D7.2 BEST PRACTICES ANNUAL REPORT – 1ST REPORT

Type of Deliverable: Report, Public

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Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS), Ireland

Polytechnic of Leiria (IPL), Portugal

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List of Abbreviations

C&D	Communication and Dissemination
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EZ-ID	European Zone for Interregional Development
FASA	Future and Advanced Skills Academy
FB	Facebook
FHV	Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences
HAMK	Häme University of Applied Sciences
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IG	Instagram
IPCA	Polytechnic of Cávado and Ave
IPL	Polytechnic of Leiria
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NHL Stenden	NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences
RDI	Research, Development, and Innovation
SAB	Students Advisory Board
SAP	Short Advanced Programme
SZE	University of Győr – Széchenyi Istvan University
TUS	Technological University of the Shannon
WP	Work Package

1. Executive Summary

This deliverable is the first of a series of three reports. It summarises best practices used by the RUN-EU PLUS project in communication and dissemination activities related to the work package activities and details the measured impacts by the RUN-EU PLUS alliance partners from M1 until M12 of the project development, matching them with target audiences, tools and channels and key performance indicators. It follows the provisions of the D7.1 Communication and Dissemination Strategy.

The results of the communication and dissemination actions conducted by all RUN-EU PLUS alliance partners from M1 until M12 of the project development are encouraging and positive. They reflect the success of the strategy implemented at the beginning of the project, as well as the members' commitment and engagement.

The RUN-EU PLUS project was launched, in 2021, by an alliance composed of seven alliance partners (commonly referred to as RUN-EU alliance members).

The universities that compose of the RUN European University and are involved in delivery of the RUN-EU PLUS project include the Polytechnic of Leiria (IPL), the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), the Polytechnic of Cávado and Ave (IPCA), the Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK), the University of Győr – Széchenyi István University (SZE), the NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (NHL Stenden), and the Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences (FHV).
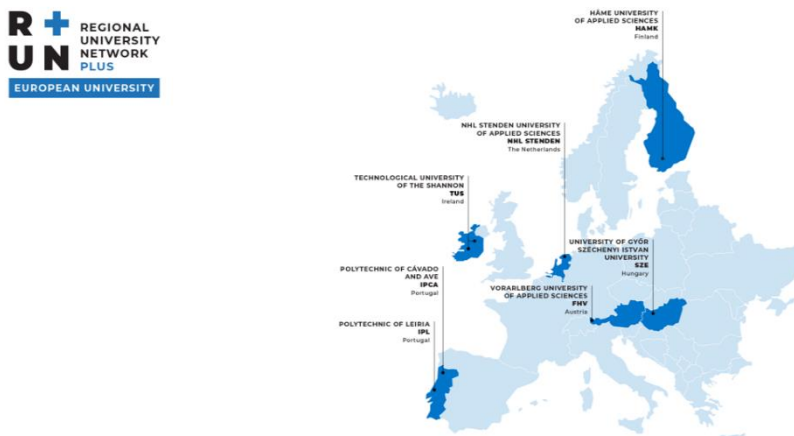

Figure 1 – RUN-EU PLUS ALLIANCE MEMBERS

The evidence of all activities reported by the seven members was collected by each partner institution and is available on the RUN-EU PLUS WP7 MS Teams General team, under the

folder dissemination and can be found in the RUN-EU PLUS D7.12 Annual Communications and Outreach - 1st Report.

2. Introduction

The establishment of a community of best practices across all RUN-EU PLUS partners was an essential tool in aiding the communications, dissemination and exploitation of results generated from the work package activities. This best practice also informs the other work packages on how to target their specific audience, whether it be on Open Science or Research and Innovation or Gender Inclusion and Equality in career pathway development. It will promote the discussion and identification of the best practices to advance technical collaboration in R&I activities, improve the average level of R&I and maximise the impact of Professional Practice-based Research programmes.
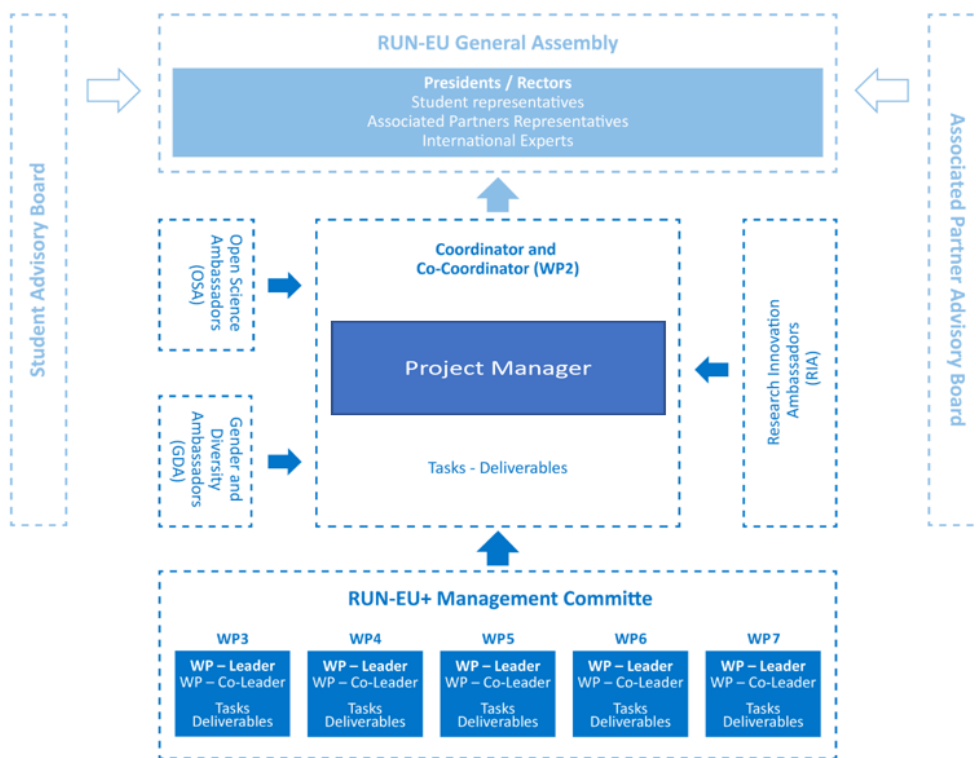

Figure 2 – RUN-EU PLUS Management Organisation

Work Package 7 (WP7) of the RUN-EU PLUS project implements the communication, dissemination and exploitation strategies linked to all work packages of RUN-EU PLUS. This results in the establishment/promotion of a sound and consistent brand, creation/animation

of the communication channels (particularly the website and social media), development and distribution of several attractive promotional materials and organisation of dissemination and exploitation events.

WP7 works towards four objectives:

- O7.1 To develop and implement the communication, dissemination, and exploitation strategies, envisaging the sharing of best practices and learning lessons to ensure system-level impact.
- O7.2 To disseminate the activities and results within the R&I community, including students and researchers, from the alliance members but also other national and European HEIs.
- O7.3 To deploy events and produce communication material engaging the R&I community, reinforcing cooperation with external partners, strengthening the outreach, and sharing the project achievements.
- O7.4 To exploit joint structures and share best practices among the members of the RUN-EU PLUS alliance and their associated partners, including business and society stakeholders, and promote structured collaboration at the European level, among other pilot Alliances.

Towards these objectives, having clear best practice guidelines on communication and dissemination is essential for the successful completion of all activities on time across such a broad network of students, researchers, managers and associated external partners. Clear guidelines also prolong the project lifecycle, by allowing participating HEIs to communicate and share activities, outcomes, and deliverables, thus extending the impact of their projects, improving their sustainability, and justifying the European added value of Horizon 2020.

RUN-EU PLUS has looked to its host EUI the Regional University Network – European University (RUN-EU) to devise its communication and dissemination strategy (D7.1) and is therefore also reflecting on best practices used there to ensure clear communication, dissemination, and exploitation. Some learnings have allowed for the identification of three main topics of best practices going forward:

- What target groups work best for each activity.
- How we reach our Audiences.
- What medium of communication and dissemination to choose and when.

We will explore these three topics in more detail below with the overarching goal of sustainability in approach and practice.

3. RUN-EU PLUS Target Groups and Key Messages

Target Groups

- Students, alumni, and potential applicants
- Teachers, researchers, and staff from RUN-EU members
- Alliance partners on regional, national, European, and global levels
- RDI partners and funders
- Associated partners
- Regional and national authorities, decision-makers, and other relevant stakeholders
- Regional business, industry, and cultural representatives
- Media on regional, national, European, and global levels

Message to Students

Together our seven alliance partners are producing and enabling teaching, learning, and researching opportunities, and conducting joint projects that will meet future skills needs. This means that students can flexibly participate in mobilities and intensive periods at RUN-EU PLUS alliance partners and complete tailored R&I skills development workshops and Postgraduate European degrees.

Message to Staff

We will collaboratively co-design and deliver innovative pedagogical, research, innovation and engagement activities that meet the students' future skills needs and promote regional development. The staff of the RUN-EU PLUS alliance partners will be offered the opportunity to build up international competence through, for example, staff exchanges, and joint education and research projects. Short-term and flexible student and staff mobilities are the key operating models for achieving these goals.

Message to Stakeholders and Society Partners

RUN-EU PLUS will secure the sustainable economic, social, cultural, and environmental progress of its regions and stakeholders. This mission will be implemented by delivering the future and advanced skills necessary for its students and stakeholders to successfully meet the challenges of the future, engage in societal transformation and promote active citizenship, thereby leading to the creation of a new multinational interregional alliance, a European Zone for Interregional Development.

4. How do we Reach our Audiences

The RUN-EU PLUS target groups will be reached and involved during the project lifetime using several channels and communication events, including:

• Project promotional materials (brochure, e-newsletter, leaflets).
• Social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube).
• RUN-EU website.
• Publication of news in the media on the different alliance partners' countries.
• Invitation for participation in project events.
• Invitation for participation in Short Advanced Programmes.
• Invitation for pop-up café, round table discussions, workshops, conferences (physical or virtual).
• Mailing to target groups and stakeholders with key project information.
• Scientific and professional papers written in collaboration with RUN-EU members.

WHICH CHANNELS AND MATERIALS ARE USED?

Other means of reaching our audiences include regional and international fairs, partner organisations and agencies that host events and conferences such as RUN-EU General Assemblies, RUN-EU European Innovation Hub networking events and the RUN-EU PLUS annual International Conference on Applied Research with Business and Society (ICARUS) events.

RUN-EU PLUS key concepts for dissemination:

● Practice-based master's and PhD programmes.

● International programme development.

● Trans-European supervision and programme delivery.

● Collaborative research and innovation.

● Open science practice.

● Researcher career development.

● Regional development.

5. Communication and Dissemination Tools – Analysis of Impact

Communication and dissemination will benefit the target groups at all levels (local, regional, national, European, and international), by providing information and raising awareness, enabling target users and stakeholders to have direct access to and understand the project vision, objectives, and results. There is therefore a requirement to ensure clear and informative information about the activities of RUN-EU PLUS is being produced. This is done through a clear communication strategy, measurement of engagement metrics via the feedback after events and monitoring of visitation sites and resharing of articles on media platforms. Therefore, we have adopted the following communication and dissemination tools for use in RUN-EU PLUS implementation and analysis of their performance and effectiveness via identified key performance indicators (KPIs).

5.1. Communication and Dissemination Channels and Tools

Branding

A complete RUN-EU PLUS Brand Book comprising a Brand Guide and a Style Guide has been developed by IPL and shared with all WP7 colleagues. This is the first step in the implementation of the D7.1 Communications and Outreach Strategy for RUN-EU PLUS.
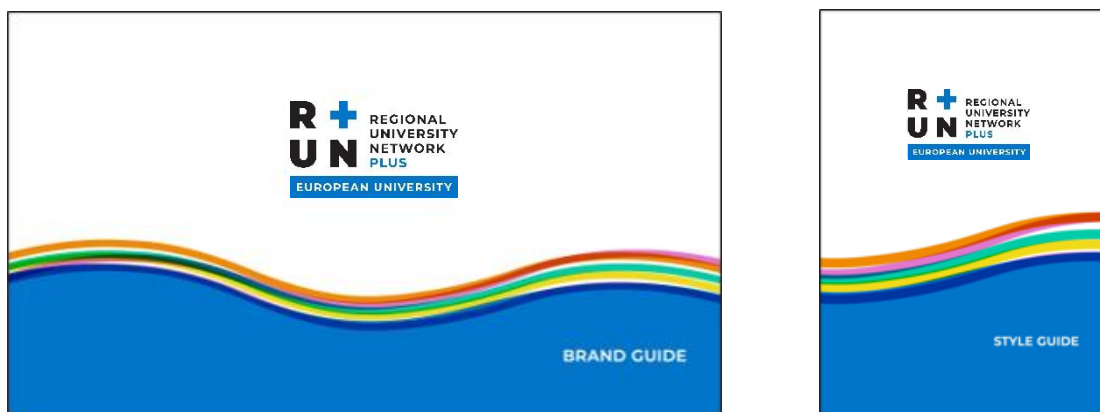

Figure 3 – RUN-EU PLUS Brand Book

The **RUN-EU PLUS Brand Guide** includes:

- Brand Key Message
- Brand Mission
- Brand Personality
- Brand Tone of Voice
- Visual Identity
- Typography
- Colours
- Logos Composition
- Social Media Guidelines
- Graphic Elements

This is the first key element to the establishment of a best practice approach for clear and informative communication. Singular templates and identities encompass all alliance partners. Training for all staff in Communications Offices within the Alliance Members is recommended to ensure correct implementation of the Brand Guide.

The **RUN-EU PLUS Style Guide** includes:

- Target Groups and Brand Key Message
- Our Style
- Brand Personality
- Brand Tone of Voice
- Writing for the Web
- Producing Accessible and Inclusive Web Content
- Writing for social media
- General Style Preferences
- List of Abbreviations
- Further Reference

A set of potential logos was presented for discussion with all WP7 colleagues to choose the final one. The following logo was approved as the new official logo of RUN-EU PLUS in May 2022:

Figure 4 – RUN-EU PLUS Logo

Branding & Merchandise Sustainability

Built into this should be a consideration for the sustainability of the branding process. Sustainability of materials used, branding processes and supply change of raw materials are also considerations to be adopted by the communication departments of RUN-EU PLUS Alliance members. The need to produce physical media such as pull-up banners and posters should be designed with longevity in mind, keeping the overall message clear and aligned to the strategic objectives of RUN-EU PLUS, such as Open Science and Research & Innovation rather than specific events such as workshops.

Templates

To harmonise the documentation produced by all project members, Microsoft Word and PowerPoint templates inspired by the Brand Book were defined for the project. These templates have been used by all members for relevant documents and presentations prepared for RUN-EU PLUS.
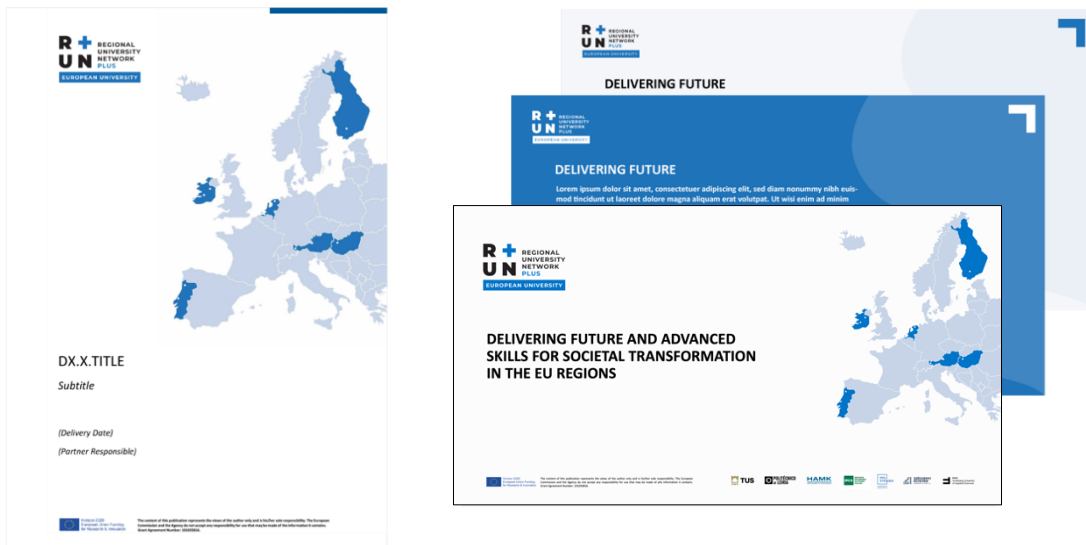
Figure 5 – Word Report and PowerPoint Presentation Templates
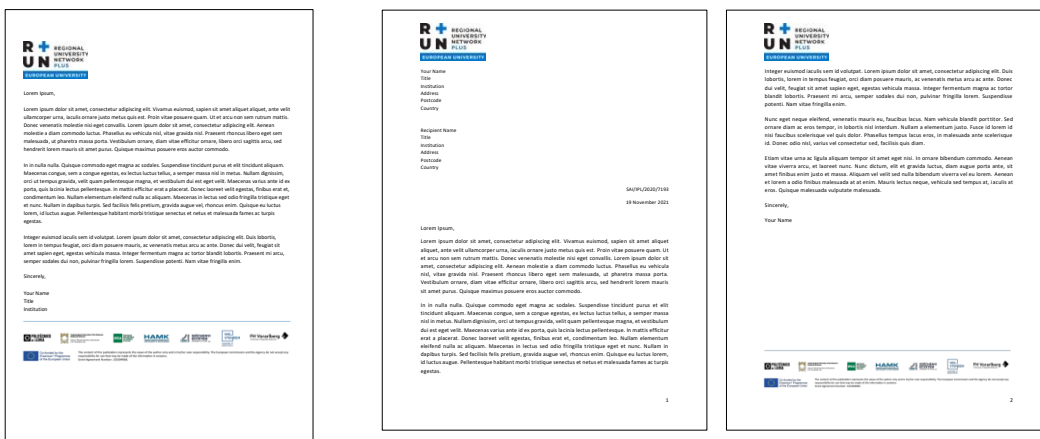
Figure 6 – Email and Letter Templates

Figure 7 – Press Release Template

Website

The webpage of the project has been maintained fully functioning since March 2022, hosted on the RUN-EU website. All website content is available in English at https://run-eu.eu/run-eu-plus/
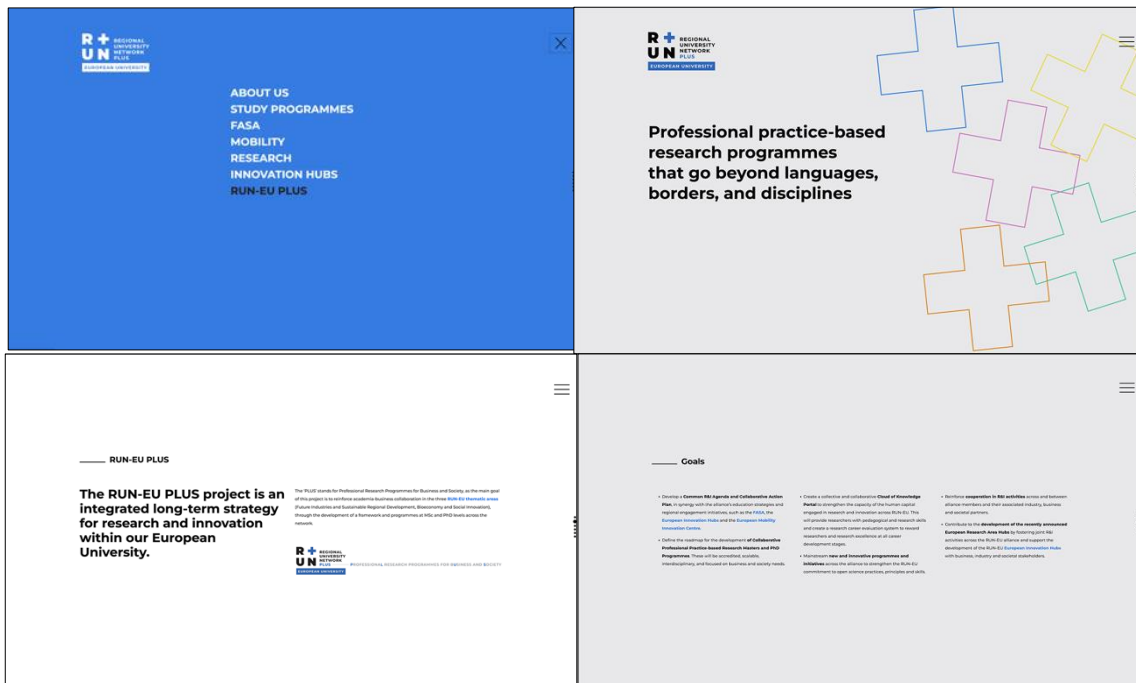
Figure 8 – Website (desktop view)

From March 2022 to September 2022, 12 articles were posted about the achievement of milestones, delivery of results, as well as events announcement and coverage.

The website usage and access are monitored with Matomo. This allows the recording of important data, such as website visitors, traffic sources, most viewed content, etc. This is a helpful means to identify opportunities for improvement, increase communication efficiency and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the website.

Between 21 March 2022 (the day when the new website was launched) and 20 September, it has been visited 77,153 times with 62,261 unique pageviews reached.

The average website visit duration is 1min 32s. The average number of actions (page views, site searches, downloads or outlinks) that were performed during the visits was two actions.

During the reported time, the website has been accessed by **41665 new visitors** and has performed as seen below:

Figure 9 – Matomo Website Statistics

41,665 visits
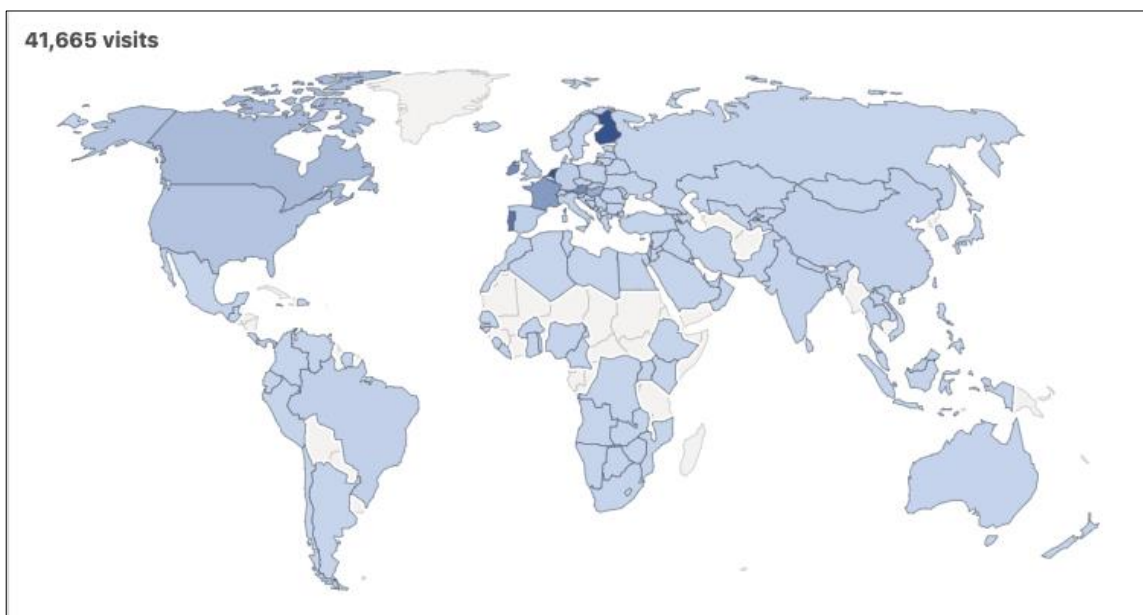
Country

COUNTRY	▼ VISITS
Netherlands	8,323
Finland	7,950
Portugal	5,782
Ireland	4,170
Austria	4,098
France	3,302
Hungary	2,292
Canada	1,399
United States	865
United Kingdom	486

Overall, the website performance is particularly good. Other sources, such as social media and the institutional websites of members, generate fewer visitors to the RUN-EU PLUS website.

All RUN-EU PLUS members have at least one reference to the project on their institutional websites linking to the RUN-EU PLUS webpage, which helps increase website traffic.

There is also a news and events section to share the project progress and achievements with the stakeholders; a results section to present the public key results produced over time, to raise awareness of the dimension and potential of RUN-EU PLUS as a European University; a download area to present the promotional materials developed, such as brochures, leaflets, and e-newsletters; and a contact section aiming to encourage stakeholders to be in contact with the alliance and to join the project (a contact form will be available to register the stakeholders' interest in the RUN-EU PLUS results and activities).

The homepage also includes links to the project's social media channels.

Social Media

To avoid confusion, the diffusion of RUN-EU PLUS activities will be made also via RUN-EU social media accounts. RUN-EU social media will keep target groups informed about the RUN-EU PLUS project progress and the possible involvement followers can have, by participating in the events, piloting activities, and providing their feedback and recommendations.

Regular information about the RUN-EU PLUS project will be posted on the following RUN-EU social channels:

- **Facebook**: https://www.facebook.com/run.europeanuniversity
- **Instagram**: https://www.instagram.com/run_europeanuniversity/
- **Twitter**: https://twitter.com/run_euniversity
- **LinkedIn**: https://www.linkedin.com/company/run-european-university
- **YouTube**: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6vtPNyQ2YSu2KQro0yoyCA

These channels contributed to an outreach of **45,542 online views** on the whereabouts of the project.

RUN-EU social media has been regularly updated with posts about the RUN-EU PLUS project activities, achievements, and results, to inform followers about the project progress and how they can get involved (such as in events, training workshops, feedback, and recommendations activities).

Hashtags mentioned in posts:

- #run_eu_plus

- #Horizon2020

- #run_eu

- #erasmus

- #erasmusplus

- #europeanuniversities

- #europeanunion

Facebook Metrics

The RUN-EU PLUS Facebook-related page currently has 651 likes and 695 followers.

From December 2021 to September 2022, 18 posts were published with an overall engagement of 607 people (according to Facebook engagement metrics results, which are available in the folder 'Evidence', which is inside the folder '1 – IPL', under the folder 'RUN-EU_D7.12_1st_Communication and Outreach Report' on the WP7 MS Teams General team).
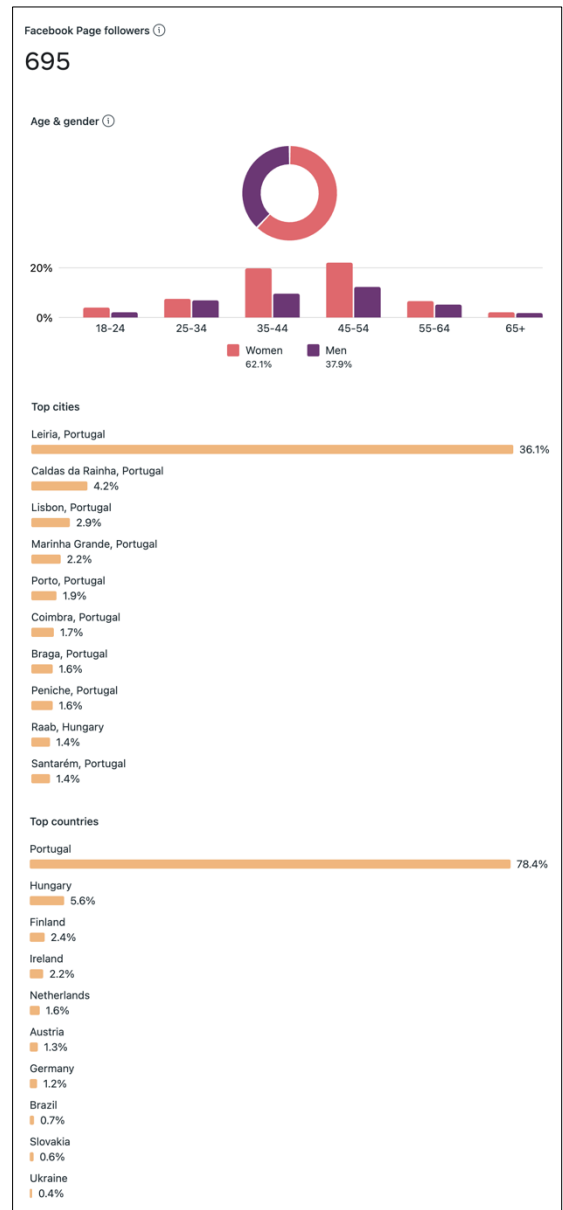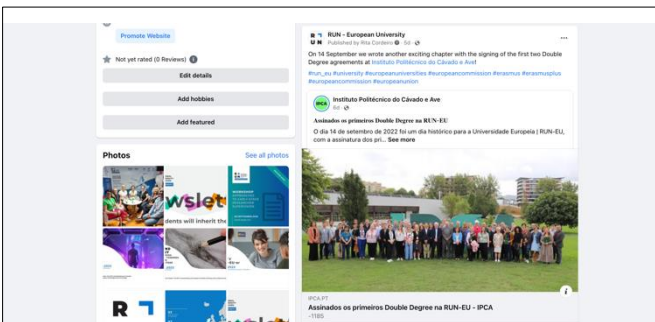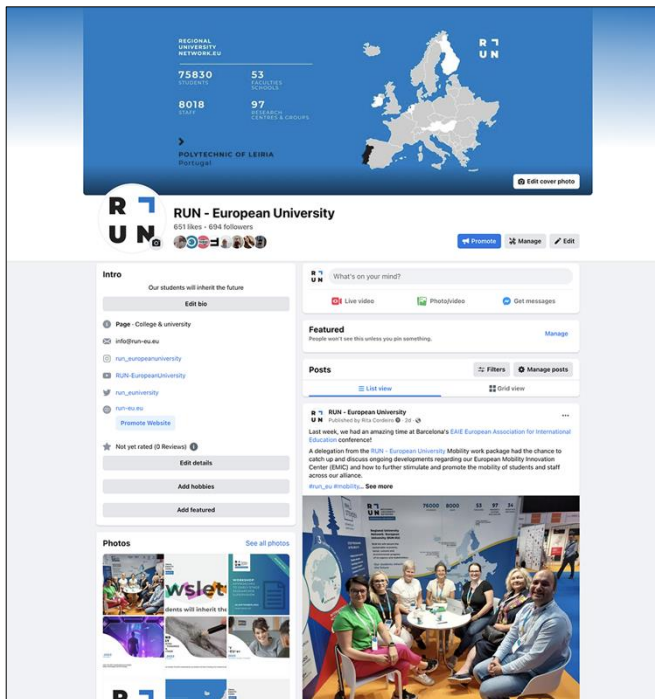

Figure 10 – Facebook Page Likes and Followers

The RUN-EU Facebook page reached 33,367 people, was visited 1,311 times and has 102 likes, as shown in the figures below.
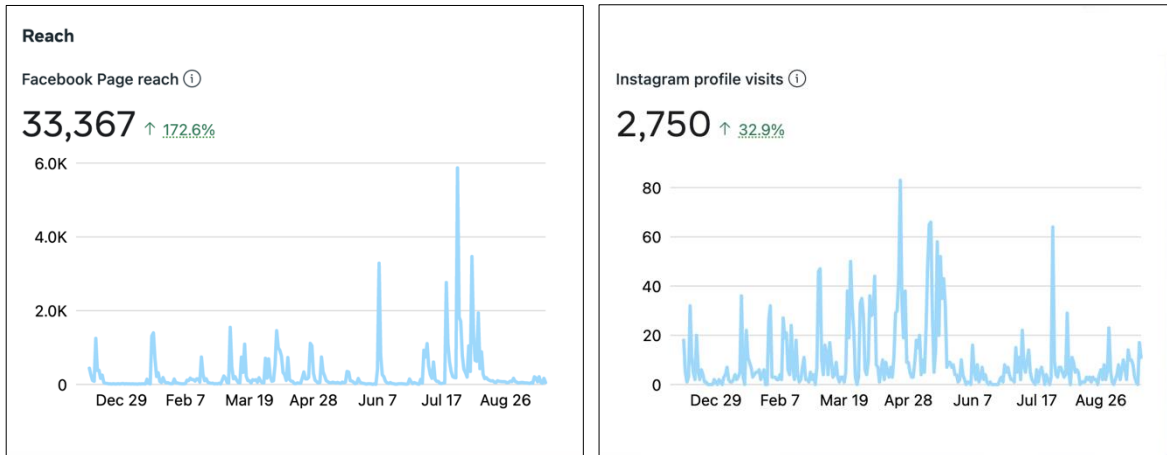

Figure 10 – Facebook Page Reach and Visits (Dec 2021– Sep 2022)
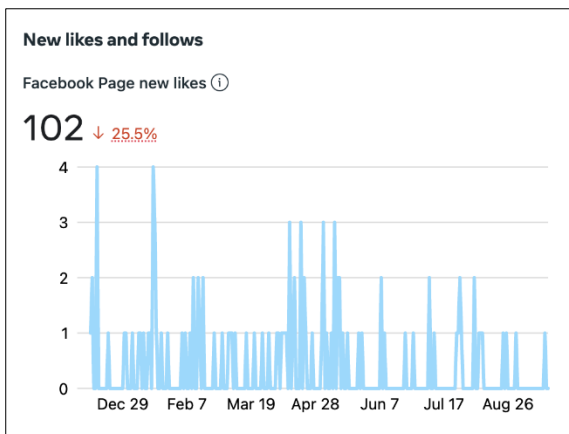
Figure 11 – New Likes and Followers (Dec 2021 – Sep 2022)

Instagram Metrics

RUN-EU's Instagram profile has 650 followers.

From December 2021 to September 2022, 13 posts and 14 stories were published about RUN-EU PLUS with an overall engagement of 734 people (according to Instagram engagement metrics results, which are available in the folder 'Evidence', under the folder '1 – IPL', under the folder 'RUN-EU_D7.12_1st_Communication and Outreach Report' on the WP7 MS Teams General team).
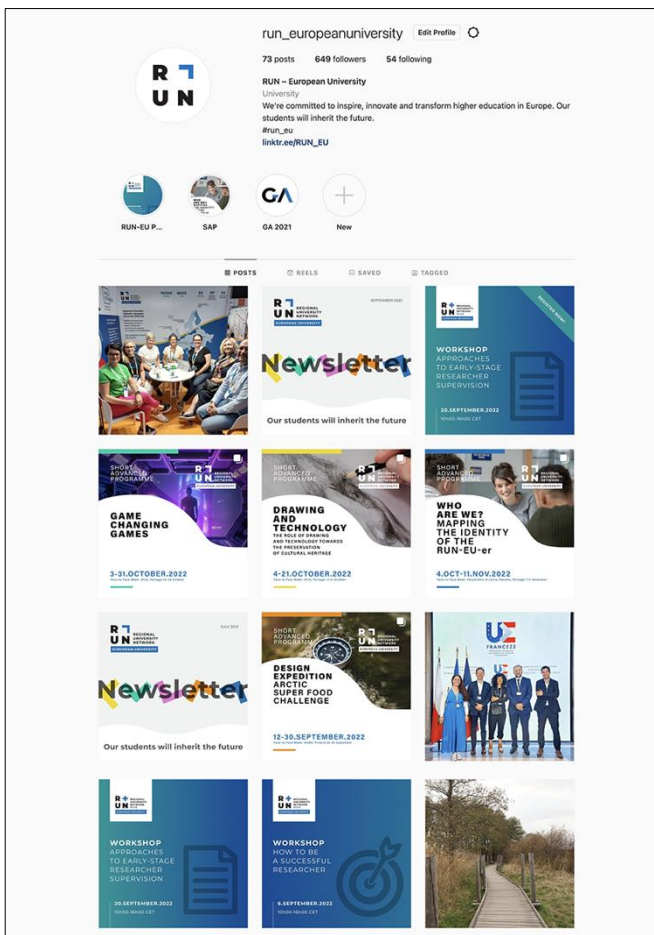
Figure 12 – Instagram Profile Likes

The RUN-EU Instagram profile reached 7,034 people, was visited 2,750 times and has 328 followers, as shown in the analytics below.
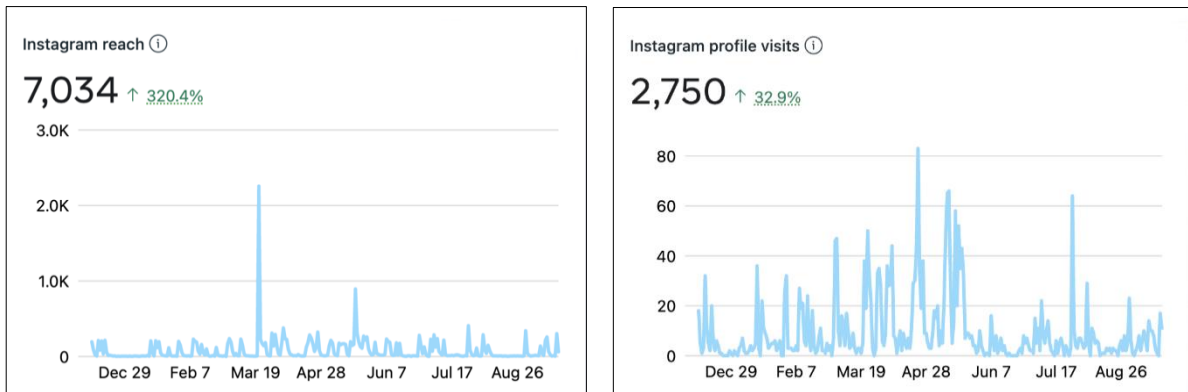
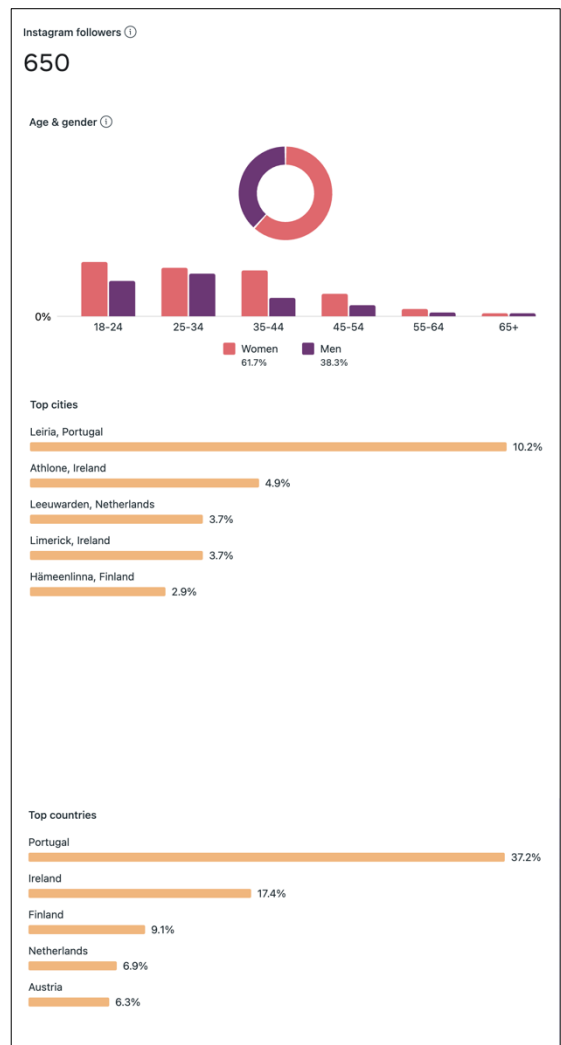**Figure 13 – Instagram Reach and Profile Visits (Dec 2021 – Sep 2022)**
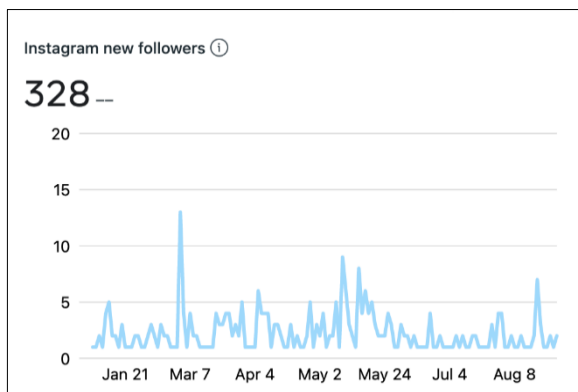
Figure 14 –Instagram New Followers

LinkedIn Metrics

RUN-EU LinkedIn counts 961 followers.

From December 2021 to September 2022, 19 posts about RUN-EU PLUS were published with an overall engagement of 2063 people. The RUN-EU LinkedIn page reached 20277 people (according to LinkedIn analytics results, which are available in the folder 'Evidence', which is inside the folder '1 – IPL', under the folder 'RUN-EU_D7.12_1st_Communication and Outreach Report' on the WP7 MS Teams General team).


Figure 15 – LinkedIn Page Likes

YouTube Metrics

RUN-EU YouTube channel currently has 113 subscribers and acts as a repository of audio-visual content produced during the project events, workshops, and presentations outputs.
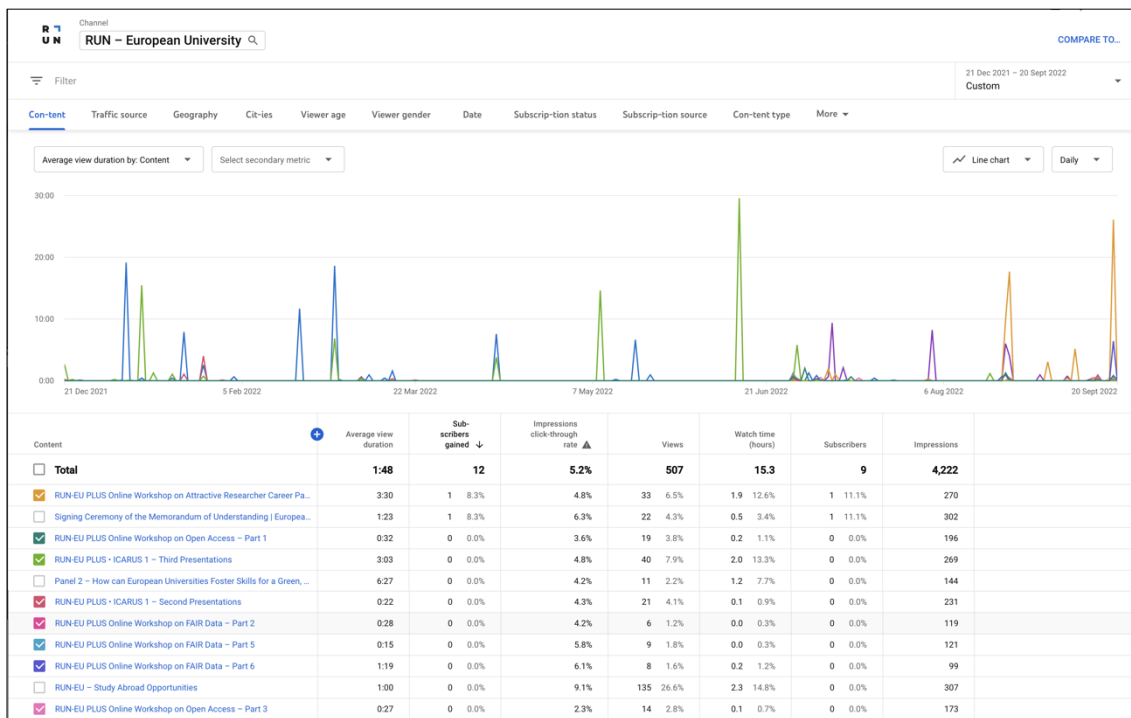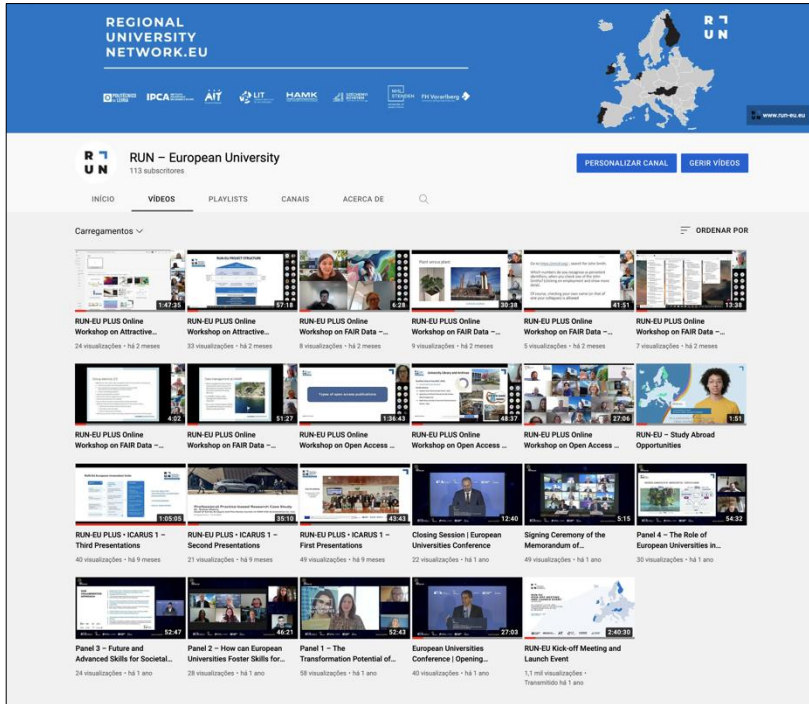
Figure 17 – YouTube Average View Duration by Content

Online Notices and News Articles

Several online notices have been created as a means of timely communication of all events. A Save the Date notice issued 3 months in advance of the event was posted across the webpage and i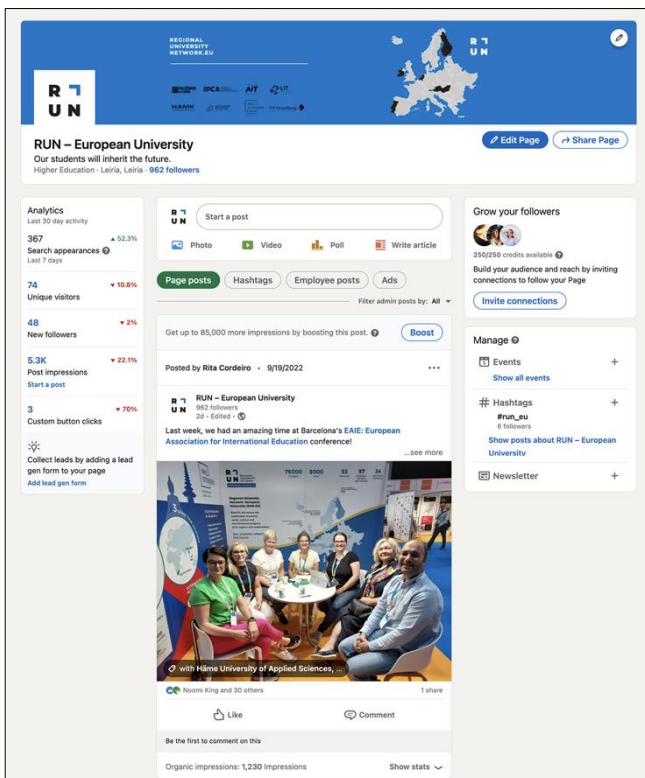nternal channels as described in D7.12. Two months before the event, a second notice was posted with full details of the event including a registration link. A dissemination news article was published post-event to capture feedback and evidence in the form of screenshots, posts on social media and videos.
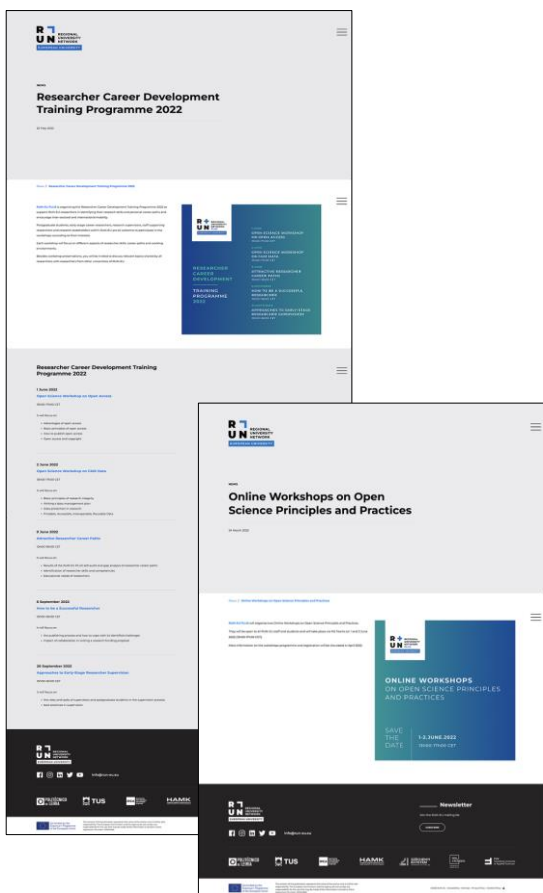
Figure 18 –Online Notices and News Articles

An e-zine for publication on the RUN-EU PLUS webpage and in hard copy is currently in the design stage and will be available for the RUN-EU General Assembly in November 2022 in HAMK. This e-zine focuses on informing external associated partners on all aspects of RUN-EU PLUS activities and the impacts it can generate in the development of higher-level skills, and transformation of research and innovation outputs to enterprise-generating products.

5.2. Key Performance Indicators

Communication activities are monitored according to a set of quantitative and qualitative success indicators. The evaluation of communication activities determines the degree to which the communication objectives have been reached, and the relationship between the outcomes and the efforts made to reach the goals.

As outlined in the RUN-EU PLUS Communication and Dissemination Strategy, a set of specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) has been defined to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the project C&D activities. The table below shows the status of the C&D activities conducted up until now:

Table 1 – Key Performance Indicators

Communication and Dissemination KPIs			Achievements	
Tool, instrument, or activity	Indicator	Expected impact	M1-M12	Status
Website	Number of visitors	2,000	Over 2,000	100%
Facebook	Number of followers	500	Over 500	100%
	Engagement average	2,000	1,652	82.6%
LinkedIn	Number of page followers	200	Over 200	100%
Twitter	Number of followers	200	Over 200	100%
Instagram	Number of followers	300	Over 300	100%
YouTube	Number of subscribers	200	113	56.5%
Brochure	Number of copies distributed by email, or face-to-face events / downloaded	1,000	Over 1,000	100%
	Number of editions released	2	1	50%
Online Leaflets	Number of copies distributed by email or face-to-face events	1,000	0	0%
	Number of editions released	6	0	0%
e-Newsletters	Number of copies distributed by email or face-to-face events	2,000	Over 2,000	100%

Communication and Dissemination KPIs			Achievements	
Tool, instrument, or activity	Indicator	Expected impact	M1-M12	Status
	Number of editions released	6	6	100%
Promotional short videos	Number of videos	4	0	0%
Thematic dissemination events	Number of attendants	100	Over 100	100%
	Number of editions	3	1	33%
International Conference	Number of attendants	100	Over 240	100%
Dissemination inside the HEIs	Number of staff/students reached by the project	2,000	Over 2,000	100%
Publication of news and posts	Number of news published on HEIs website and/or social media	60	Over 60	100%
Scientific/paper publications	Number of communication/ papers submitted	2	0	0%

Total Attendance at Year 1 training programmes are as follows:

1. Open Science 1st June 2022 – 90 participants

2. Open Science FAIR Data 2nd June 2022 – 92 participants

3. Attractive Researcher career paths 9th June 2022 – 53 participants

4. How to be a successful researcher 6th September 2022 – 102 participants

5. Approaches to Early-stage Researcher Supervision 20th September – 42 participants

6. Conclusion on Best Practice in Communications and Outreach

Reviewing the evidence illustrated through the key performance indicators of engagement across all the social media platforms and the webpage the following recommended best practice approach is proposed:

- Strategic positioning of RUN-EU PLUS and its exploitation at the highest level within each Alliance member organisation.
- Continuous and open communication to all alliance members and associated partners.
- Continuous Shared Good Practice as digital marketing evolves and provides design support across all partners – scheduled meetings and communications workshops essential to ensure alignment to changing regional and European environments.
- Training for all users to be provided on the correct use and implementation of RUN-EU PLUS communication strategies.
- Common Media Templates and Strategies to be agreed upon and implemented with a Sustainable approach to media use and merchandise production including supply chain and material composition:
  - o Adapt templates to work on each platform
  - o Diverse physical media for events essential pre, during and post-event.
- Target group selection is essential for successful communication of activities:
  - o Personal connectivity is essential for inclusion – making the audience feel that the activity will positively impact their personal and professional development needs to be the overall goal of the communications medium.
  - o Corporate accounts can only be used due to strict privacy policies – essential to disseminate these accounts to ensure usage by target audiences outside of work accounts.
- A clear timeline of events with a minimum notice of 12 weeks to allow for design and content preparation:
  - o Dynamic infographics, videos, and design images through a clear branding strategy to be agreed upon and implemented
  - o Clear and strong message to be communicated – less is more.
- Gather and archive all evidence of an event in real-time:
  - o The utilisation of testimonials of experience (Feedback Surveys) for later exploitation.
  - o Trackable means of communication and impact measurement are essential for an evidence-based approach.
- Publish / Report Key Performance Indicators for continuous review and quality improvement of communication and dissemination practice.

WE ARE ONE
WE ARE RUN

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