



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

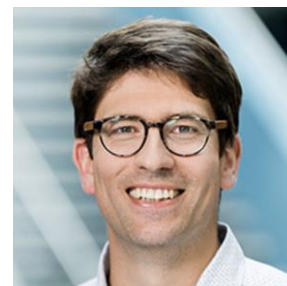


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FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM OUTGOING CA PRESIDENT, CLEMENS MADER

Over the past 25 years the COPERNICUS Alliance has changed from a network of Charta signatories to a network of research and development focusing on a sustainable whole institution approach at universities. When we look back at the vocabulary that was used in the 1994 CRE COPERNICUS Charta, we find ambitions to work towards interdisciplinarity, environmental education, university–industry exchange, and knowledge transfer. Today's endeavours are characterized as striving for transdisciplinarity, education for sustainable development (ESD), university–society exchange, and development of sustainability competences to enable change agency.



Not only has the language changed, policies have also progressed at global, European, national, and institutional level. After the UN Decade and UNESCO Global Action Programme on ESD we are heading towards the ESD 2030 Programme which, I believe, should use ESD targets to strengthen the UN Agenda 2030 and make it more transformative through education.

So progress is happening and we are heading in the right direction, at least in this area! But the reality we encounter at our universities demonstrates on a daily basis that even though movement is discernible, there are still some long-standing walls to break through, which seem to be embedded (although not unshakeable!) in universities and society.

- Rankings (competition orientation instead of collaboration),
- frequent flying (high CO₂ emissions all across campus instead of being a role model),
- privatization (not only in funding but also in data/knowledge ownership),
- rigid structures (although we live in times of rapid societal and technological change), and
- post-factual politics (unreflected sharing of “alternative facts” in society and policy)

are major “construction sites” when we talk about the future of ESD. The digital transformation will clearly play its role and, sooner rather than later, we must elaborate on how we can make use of this transformation in the service of sustainability.

The COPERNICUS Alliance will change its leadership in January 2019, with Anne Zimmermann of the University of Bern as elected president for 2019-2020. The CA office will move to the University of Girona, with Ingrid Mulà as elected Executive Director for 2019-2022. With this new leadership, as well as motivating ESD programmes ahead and grand challenges to be faced, we can be sure that the COPERNICUS Alliance will go through a demanding and but very inspiring time.



As outgoing president I would like to voice a big thank you to Jana Dlouhá as outgoing Vice-President, as well as to the CA office team (Laura, Mario and Jiří) and all CA members, and colleagues from other organizations for all the inspiration and engagement they showed in the past years. Finally, I would like to invite all those who are not yet a member to join the COPERNICUS Alliance to strengthen the dynamics of the process in front of us.

1. SUMMARY

The COPERNICUS Alliance (CA) is a European network of higher education institutions committed to transformational learning and change for sustainable development. Working closely with its members and in partnership with strategic stakeholders, it seeks to inform international and European higher education policy developments as well as support individual institutions in their journeys toward embedding change for sustainability in their institutional policies, teaching, and research.

This report documents the activities of the CA in 2018, in reference to its objectives and the ambitions of the COPERNICUS Alliance Leadership Team, Dr. Clemens Mader (President) and Dr. Jana Dlouhá (Vice-President), re-elected for 2017-2018 after their initial term in 2015-2016.

The CA aims to achieve the following objectives:

- ✦ **Networking:** Exchanging good practices and enhancing knowledge on sustainability and Education for Sustainable Development in higher education.
- ✦ **Policy and Representation:** Informing higher education policy-making in Europe and globally. Engaging and participating in international gatherings, dialogues, committees, and expert groups.
- ✦ **Professional Development:** Developing tools and materials and providing professional development opportunities.
- ✦ **Outreach:** Working in partnership to promote sustainable development in European Higher Education.

Opportunities to **support knowledge exchange, relationship building, networking, and professional development** arose mainly through the CA Conference – the Future Forward Summit in Brussels, Belgium, hosted by CA member Ecocampus – and cooperation was supported by **Micro Funds**, small grants for colleagues wishing to initiate small- or larger-scale projects, workshops, and research on CA themes with the participation of at least two CA members. The CA issued three calls for applications for Micro Funds in 2018 and three applications were accepted: co-authoring of a journal article (University of Girona, Charles University Environment Centre, Open Universiteit in the Netherlands, The University of Gävle, Leuphana University Lüneburg, University of Zurich), joint teaching in the European Virtual Seminar (University of Graz, University of Maribor, Open University of the Netherlands, Charles University Environment Centre), and exploring how to best create conditions for transformative learning in HE (University of Bern and University of Zurich).

The CA was represented in dialogues and events to drive **policy development**:

- ✦ Partnership with the **IAU** (International Association of Universities) deepened during the launch of the IAU Global Cluster on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development. The IAU is leading work on SDG 17 on global partnerships, in which the CA is a partner network. Furthermore, in the course of the 2018 CA Annual Conference in Brussels, the IAU, CA, and Palgrave Research Prize for papers on the theme “Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development: A New Academic Discipline?”, published in the Palgrave **Higher**

Education Policy Journal, was awarded to colleagues from Bern and Madrid (see section 3.1.1 for details).

- ✦ Connections between CA and **saguf** (Swiss academic society for environmental research and society) have been closely established thanks to the cooperation of outgoing President Clemens Mader and incoming President Anne Zimmermann and their respective Universities of Zurich and Bern. Both Anne and Clemens are members of the saguf working group on ESD, providing an excellent opportunity for rich synergies in research and advocacy. A workshop on transformative higher education was held close to Bern, Switzerland, as a collaboration of the saguf working group on ESD and the CA. Participants were from academia, consulting, and practice.
- ✦ Cooperation between the CA and **UNICA Green** continues, with mutual interest and attendance at both networks' events.

2. SECRETARIAT, LEADERSHIP TEAM, AND ADVISORY BOARD

The COPERNICUS Alliance (CA) has a rotating Secretariat and Leadership Team. Dr. Clemens Mader (University of Zurich [Sustainability Team] and Empa [Technology and Society Lab]) and Dr. Jana Dlouhá (Charles University Environment Centre) concluded their second term of service as the CA Leadership Team at the end of 2018.

The outgoing Leadership Team proposed a revised management strategy to ensure greater capacity and efficiency. The position of Vice-President has been replaced by an Executive Director for a term of four years to ensure continuity, while the position of President remains a two-year commitment. The Secretariat will be hosted by the Executive Director's institution.

CA members unanimously elected the new Leadership Team members at the CA Annual General Meeting in Brussels on 16 October 2018, on the occasion of the Annual CA Conference – the Future Forward Summit hosted by CA member Ecocampus from 17-19 October 2018.

The composition of the Advisory Board is currently as follows:

- ✦ **Prof. Matthias Barth** (CA Member Representative), Professor for Education for Sustainable Development, Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany
- ✦ **Prof. Anna Maria Geli** (CA Member Representative), Professor at the Universitat de Girona (UoG), Former Rector of UoG and President of CADEP-CRUE (2005-2013), Spain
- ✦ **Prof. Hans van Ginkel** (CA Advisor), Former Under Secretary General of the United Nations, Rector of the United Nations University and Rector of Utrecht University, Universiteit Utrecht, The Netherlands
- ✦ **Mr. Dario Piselli** (CA Student Representative), Law student at the University of Siena and Founder of Greening USiena, Italy
- ✦ **Prof. Alessandra Viviani** (CA Member Representative), Deputy Director, Department of Political and International Sciences, Associate Professor of International Human Rights Protection, former Vice Rector for International Relations (2010-2016), University of Siena, Italy
- ✦ **Prof. Doris Wastl-Walter** (CA Member Representative), emerita Professor of Human Geography and former Vice-Rector Quality (2011-2017), University of Bern, Switzerland

3. COPERNICUS ALLIANCE INITIATIVES IN LINE WITH KEY STRATEGIES AND VISION 2018

3.1. NETWORKING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1.1. CA Conference 2018: Future Forward Summit



The Future Forward Summit took place from 17-19 October 2018 in Brussels. It aimed to bring together game-changing pioneers in higher education for sustainable development as well as other sectors, such as design and architecture, to create a rich environment for cross-fertilization of ideas. Participants had many opportunities to discuss and develop ideas, presenting not only their best practices, but also work in progress to get feedback and help from like-minded colleagues as well as experts with other backgrounds. With 220 participants, the Future Forward Summit was a lively, inspiring, and creative event with many different formats of interaction and networking offered. Our hosts, the Ecocampus team, organised:

- 4 refreshing keynotes by leaders in the field of sustainability policy and education, sustainability arts, film and architecture,

- 6 dialogue talks between 2 inspiring experts from diverse fields, committed to sustainability transformation,
- 39 interactive workshops with change-makers,
- 98 opportunities for 30-minute one-on-one dates with 13 experts in making ideas reality.

The conference was structured along four threads:

1) Together we can change the weather

Collaboration within higher education and with external stakeholders is necessary to achieve steps forward in sustainable challenges. Focus on collaboration, co-creation, inter- and transdisciplinarity, community-building, service learning, living labs...

2) Interventions in educational settings

How can we recondition education to become education for sustainable development? Focus on transforming learning environments and building educators' capacities.

3) Wicked problems tackled

How can higher education and research play a role in dealing with wicked problems? How can complexity and uncertainty be embraced to strengthen your education and research?

4) State of the art

Creating space for experiments and innovation is important in higher education. Focus on innovative projects that are already unexpectedly, breaking through barriers or hacking problems in the traditional (educational) system.

Awarding the IAU, CA, and Palgrave Research Prize

The CA prize was awarded to Lilian Trechsel and co-authors from the University of Bern, including incoming CA President Anne Zimmermann, and CA Advisory Board member Doris Wastl-Walter, for their article [Mainstreaming Education for Sustainable Development at a Swiss University: Navigating the Traps of Institutionalization](#).

The IAU prize was awarded to David Alba-Hidalgo and co-authors from Autónoma University of Madrid and the University of Granada for their paper, [Towards a Definition of Environmental Sustainability Evaluation in Higher Education](#).

Future Forward Summit presentations are available on the conference website:

<https://www.futureforwardsummit.com/>

3.1.2. Micro Funds

Three grants of up to 1,000 EUR each were awarded to CA members:

✦ **Two-day retreat for the ESD Working Group of saguf (Swiss academic society for environmental research and society)**

Participating CA members: University of Bern, University of Zurich

Two representatives of the Universities of Bern and Zurich applied for a CA Micro Fund to carry out a two-day retreat in collaboration with the ESD Working Group of saguf (Swiss academic society for environmental research and society).

The aim of this event was to conduct in depth case-based discussions on transformative learning (TL) for sustainable development in the context of higher education institutions, as a follow-up of theoretical work published in 2017 in GAIA.

Four practitioners from Switzerland and one from Sweden were invited to join the retreat, among them Marilyn Mehlmann, the co-founder of legacy17.org, with whom discussions were also held about the possibility of linking her organization with our universities and the CA. The retreat was very fruitful. Among the questions that will continue to be pursued by the ESD Working Group in a planned publication are: what exactly do we want TL to contribute to? What kind of impact do we want to achieve; how do we want to measure it (if at all possible)? How can assessment contribute to TL? Our focus is on educating future change agents and leaders: how can we promote assessment as a contribution to a (transformative) learning process? And how can TL on an individual and collective level be supported in HESD? Finally, what role do “liminal” experiences play, what does it mean to bring students to their “learning edge”? To conclude: the micro-fund made it possible for us to extend our network, link theory with practice, and plan exciting new ESD work.

✦ **Support for staff participation in the European Virtual Seminar winter semester 2018-19**

Participating CA members: University of Graz, Charles University, University of Maribor, Open University of the Netherlands.

A Micro Fund was awarded to support the participation of University of Graz staff in the European Virtual Seminar (EVS). EVS is a web-based course, jointly organized and offered by 10 universities across Europe. In EVS international, multi-disciplinary student teams conduct case studies in European sustainable development, coached by tutors and experts. EVS has been repeatedly acknowledged as good practice in many respects including professional development of university teachers.

✦ **Support for co-authoring an article for the Sustainability Special Issue “Competencies in Education for Sustainable Development”**

Participating CA members: University of Girona, Charles University, Open University of the Netherlands.

This award is provisional, pending acceptance of the manuscript: Should it be accepted, the Micro Fund will cover the publication fee.

3.1.3. Communications tools

✦ **CA website**

The website communicates calls for Micro Funds, showcases member institutions, provides information on CA strategic activities and contains a collection of past and current newsletters.

✦ **CA Newsletter**

The COPERNICUS Alliance newsletter is sent to all network members and colleagues from across Europe active in the field of ESD. The newsletters provide information about the activities of the Alliance and its members, relevant news, and resources of interest to members. The newsletters

also feature a profile of a member institution and the colleagues who work on CA issues from that institution. As in 2017, there were five Newsletter issues in 2018.

✦ **CA members' email**

To contribute to relationship-building among CA members, the email was designed to provide the opportunity for members to be in direct contact to share news, seek partnerships, and reach out for support.

3.2. POLICY AND REPRESENTATION

- ✦ CA holds “Observer” status in the work of the **UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development**, contributing to the [UNECE Draft workplan](#) for 2017-2019 for the UNECE Strategy for ESD. Jana Dlouhá, who also holds the position of 2nd vice-chairman of the Czech Commission for UNESCO, attended the UNECE Steering Committee meeting on behalf of the CA (3-4 May 2018, in Geneva).
- ✦ Since the establishment of the first RCEs in 2005, the CA has been a member of the **Ubuntu Committee of Peers for the Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development**. This Committee is coordinated by the RCE Service Centre at the United Nations University – Institute for the Advanced Studies of Sustainability. The CA President represents the CA in the Committee. The 11th Global RCE Conference was held in Cebu, Philippines, from 7-9 December 2018 with the theme “Education for the Sustainable Development Goals”. VP Jana Dlouhá, also coordinator of RCE Czechia, represented CA at this meeting.
- ✦ **Representation at The European Environmental Bureau:** EEB is the largest network of environmental citizens’ organisations in Europe. It currently consists of around 140 member organisations in more than 30 countries, including a growing number of European networks, and representing some 15 million individual members and supporters. Jana Dlouhá attended the EEB Policy Forum “Shaping the Future of EU Environmental Policy. From the 7th to the 8th Environment Action Programme – Status, Challenges, and Next Steps” on Wednesday, 13 June 2018 in Vienna. This event provided an excellent opportunity to be informed about the state of the art in European environmental policy, and get involved in commenting/consulting prepared strategies. Jiri Dlouhy as a member of the EEB Board represented CA at the Annual conference: Protecting the environment in a new Europe, Edinburgh, 6 November, 2018.
- ✦ Work in the framework of the **UNESCO International Network of Teacher Education Institutions** (INTEI) was continued. The virtual conference “Designing the Future” took place on 13-15 November 2018.
- ✦ The CA president and vice-president have been involved in the work of their respective national Commissions for UNESCO. Both of them attended the meeting “Steps towards a Sustainable University Barometer” from 13-14 December 2018 in Paris, UNESCO Headquarters – an expert

discussion aimed to depict a comprehensive sustainability-oriented view of universities by a reliable and manageable indicator set.

3.3. OUTREACH

✦ IAU International Association of Universities

The IAU-CA partnership was formally agreed with IAU in 2016. The partnership established with IAU provides an opportunity for the CA to engage with a global network of 633 institutions. In 2018 the partnership focused on the following activities:

- Contributing to the process of editing a special issue of the IAU indexed journal *Higher Education Policy*, Routledge: “Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development: A New Academic Discipline?” and identification of winning entries: one CA member and one IAU member.
- CA Members now have increased visibility with their institutional profiles on the HESD online platform.
- In 2018, IAU launched the Global Cluster on Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development. All 17 sustainable development goals are addressed by 16 lead universities, one for each SDG, with IAU taking the lead on SDG 17 on global partnerships, in which CA is a partner network. The IAU Cluster on HESD promotes the role that HEIs globally have to fulfil in order to achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The Cluster encourages a holistic approach to the SDGs, focusing specifically on the whole institution approach. Peer-to-peer learning will spark new ideas and creativity among the Members of the Cluster and will encourage other universities to step up their game towards achieving a more sustainable future. The Cluster will help generate new joint and collaborative projects and other initiatives.

The clusters serve as:

- 1) a resource and networking hub for universities around the world to which universities can turn to for collaboration and guidance;
- 2) a global voice for higher education in sustainable development debates (including at the UN High Level Political Forum), informing international organizations and national governments about the role of universities in achieving the SDGs.

For more information please see: <http://iau-hesd.net/en/contenu/4648-iau-hesd-cluster.html>

✦ Saguf

Connections between CA and the saguf (Swiss academic society for environmental research and society) have been established thanks to the cooperation between outgoing President Clemens Mader (University of Zurich) and incoming President Anne Zimmermann (University of Bern). Both Anne and Clemens are members of the saguf working group on ESD; they have actively developed synergies between research, teaching, and institutional matters of relevance to their own universities, to saguf as a Swiss network, and to CA as a European network for ESD in the course of the past year. Results from the saguf working group’s research meetings (publications on transformative learning and broader issues related to implementing a whole institution approach)

have found their way into activities for the CA (participation in the Future Forward Summit, publication of articles, policy work) and vice versa, maximizing the benefits of networking. The virtual conference to be held in 2019 will also benefit from this collaborative approach.

✦ **UNICA Green**

Cooperation between CA and **UNICA Green** continues, with mutual interest and attendance at both networks' events. Laura Henderson represented CA at the UNICA Green workshop "Implementation of SDGs in Higher Education" in Brussels, 21-23 March 2018.

3.4. PUBLICATIONS

✦ **Saguf working group on ESD: Transformative Learning and Education for Sustainable Development**

The working group, which includes two CA members (Anne Zimmermann, University of Bern and Clemens Mader, University of Zurich, Empa), produced this call for action based on a literature review and process of joint learning. The publication comments on the relationship between transformative learning and higher education for SD, and identifying conditions that can help to accelerate current progress at higher education institutions.

The publication is available online here:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321969501_Transformative_Learning_and_Education_for_Sustainable_Development

✦ **Higher Education Policy Journal Special Issue, Higher Education and Research for Sustainable Development: A New Academic Discipline?**

[Higher Education Policy](#) is a peer reviewed, indexed journal (2018 impact factor 1.333), closely affiliated with IAU and CA – disseminated to all of IAU's member institutions, i.e. currently more than 600 HEIs all over the world: this is very likely to increase the impact of the published articles on higher education policies. The special issue was published in 2018, and two prizes each worth 2,000 EUR were awarded for the work of one IAU and one CA member.

The IAU prize was awarded to David Alba-Hidalgo and co-authors from Autónoma University of Madrid and the University of Granada for their paper, [Towards a Definition of Environmental Sustainability Evaluation in Higher Education](#).

The CA prize was awarded to Lilian Trechsel and co-authors from the University of Bern, including incoming CA President Anne Zimmermann, and CA Advisory Board member Doris Wastl-Walter, for their article [Mainstreaming Education for Sustainable Development at a Swiss University: Navigating the Traps of Institutionalization](#).

✦ Ingrid Mulà, incoming CA Executive Director, is co-editor of the **MDPI Sustainability Special Issue: Competencies in Education for Sustainable Development**, to be published in 2019. Topics will include the integration of ESD competencies in policies, strategies, and programmes; innovative pedagogical approaches to ESD competencies; curriculum development; processes and tools to assess ESD competencies; connecting quality education with ESD competencies development; professional development in ESD; and ESD competencies in teacher education.

- ✦ Clemens Mader, outgoing CA President and Christian Rammel, director of RCE Vienna at CA Member institution Vienna University of Economics and Business are editors of the **MDPI Sustainability Special Issue: The Future of Education for Sustainable Development – Between the Power of Technology and the Need for Responsible Citizenship**. The special issue, to be published in 2019, will focus on the technological applications in education and learning environments and include topics such as technological applications in education and learning environments, MOOCs, blockchain, artificial intelligence, and virtual learning environments.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Table 1: Membership evolution 2017-2018

Membership category	2017	2018
Institutional members & Trial members	16	15
HE NGOs, associations & agencies	4	2
Observers	-	-
Individual members	1	1
International observers	-	-
TOTAL	21	18

Table 2: List of members in 2018

Member institution	Country	Type	Member since
Vienna University of Economics and Business	Austria	Institutional	2010
University of Graz	Austria	Institutional	2010
Leuphana University of Lüneburg	Germany	Institutional	2010
Open University in the Netherlands	Netherlands	Institutional	2010
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna	Austria	Institutional	2012
Charles University Environment Centre	Czech Republic	Institutional	2012
CRUE-CADEP	Spain	NGO	2012
University of Basque Country	Spain	Institutional	2013
University of Siena	Italy	Institutional	2013
Flemish Ministry of Environment, Nature & Energy	Belgium	Governmental Agency	2014
The University of Warsaw	Poland	Institutional	2014
University of Hamburg	Germany	Institutional	2015
University of Zurich	Switzerland	Institutional	2015
University of Maribor	Slovenia	Institutional	2016
University of Bern	Switzerland	Institutional	2016
University of Girona	Spain	Institutional	2017
University of Gävle	Sweden	Institutional	2017
Individual Researcher	France	Individual	2017

5. FINANCES

The CA is officially acknowledged as an NGO under German law with the registration number VR200489. Its finances and accounting are assessed on a regular basis by the tax authority of Lüneburg, Germany. They approve the status of CA as a Non-Profit Organisation serving society with a research and science purpose.

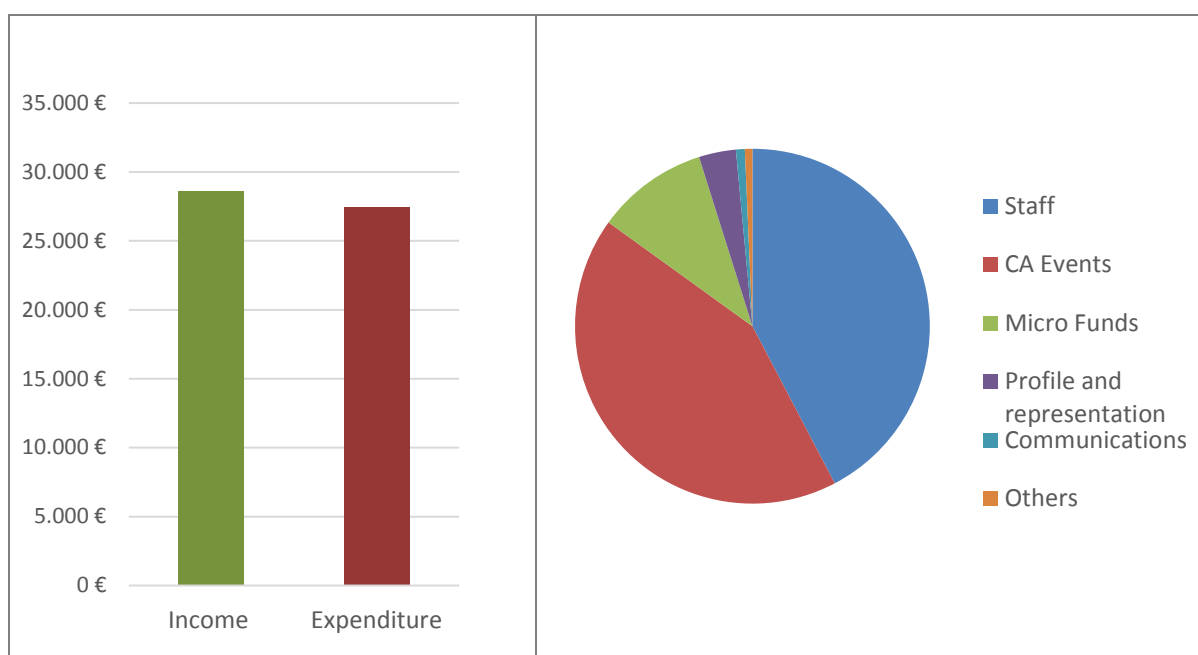
The CA's income consists exclusively of membership fees. Expenditures in 2018 relate to staff (Administrative Coordinator/Secretariat and Financial Administrator), the Annual CA Conference in Brussels, as well as communications, and profile and representation (includes memberships, travel, subsistence and fees to participate in important events where CA has profiled its work and activities). Furthermore, every year a part of the annual budget is reserved for Micro Funds to support members' initiatives. In addition, an important part of the workload is covered by in-kind contributions of the whole CA Leadership Team.

As the table and the figure below illustrate, the year 2018 closed with a positive balance of € 1,180.25, leading to a total account balance of € 13,709.60 at the end of 2018. The membership fees contributed € 14,700.00 (from 18 member institutions) to the annual budget. To enhance visibility of the CA and strengthen cooperation with other international organizations, € 650.00 were spent for membership in the International Association of Universities (IAU). CA member initiatives were supported with € 2,000 through CA Micro Funds. € 2,000 were spent for the Essay Competition Award. For the CA conference in Brussels (Future Forward Summit), the main event of the year, € 12,844.09 (incl. travel funds) were invested, but incoming conference fees of € 13,910.00 led to a positive balance for the conference in total.

Table 3: Finances 2018

INCOME	Membership fees	€ 14,700.00
	CA Conference fees (CA Conference Brussels)	€ 13,910.00
	TOTAL Income	€ 28,610.00
EXPENDITURES	Staff	€ 8,974.61
	CA Events (CA Conference Brussels)	€ 12,844.09
	Profile and representation (incl. membership in IAU)	€ 650.00
	Micro Funds	€ 2,000.00
	Communications	€ 284.45
	Others	€ 2,676.60
	TOTAL Expenditures	€ 27,429.75
Balance 2018		€ 1,180.25
Carried forward from 2017		€ 12,529.35
TOTAL BALANCE		€ 13,709.60

Figure 1: Left: Income and Expenditures 2018; Right: Distribution of expenditures 2018



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2019: FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM OUTGOING CA VICE-PRESIDENT, JANA DLOUHÁ

The CA is a great opportunity to be in a community with many excellent members. It is also a responsibility for all members of this community – building a supportive environment for collaboration, and contributing to change and progress. It is important to be in close contact with each other via various communication channels such as newsletters and (annual) CA meetings and conferences; this is where we can transform ideas and energy into concrete plans and activities – it is our collective decisions and collaborative efforts that make these a reality. The ongoing exchange of experiences and viewpoints which occur informally, as well as formally by contributing to regional and global strategies and policies, makes the CA a unique environment to develop initiatives that combine the bottom-up and top-down commitment of its members.

