

 10 Years  
International  
Office



\*\*\* See English Version below \*\*\*

Liebe Mitarbeitende der Universität,

Die rasanten geopolitischen Entwicklungen halten aktuell auch Universitäten und insbesondere die International Offices an Hochschulen in Atem. Diese kümmern sich um internationale Kooperationsverträge für Forschung und Lehre, setzen Mobilitätsprogramme um für Studierende und Dozierende incoming wie outgoing und empfangen Delegationen aus aller Welt aus dem breiten Feld der Wissenschaft, Wirtschaft und Diplomatie. Anders gesagt: Sie unterstützen den Wissensaustausch, initiieren und pflegen Beziehungen und schlagen kulturelle Brücken in alle Welt.

Etablierte Partnerschaften geraten nun plötzlich unter Druck, wenn sich eingespielte Regeln und gemeinsame Werte verändern. Gleichzeitig setzen Sparmassnahmen von Bund und Kantonen Forschungsvorhaben wie Kooperationsplänen unerwartet Grenzen.

Wenn sich gemeinsame Fundamente verändern, müssen neue Wege eingeschlagen und Strategien bei Bedarf justiert werden. Was bedeuten strategische Partnerschaften für uns? Wie engagieren wir uns in Partnerschaften oder Allianzen, wenn plötzlich in manchen Ländern demokratische Rechte und Freiheiten bedroht werden oder nicht mehr gegeben sind? Was bedeutet das für die fachlichen und persönlichen Beziehungen, die in jahrelanger Arbeit zwischen Forschenden und Institutionen aufgebaut wurden?

Genau das beschäftigt auch uns in diesen Monaten sehr. Aktuell arbeiten wir an einer neuen Internationalisierungsstrategie, die auch diesem veränderten und in konstanter Bewegung befindlichen globalen Umfeld Rechnung tragen muss. Internationalisierung ist eine so spannende wie komplexe Querschnittsaufgabe, die von viele Akteur:innen an unserer Universität getragen und vorangebracht wird. Von einigen dieser Bereiche bei uns im International Office berichtet dieser Newsletter.

Anregende Lektüre,

Dr. Tanja Popović  
Leitung International Office  
[www.unibas.ch/intoffice](http://www.unibas.ch/intoffice)

Dieser Newsletter richtet sich an alle Unimitarbeitenden; um möglichst alle zu erreichen, halten wir ihn weitgehend auf Englisch.

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Dear University Employees and Colleagues,

The fast-paced geopolitical developments are currently also keeping universities, and especially their international offices, on their toes. International offices manage international cooperation agreements for research and teaching, implement mobility programs for incoming and outgoing students and academics, and host delegations from around the world from the broad fields of science, business, and diplomacy. In other words, they support knowledge exchange, initiate and maintain relationships, and build cultural bridges across the globe.

Suddenly, long-standing partnerships are coming under pressure as established rules and shared values change. At the same time, budget cuts at the federal and cantonal levels are unexpectedly limiting research projects and collaborative initiatives.

When our common ground shifts, it is necessary to forge new paths and adjust our strategies. What do strategic partnerships really mean for us? How should we engage in partnerships or alliances when democratic rights and freedoms are suddenly threatened or no longer exist in some countries? What does this mean for the professional and personal relationships that researchers and institutions have cultivated over many years?

These questions have been occupying us a great deal in recent months. We are currently working on a new internationalization strategy that must also address this transformed and constantly evolving global environment. Internationalization is an exciting and complex transversal task that is undertaken and advanced by many actors from across our university. This newsletter reports on some of the work happening in our International Office.

Wishing you an engaging read,

Dr. Tanja Popović  
Head International Office  
[www.unibas.ch/intoffice](http://www.unibas.ch/intoffice)

This newsletter is intended for all university employees; to reach as many people as possible, we distribute it largely in English.

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International Office

## Public debate at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)



Photo credits: Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, International Affairs International Communication

On the occasion of this year's International Days, the colleagues from KIT hosted an interesting panel discussion on the current challenges of international cooperation for universities. The discussion revealed many similarities, but also differences in national and university-specific approaches.

This year's International Days (5-16 May) were also marked by the 200th anniversary of KIT – warm congratulations to our valued EUCOR/EPICUR partner KIT!

**Link:** [KIT - INTL - Service - International Days](#)

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## **New Team Members: Lena Farré & Chiara Kindler**



Lena Farré (left) and Chiara Kindler (right). Photo credit: Thierry Spampinato

### **Lena Farré in Student Exchange Team**

We are thrilled to announce that Lena Farré has joined our Student Exchange team as of February. She is working alongside Andrea Delpho and Gérald Zimmerman, who have been running the Student Exchange Office for several decades.

The workload has increased over the years, so we highly appreciate Lena's support in various aspects of our mobility programs and networks. She will play a key role in advising and welcoming employees and students seeking international experiences.

Lena is no stranger to our university—she studied geography and history here and has previously contributed to career advancement, research, and grant management within our university network. Her international experience includes studying abroad, collaborating in research projects in southern Africa, and working in the multilateral cooperation sector.

In her new role, Lena will focus on collaborating with partner universities, developing new event formats, and enhancing our communication tools. Lena is currently working at 60% capacity, as she is the mother of a young child. We are delighted to have her on board!

**Contact:** Lena Farré, [lena.farre@unibas.ch](mailto:lena.farre@unibas.ch)

### **Chiara Kindler at Welcome & Euraxess Center**

We are very happy to introduce our new colleague: Chiara Kindler is the new student assistant at the Welcome & Euraxess Center in the International Office.

She is currently pursuing a master's degree in European global studies after having obtained a bachelor's degree in international affairs. Through her studies and subsequent work as a research assistant, she has developed a comprehensive understanding of academic structures and research environments. She was born in the United States and grew up bilingual, which has given her many opportunities to enrich her understanding of different cultures, including while attending an international school. She also had the chance to complete an internship at the United Nations in Vienna—an experience that reinforced her desire to work in an international environment and contribute to addressing global challenges.

In her new role, she supports the head of the Welcome & Euraxess Center in various areas, such as administrative and organizational matters, and contributes to the organization of events. Moreover, her efforts focus on expanding the outreach of the International Office, particularly by enhancing our social-media presence as well as by contacting and collaborating with university departments to increase the center's visibility.

**Contact:** Chiara Kindler, [welcome@unibas.ch](mailto:welcome@unibas.ch)



## European Cross-Border Cooperation: The example of UpQuantVal and the Swiss-European Interreg and NRP

Academic collaboration in the Upper Rhine region started in 1989 with the establishment of EUCOR. The University of Basel was one of the seven founding members. The European-Swiss Interreg and NRP funding tool has been strengthening cross-border research and enriching the region ever since.

At the University of Basel, the International Relations Office helps researchers connect with this tool. A very recent example is the Physics Department's participation in the UpQuantVal project under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Dominik Zumbühl. With a total budget of 5.1 million EUR and a Swiss contribution of 500,000 CHF, this project investigates developing competitive quantum sensors and quantum computers with almost twenty partners from academia, public agencies, and the private sector. At the same time, it aims to create a "Quantum Valley" by integrating a variety of region-specific procedures and requirements into one common framework. "UpQuantVal will help us enlarge our research and innovation capacities in the Upper Rhine region and contribute to establishing even more competitive enterprises," as Professor Zumbühl puts it.



Photo credit: Nicolas Busser, IPHC CNRS

Researchers interested in engaging in cross-border collaboration in the Upper Rhine region are invited to take a look at the [Interreg Upper Rhine project database](#) as a first entry point. The current call period covers the years 2021–27, and project ideas can be submitted at any time. The project selection committee meets twice a year.

International Relations is the first contact point at the University of Basel. It supports researchers with information about the application process and connects them with the [IKRB grant-administering and consulting unit](#) in Basel. As for the application, the consortium agreement for selected projects is also established in a two-phase track, and International Relations facilitates the in-house communication between the project coordinators, Legal Services, and the Office of the President. Project applications are also directed to the [Grants Tool](#).

**Contact:** Erich Thaler, [Erich.Thaler@unibas.ch](mailto:Erich.Thaler@unibas.ch)

**Link:** [Interreg Upper Rhine Project Database](#) and [IKRB](#) (Intercantonal Coordination Office at Regio Basiliensis)

## Utrecht Network 2025 Annual General Meeting



Photo credit: University of Valencia

The 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Utrecht Network was hosted by the University of Valencia in Spain. The meeting brought together representatives from thirty European universities and partner networks in Australia, Brazil, and the US. Besides the regular agenda with reports by the steering committee and task forces (student mobility, summer schools, staff mobility, research management, internationalization, and global engagement), the AGM offered two workshops:

The hot topic was “knowledge diplomacy,” which encompassed how to cooperate with foreign universities, industrial partners, and foreign researchers in research and teaching and how to evaluate and decide on international research cooperations. It also covered informal exchanges via email, business trips, exporting scientific equipment, the development of new technologies, and collaboration with visiting researchers.

The second workshop compared different cooperation models such as consortia for EU projects with institutional networks (such as the Utrecht Network) and university alliances. The presentation touched on different aspects of cooperation models, highlighting the pros and cons of each model and the different purposes they serve:

	Consortia (EU projects)	Institutional Networks	Alliances
<b>Lifespan</b>	Short-term (3-4 years)	Indefinite	Mid to Long-term
<b>Cooperation</b>	Intense	Loose	Intense
<b>Coordination</b>	Faculty/Department	Institutional/Central	Institutional
<b>Pervasiveness</b>	Low, few people involved	High, potentially many people <sup>1</sup>	High
<b>Activities</b>	Innovative, output-based	Traditional, strategy-driven	Innovative, strategy-driven
<b>Partnership and scope</b>	Multilateral, few partners, Europe	Multilateral, pot. many partner, Global	Multil, Medium, EU
<b>Dependency/Funding</b>	External funding	Membership fees	Both
<b>Accountability</b>	High with funding; high with results	High with funding; medium with results	High
<b>Challenges</b>	Sustainability, hard to become strategic	Lack of creativity, stagnation	Extern. Intern.
<b>Lobbying</b>	Scarce, through results	High, through representation and expertise	High, through both

Table by Berkeens 2002; Stockley & de Wit 2011; Karvounaraki et al. 2018 added Francesco Girotti's reflections on alliances.

Three days of intensive talks, discussions, and networking provided a flood of ideas and suggestions for the upcoming years. The network will meet again in Coimbra, Portugal, for the next AGM in 2026.

**Contact:** Gerald Zimmermann, [Gerald.Zimmermann@unibas.ch](mailto:Gerald.Zimmermann@unibas.ch)

**Link:** [utrecht-network.org](http://utrecht-network.org)

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Welcome & Euraxess Center

Change of coordinator for FCS Swiss Excellency Grant Program

Since 1961 the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students (FCS) has been awarding scholarships to talented young researchers, students and artists from countries around the world to study or carry out research in Switzerland.

The University of Basel has welcomed an impressive number of young researchers across the disciplines. For the past 24 years, Andrea Delpho from Student Exchange within the International Office has been the coordinator and first point of contact for FCS scholarship holders and their academic advisors at the University of Basel. After taking care of 563 federal grant holders from 92 countries over the years, Andrea is handing over to her colleague Marijana Mirkovic from the Welcome Center as of July 1.

Inquiries can be addressed to: [welcome@unibas.ch](mailto:welcome@unibas.ch)

Link: [SBFI > ESKAS](#)

International Office

### **Volunteer Opportunity for the Scholars at Risk Initiative!**

#### **Volunteer Proofreader Initiative**



The Scholars at Risk (SAR) Initiative is looking for volunteers with **academic experience, professional proofreading or editing skills, or expertise in academic hiring to provide individualized feedback**. At-risk scholars can face significant challenges in securing academic positions due to limited career support and mentorship.

Among its many activities, SAR provides assistance through the Volunteer Proofreader Initiative (VPI), which provides scholars with professional proofreading services to enhance their job-search materials. Since its launch in 2020, our dedicated volunteers have supported over sixty scholars, helping them refine CVs, cover letters, teaching and research statements, and other essential documents. As demand for this service continues to grow, we are seeking additional volunteers to expand our impact. We especially welcome volunteers from all academic disciplines who can offer subject-specific insights and knowledge of country-specific job-market expectations.

For more details on program expectations, time commitment, and how to get involved, please visit the [SAR website](#) or contact SAR:

[sar-volunteerproofreader@nyu.edu](mailto:sar-volunteerproofreader@nyu.edu)

## Café international: Events

This spring, Café international hosted two intercultural events that aimed to bring together new and established colleagues at the university.

In February, more than forty participants joined a city walk to discover the rich traditions of Basel's fasnacht. Participants learned about its unique music, costumes, masks, lanterns, and deep-rooted satire and symbolism, which make this tradition so distinctive that it made it onto the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2017. The tour was organized in collaboration with the Basel Tourism Office.



Photo credit: Tanja Popović

In May, music lovers got into the Eurovision spirit at the UNiversal Song Contest pub quiz. Held at Verso, the evening was fully booked and brought together ESC superfans and curious newcomers alike. Participants enjoyed a lively atmosphere, made new connections, and tested their knowledge about world music and Eurovision highlights from past years. It was a joyful and social night that showcased the spirit of Café international!

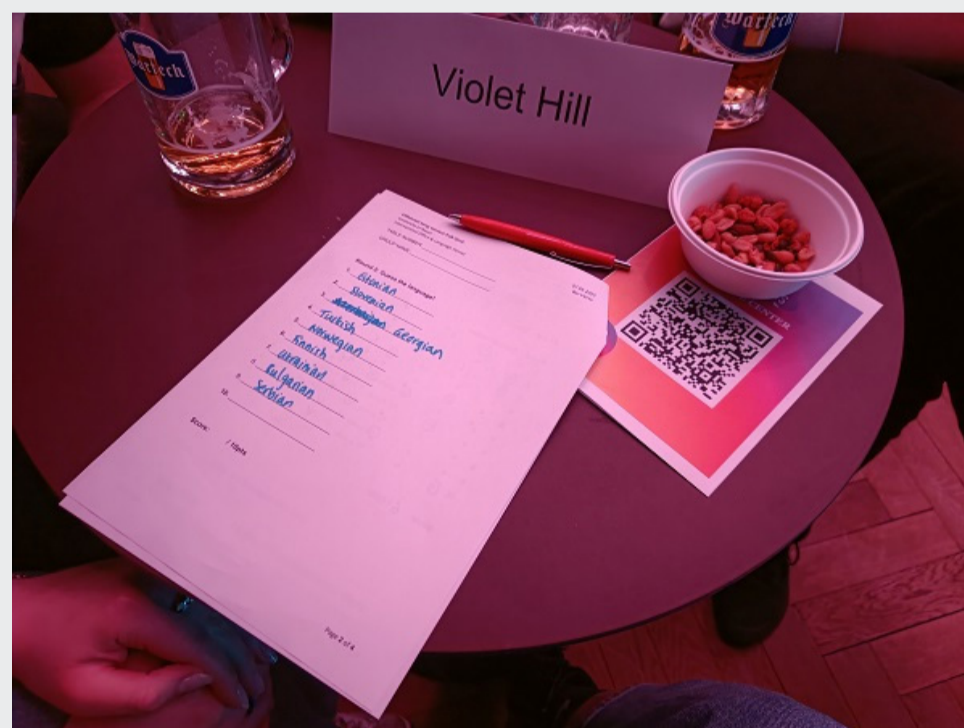


Photo credit: Lena Farré

If you are interested in learning more about Café international and its future events, please check out our website. Café international plans two intercultural events per semester. All university newcomers are welcome, as are any interested members of the university or affiliated institutions.

**Link:** [Café international](#)

About this Newsletter

**Technically it is not possible to remove individual recipients from the university-wide group lists.**

If you want to permanently stop receiving our mails please add the address [international-quarterly@unibas.ch](mailto:international-quarterly@unibas.ch) to your block list or mark it as spam.  
(Find the [link to the Outlook WebApp Manual here.](#))

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