cultures that are inclusive, safe and welcoming.



Human Rights & Dignity

We are dedicated to developing new pathways for humanity to flourish.



Solidarity & Social Commitment

We strengthen bonds with our communities.



Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship

We embrace the holistic interconnection of ecological, social and economic systems.



Responsibility & Transparency

We recognise that our actions have a profound impact on the lives of individuals and the environment around us.

The Elements of Our Unique Approach

The name **ACE²-EU** comes from four key words that define our educational approach – the way we **learn, teach and work together across Europe**.

01

Applied

We create joint education, research, innovation and service-to-society learning opportunities and activities that have a practical, applied focus, deal with real-world issues and use active, challenge-based learning approaches.

02

Connected

We connect the collective expertise and strengths of Alliance members through our joint operational units and knowledge creation teams, fostering a collaborative approach to the creation of joint learning opportunities and activities focused on finding solutions to future challenges.

03

Entrepreneurial

We promote, use and generate novel and innovative approaches in the development and implementation of our joint learning opportunities and activities to address and tackle future challenges, thereby nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset across our Alliance and among our stakeholders and surrounding ecosystems.

04

Engaged

We engage our external stakeholders and partners in industry, business, society and government in the development and delivery of all our collaborative learning opportunities, activities and initiatives focused on future challenges, to ensure effective civic engagement and the promotion of knowledge transfer within our surrounding ecosystems.

OUR MISSION

"Addressing future challenges, delivering sustainable social transformation today."



1 NO
POVERTY



2 ZERO
HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



5 GENDER
EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE
ACTION



14 LIFE
BELOW WATER



15 LIFE
ON LAND

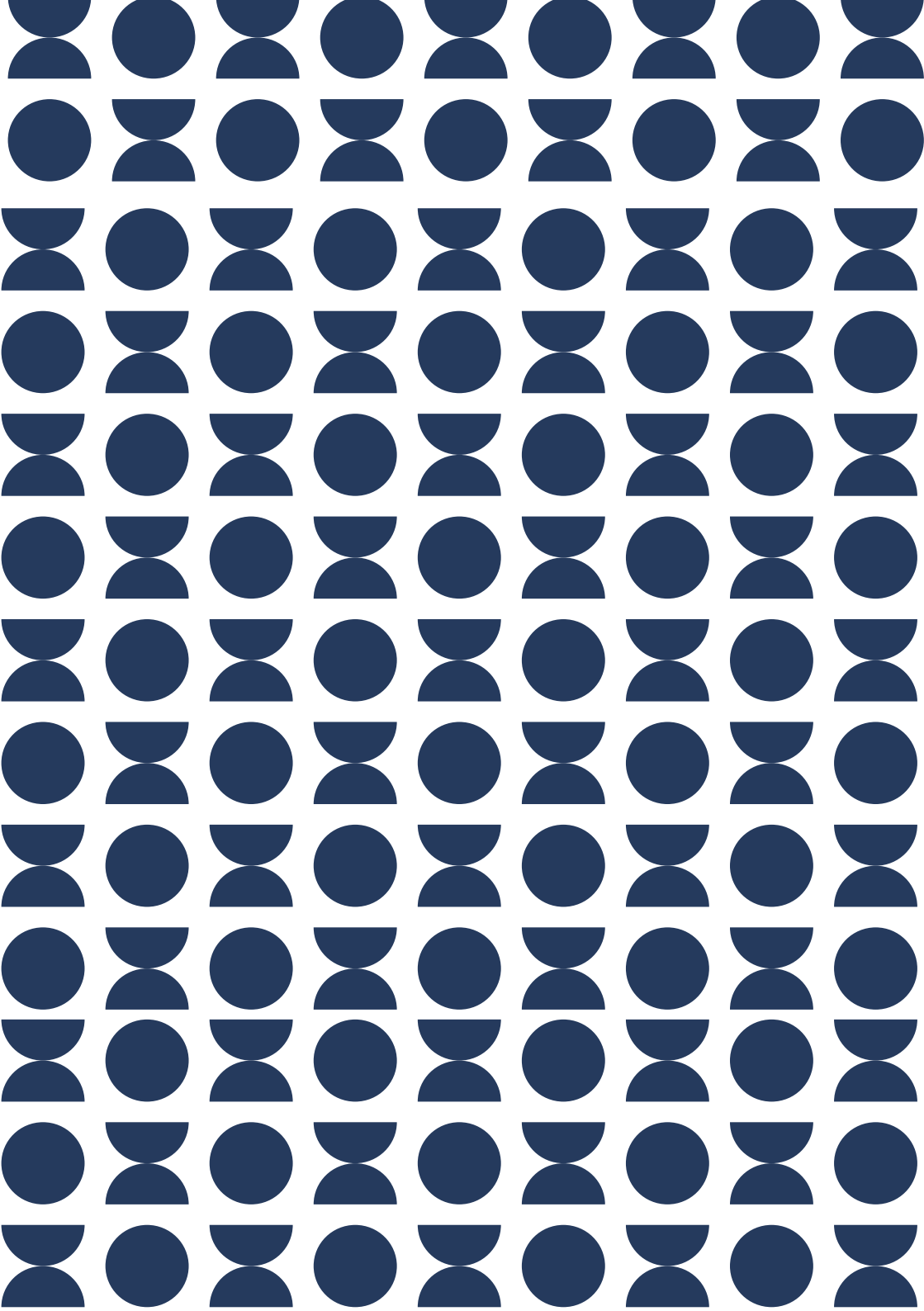


16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS





Welcome to Your ACE²-EU Flavour School

26–30 OCTOBER 2026

TÂRGU JIU, ROMANIA

1 ECTS

Welcome to **Agritourism, Local Traditions and Impact in the Communities** – an intensive five-day programme in which you will discover how rural heritage, local food and living traditions can become a source of sustainable development for the communities of Gorj and Oltenia.

You are part of a vibrant, multicultural community of learners representing nine universities across Europe:

**Constantin Brâncuși
University of Târgu Jiu**
ROMANIA · HOST

**Carinthia University of
Applied Sciences**
AUSTRIA

Goce Delcev University
NORTH MACEDONIA

Latvian Academy of Culture
LATVIA

Lietuvos inžinerijos kolegija
LITHUANIA

Medical University of Gdańsk
POLAND

**Santarém Polytechnic
University**
PORTUGAL

**Technische Hochschule
Ingolstadt**
GERMANY

**Universidad Francisco de
Vitoria**
SPAIN

This week is a unique opportunity to move from multiculturality to true interculturality – to go beyond coexistence and experience genuine encounter. Through field visits to traditional villages, interviews with local residents, meetings with traditional craftsmen, and filming and storytelling workshops, you will discover new ways of understanding, respecting and valuing different cultures, perspectives and traditions.

Working in international teams, you will bring academic knowledge and creative teamwork together to tell the story of a rural tradition, a local product or a gastronomic custom – and present it at the end of the week in a promotional video of up to 90 seconds.

You will learn not only from your teachers and mentors but also, and above all, from one another. Take every chance to listen, create and connect. This is the heart of your European learning journey.

Welcome to your Flavour School.

Let's make this week meaningful, intercultural and unforgettable.

Learning Framework

ACE²-EU Student Onboarding Programme: ACE-Rookies (ACERs)

The **ACERs student onboarding programme** will be available **online** to all students of **ACE²-EU** who register for a joint learning opportunity. The **ACE-Rookies** onboarding will include a pre-arrival information package, including an Alliance overview, digital welcome and student orientation sessions with practical travel information, information on available support, expectations for participation in a joint learning opportunity, and information on EU and Alliance values. This onboarding process will strengthen student identity as part of the Alliance and highlight the unique aspects and opportunities of being part of the Alliance.

ACE-Rookies (ACERs)

1

Online

for students who register for a joint learning opportunity

2

Pre-arrival information package

everything you need before you travel

3

Alliance digital welcome & orientation

including a travel information package

4

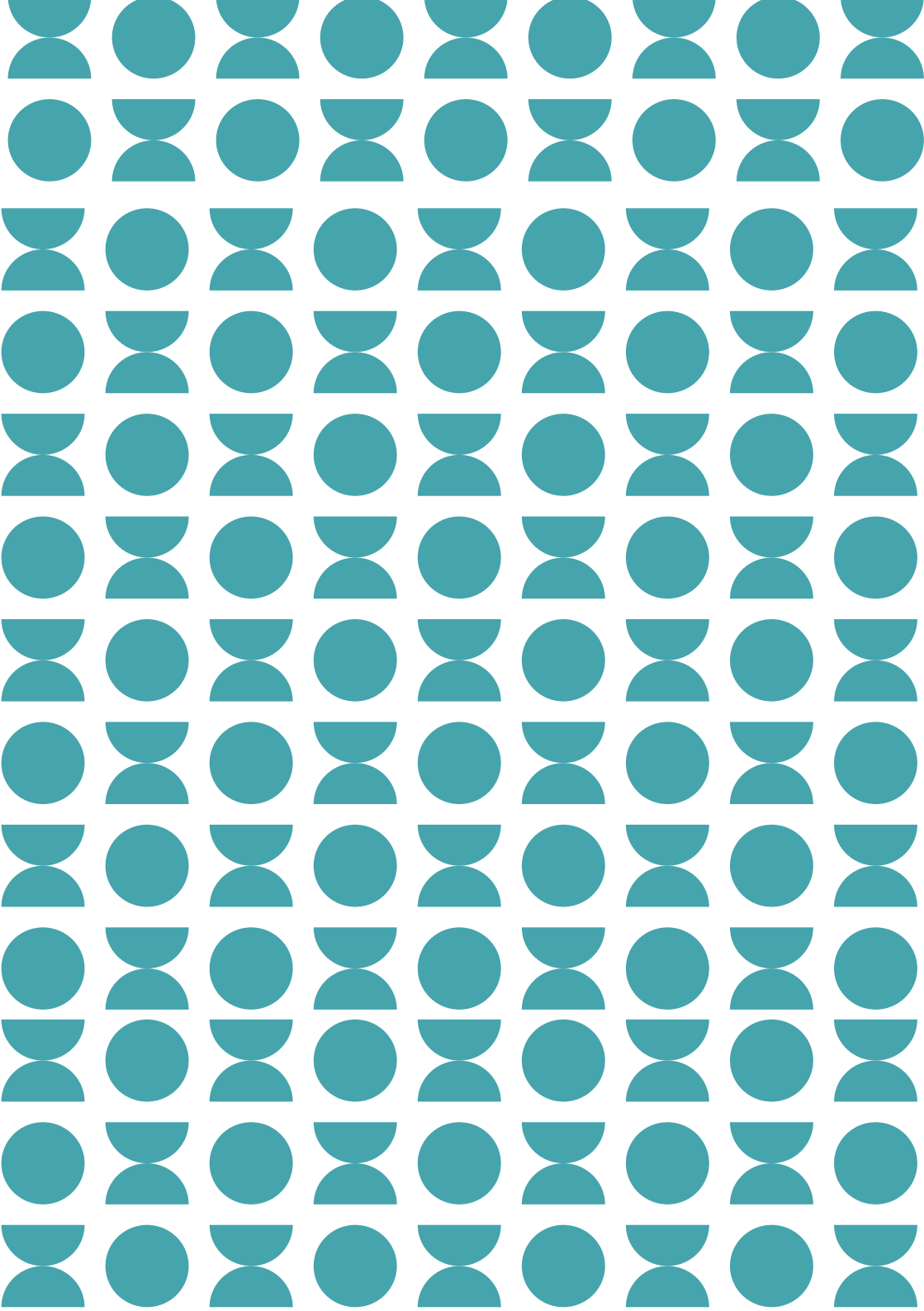
Support, expectations & values

available support, expectations for your participation, EU and Alliance values

5

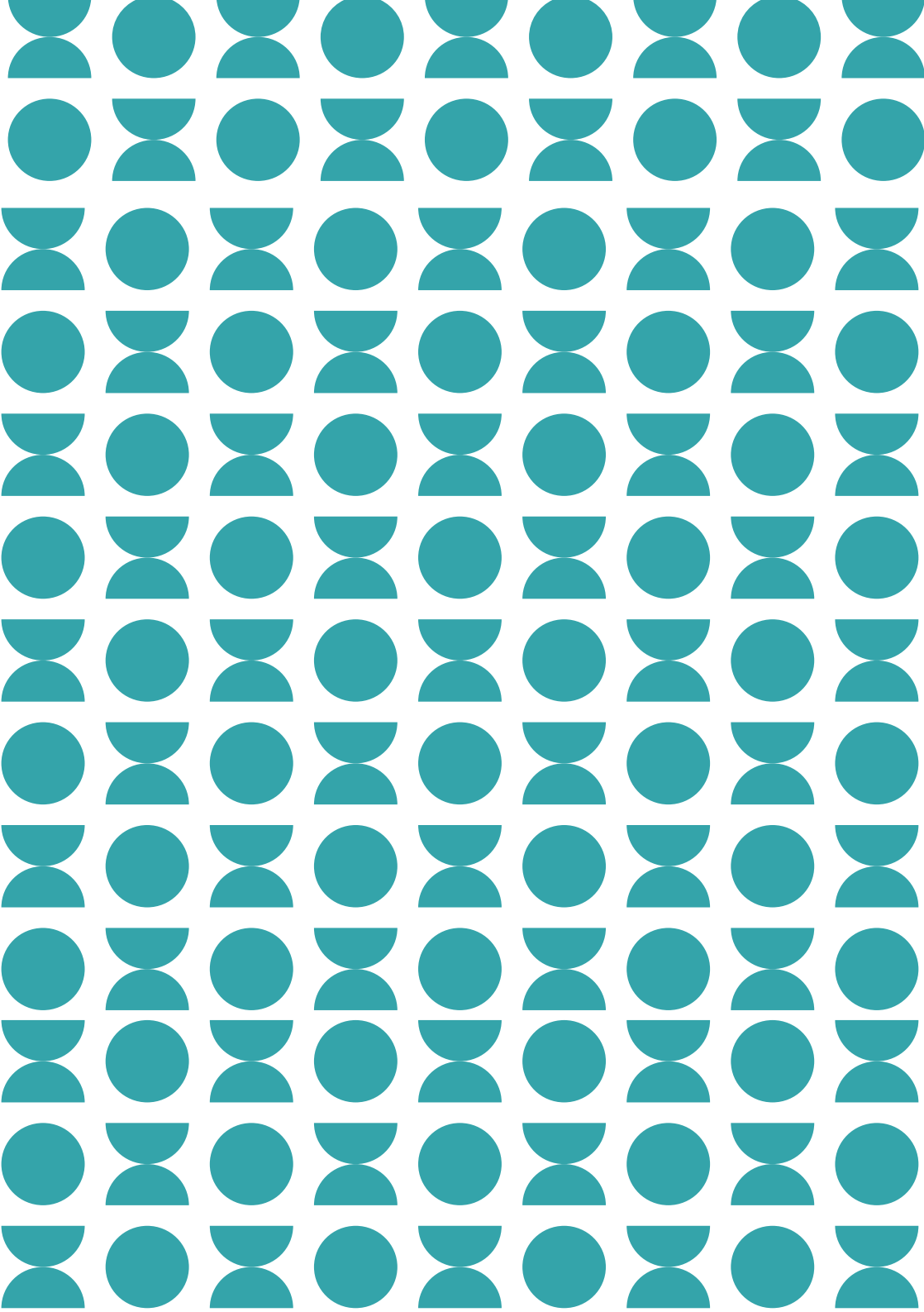
A stronger student identity

as part of the Alliance



ACE²-ED

SECTION



CONTACTS

Get connected!

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website



linkedin



instagram



youtube



facebook



"Thank you for being part of the **ACE²-EU** community a place where learning becomes action and collaboration becomes change."

ACE² **Applied Connected Entrepreneurial & Engaged**

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

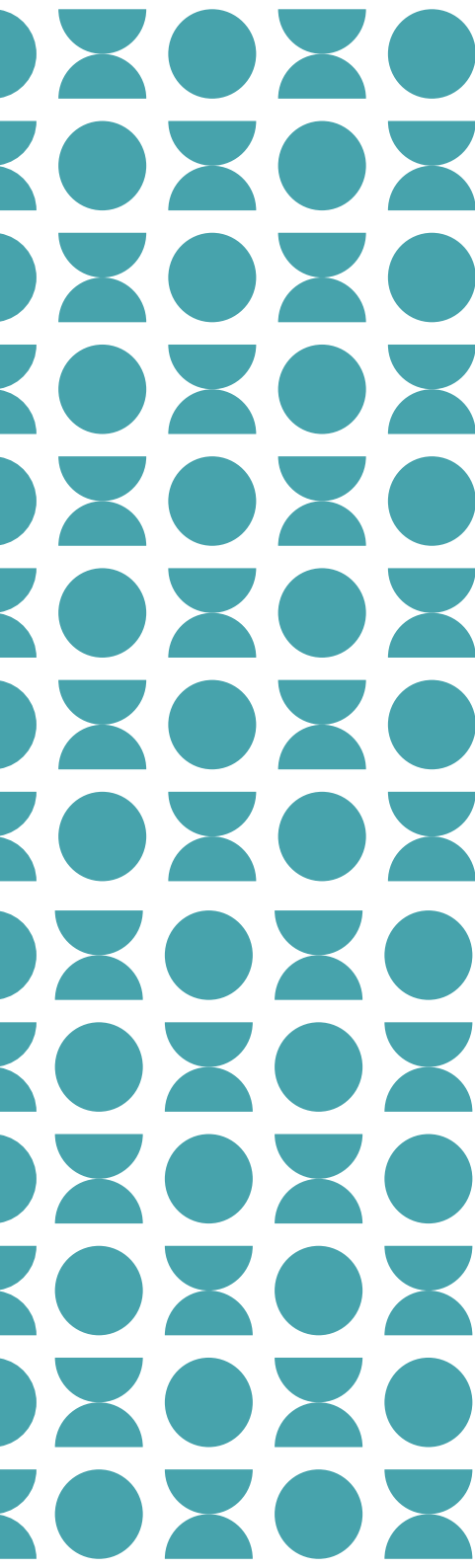


SANTARÉM
POLYTECHNIC
UNIVERSITY



**Co-funded by
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Flavour School

AGRITOURISM

Local traditions

and impact in the communities