What makes Alliances Inclusive?

Insights from INST.ALL Workshop

The INST.ALL (*Inclusivity for Students in Alliances*) project organised its first online workshop on September 17, 2026. This workshop focused on benchmarking inclusion and student participation within **European University Alliances**. It created an open space for peer learning and exchange on how Alliances could take their next steps in supporting student participation.

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Peer learning between students and staff broaden perspectives

INST.ALL has previously concluded a mapping and self-assessment exercise and identified Alliances' strengths and gaps across different areas of **Social Dimension**. To allow for more focused peer learning, this workshop focused on three dimensions:

- Strategic commitment to the Social Dimension
- Access to educational opportunities at the alliance level, and
- Student participation and democratic governance.

Students and staff from different Alliances were able to share their perspectives and experiences in mixed small groups. Many participants expressed their satisfaction with this approach and wished to have more opportunities for dialogue, not only between Alliances but also between different generations.

"My favourite takeaway was the opportunity to engage with the younger generation, learn from their experiences, and better understand how they perceive and value inclusion." One of the staff members reflected.

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Strategic commitments need responsibilities and resources

A key takeaway across the discussions was that formal structures and opportunities alone are not enough to ensure inclusion in practice. Strategic commitments need clear responsibilities and resources, while meaningful student involvement requires more than formal representation: students also need accessible information, adequate support and opportunities to contribute in ways that they find meaningful and worthwhile.

Participants also highlighted that providing joint educational opportunities does not automatically make them equally accessible to students: clear guidance and support are essential. At the same time, practices that work well in one context may need to be adapted to suit different student communities, institutions and national settings.

Comparing experiences across Alliances allowed participants to reflect on which elements of a practice may be context-specific and which could provide transferable insights for other Alliances. As one of the workshop participants pointed out:

“Among the most relevant findings, I would definitely underline how some activities may have extraordinary results in some contexts while not working in others. Student communities are extremely varied and heterogeneous.”

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Join our journey towards more inclusive Alliances

ESU and INST.ALL partners thank all students, staff and alliance representatives who shared their experiences and perspectives in the workshop. The discussions will continue at *Making Alliances Inclusive for Every Student* in Bilbao on 21 October 2026, welcoming previous and new participants into a dialogue.

Every student should have the chance to connect, collaborate, and learn beyond borders.

Read more: www.esu-online.org/projects/inst-all

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