

ANNUAL REPORT



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FOREWORD

In 2021 the "unimaginable" became the "new normal" and meant that we all had to continue meeting online instead of face-to-face. The good news is: This did not prevent the global ESD community from taking a major strategic step! Altogether 160 states signed the Berlin Declaration issued in May 2021 at the online UNESCO World Conference, thus subscribing to the following statement:

"Transformative learning for people and the planet is a necessity for our survival and that of future generations. The time to learn and act for our planet is now."

For the COPERNICUS Alliance, this is a most welcome step. It provides us with the necessary traction in our policy efforts to transform the world of higher education towards sustainability.

Transformative learning remained an important focus of CA activities in 2021:



On the one hand, Tom Kuppens and his wonderful conference team organized a very successful online teaser event on "Daring to transform learning for a future-proof economy" and judiciously linked it with the upcoming Higher Education Summit 2022, which will take place face-to-face in Hasselt, from 6-8 September 2022. On the other hand, the CA was involved in the very successful project "Online Transformative Learning (OnTL)", collaborating with Legacy17 (Sweden), Isoropia (Croatia), and Visionautik (Germany). Two practice-oriented products emerged out of this fruitful collaboration, meant to support all individuals and institutions interested in implementing transformative learning online. Collaboration is continuing with these adult education organizations on a new project, "TRACCskills", focusing on "wise choice" skills.

CA members progressed in other areas as well, witness the Vienna University of Economics and Business and partners' "SDGs Labs", the University of Girona and partners' new "SDG-iLevel" project, the University of Maribor's "IRDO conference", the University of the Basque Country and Autonomous University of Madrid's joint "Transition skills" workshop — all outlined in the present Annual Report — not to forget other members' numerous activities reported on in the regular CA Newsletters and on the CA website. We are happy to now hand over to a new Leadership Team of three Co-Presidents who have announced some exciting innovations for our CA members!

Dr. Anne Zimmermann, President

and

Dr. Ingrid Mulà, Executive Director



1. OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Vision

"The COPERNICUS Alliance will be the leading European network helping people and institutions in a higher education environment to creatively address the challenges of tomorrow in a collaborative way, to jointly build the knowledge and competences needed for global sustainable development, and to actively engage with policy-makers and community stakeholders."

Mission

The COPERNICUS Alliance (CA) aims to enable European higher education institutions and their partners to jointly identify challenges in higher education for sustainable development (HESD) and spearhead development of processes, tools, and knowledge to address these challenges from a whole-institution perspective. The CA provides a platform and organizes events where its current and future members can share resources and co-develop innovative education for



sustainable development initiatives. It provides Micro Funds for members' networking efforts and supports joint HESD proposals through advice and alliances. The CA also promotes engagement with policy-makers and community stakeholders at the European and global levels and regularly celebrates members' ambassador activities. The CA resolutely commits to reducing the ecological footprint of its activities.

Values

Respect, commitment, and collaboration are deemed the highest values of the CA.

- Respect underpins members' interactions and collaboration. Our members greatly appreciate the diversity of the CA community and the inspiration they get from exchanging.
- CA members commit to walk the talk, guided by a holistic perspective of HESD and the Agenda 2030. This commitment is supported by the possibility of exchanging with other people and institutions, and engaging in common activities.
- **Collaboration** is the mode of work of the CA community, who shares knowledge and resources, seeks to increase the impact of their work together, and find common solutions and funding for projects.



2. MANAGEMENT

2.1. Leadership Team

Since 1 January 2019, Dr. Anne Zimmermann (University of Bern) and Dr. Ingrid Mulà (University of Girona) served as President and Executive Director respectively. Their terms end on 31 December 2021. As of 1 January 2022, a new Leadership Team takes over, consisting of the following elected Co-presidents: Asst. Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Hofmann (Université Bordeaux Montaigne), Asst. Prof. Dr. Tom Kuppens (Hasselt

The CA has a rotating Secretariat and Leadership Team.



University & Vrije Universiteit Brussel), and **Prof. Dr. Eglė Staniškienė** (Kaunas University of Technology). In addition, the current Network Manager (Mario Diethart, University of Graz) will continue to be responsible for communication, administrative and financial issues.

2.2. Advisory Board

The Advisory Board members are elected for a period of four years by the CA members. They can be *member representatives, student representatives* or assume an *extended advisory board role*. The current members are:

- Prof. Matthias Barth Member representative
 President, Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development, Germany
- ◆ Prof. Kim Ceulemans, PhD Extended Advisory Board Role
 Assistant Professor, Department of Control, Accounting and Auditing at Toulouse Business School, France
- ◆ Dr. Jana Dlouhá Member representative Researcher at Charles University Environment Centre and former CA Vice-President, Czech Republic
- ★ Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rebeka Kovačič Lukman Member representative Professor of Environmental Sciences at University of Maribor, Slovenia



- ◆ Dr. Clemens Mader Extended Advisory Board Role
 Co-Director at RCE Zurich and Scientist at the Technology and Society Lab of EMPA in St. Gallen,
 Switzerland
- ◆ Dr. Estibaliz Saez de Camara Oleaga Member representative Director of Sustainability at University of the Basque Country, Spain
- ◆ Prof. Dr. Eglė Staniškienė* Member representative
 Professor at School of Economics at Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania
 - * until 31 December 2021; Co-President as of 1 January 2022

3. ACTIVITIES & INITIATIVES

In the <u>CA Action Plan 2019-2020</u>, which was **extended to 2021**, five priorities were identified that characterize the CA's unique strengths and important areas of action. The first two are thematic priorities (Goals 1 and 2), the third epitomizes the CA's mode of operation and commitment to sharing resources and learning (Goal 3), the fourth confirms the CA's involvement in European and global policy work (Goal 4), and the fifth characterizes the CA's operational needs as a learning organization (Goal 5):



For each of the **five strategic goals**, actions were defined along with indicators to measure them. We report below on the activities and initiatives organized in relation to the above-mentioned goals throughout the year 2021.



HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT 2021









141 participants



Due to the uncertainty about the COVID-19 pandemic, the CA together with the co-organizing institution Hasselt University decided early on to host

the Higher Education Summit in 2021 online. It took place on 9 December 2021 and was designed as a **virtual teaser event** for the physical conference in Hasselt, Belgium (6-8 September 2022).

Both the Higher Education Summit online teaser in 2021 and the physical conference in 2022 share the theme "Daring to transform learning for a future-proof economy" focusing on research- and practice-related issues to realize an economy that strives for a safe and just world for everyone, within our planetary boundaries.

The format of the Higher Education Summit online teaser built upon the experiences from past CA conferences. It included inspiring keynote speakers (Kate Raworth, Mamphela Ramphele and Garry Jacobs), interdisciplinary debates as well as a great variety of interactive workshops. Over 140 persons participated in the virtual event, bringing together diverse disciplines such as economy, education, research and practice.

Resources including the keynote videos and a full recording of the conference are available on the CA website. Read more

MICRO FUNDS





Goal 5



2 initiatives supported



5 member institutions involved



1,909.47 €

The CA aims to invest in members' activities by putting part of its annual budget aside to fund members' initiatives. Activities that contribute to the overall CA ambition to build capacity in higher education for



sustainable development through collaboration can be supported with up to 1,000 EUR. In 2021, two activities were supported with CA Micro Funds:



Joint IRDO Conferences - Proceedings

10-11 June 2021

Participating CA members: University of Maribor and others

Two conferences were held as one joint event: The 16th IRDO International Scientific Conference on "SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CHALLENGES OF 2021: Challenges and Opportunities of Digitization for a Sustainable Future", and the "First National Professional and Business Conference IRDO and Citizens' Initiatives for Integral Green Slovenia: Challenges and Opportunities for the sustainable development of Slovenia in the European context". More than 80 authors from ten countries participated with almost 40 papers incl. one by CA President Anne Zimmermann et al. entitled "Creative virtual conferencing and networking to advance higher education for sustainable development" (see sub-chapter "CA Publications"). Read more



Workshop "Transition skills to achieve SDGs"

21 June 2021

Participating CA members: University of the Basque Country, Autonomous University of Madrid

The ambition of this workshop was to (a) secure the participation and support of different groups and interests, (b) discuss the potential and limitations of MOOCs in education for sustainability, and (c) exchange knowledge and experiences with CA members. The workshop featured a keynote by Prof. Jorge Riechmann (Autonomous University of Madrid), codirector of the Master in Ecological Humanities, Sustainability and Ecosocial Transition. Read more

CA PUBLICATIONS





Goals 2, 3, 4



4 publications

The CA seeks to contribute to the scientific discourse by sharing experiences and knowledge from its network. Following our strategic goals, we publish in selected channels, also involving members as coauthors.



"Creative virtual conferencing and networking to advance higher education for sustainable development"

This article by Anne Zimmermann et al. was submitted to the IRDO Conference 2021. It presents the path taken by the COPERNICUS Alliance and



its partners to design two online conferences. It discusses how future academic conferences may look like. Networks, institutions, and individuals who believe that a decisive move must be made in the direction of sustainable development are increasingly in favor of virtual conferences. They are exploring new formats to ensure that such conferences offer participants the space for creativity, networking, chance meetings, career-oriented self-presentation and coaching, policy-oriented reflection, trust-building, and learning, with a view to shaping higher education for sustainable development in an innovative and convincing way. Read more



"Is striving for excellence in HEIs incompatible with partnership practices? Leadership principles for the Future We Want"

Upon invitation by the Secretary General of the International Association of Universities, Hilligje van't Land, the CA Leadership Team submitted this contribution to the IAU Horizons Magazine vol. 26.2. The short article emphasizes the importance of partnerships in higher education to strive for transformative learning and achieve sustainable development. Read more



"Integrating sustainability education in European universities: lessons learned"

The aim of this chapter is to share sustainability mainstreaming stories of five CA members: University of Basque Country, Daugavpils University, Hasselt University, Kaunas University of Technology, and Vienna University of Economics and Business. The focus lies on the one hand on the organizational learning process, and on the other hand on the individual learning process of sustainability champions in these institutions. As sustainability curricula implementation processes are highly complex, the chapter provides an overview of different drivers and obstacles of such processes. It also delineates the role of networks and leadership in supporting the embedding of sustainability in higher education. This chapter will be published in a Taylor and Francis handbook entitled "Sustainability education in the 21st Century" edited by Prof. Jordi Segalàs and Dr. Michele John and available in mid-2022.



"Do European quality assurance frameworks support integration of transformative learning for sustainable development in higher education?"

This paper investigates to what extent quality assurance frameworks currently encourage the integration of sustainability in higher education, aiming to support collaboration between these two sectors. It is the result of a 1-year research by a group of scholars consisting of Lise Janssens (Hasselt University), Tom Kuppens (Hasselt University), Ingrid Mulà (University of Girona), Eglė Staniškienė (Kaunas University of Technology), and Anne Zimmermann (University of Bern). Read more



CA CONVERSATIONS



And during the preparation stage, we were also able to benefit from consultations with both academics (including the ESD to benefit from consultations with both academics (including the ESD to thiswesty of Bern, thanks to our connection through the COPERIOUS Allance) and experts practical experience of the academic world. Networking to the superior to the superior





Goals 1, 3, 5



2 interviews

In our series "A conversation with..." we put CA members and their activities in the spotlight. In 2021, we published two interviews. They were distributed through the CA newsletter and the CA website.



Paquita Perez Salgado (Open University of the Netherlands, The Netherlands), a passionate scientist and teacher dedicated to ensuring that ICT serves sustainable development:

"Competences for stakeholder engagement, teamwork, strategic action, political action, implementation, communication, and adopting ethical practices are important to be able to translate stakeholder diversity into effective interventions towards sustainability."

Read more



Lisa Bohunovsky (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna, Austria), Strategic ESD specialist:

"All BOKU students should deal intensively with sustainability at least once during their studies." $\,$

Read more

CA WEBSITE AND NEWSLETTER





Goal 5



31 website news entries



5 newsletters



351 newsletter recipients (+19)

Through the CA website and the CA newsletter we provide and distribute general information about the network and its activities and promote members' activities. The CA newsletter informs over 350 subscribers about CA initiatives, members' activities, as well as ongoing developments in the field of HESD.

Recently we introduced a new section on the CA website entitled <u>"Resources"</u>. On this subpage we provide **open access** to materials from past conferences, webinars, as well as a selection of publications.



BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS





Goals 2, 5



2 projects



2 proposals accepted

The CA has developed a profile that has made our non-profit network an attractive partner for

European projects: This year, the CA was actively involved in a successful Erasmus+ project and it was a Network Partner for an Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance project. In 2022, the CA will be part of two new Erasmus+ projects (see below). The idea is to generate funding and other opportunities thanks to which CA members can engage in tangible projects that help to advance the CA goals.



OnTL – Pushing the boundaries of online transformative learning

EU Erasmus+ project, 09/2020-12/2021, 4 partners from 3 countries

The CA was one of four partners in the Erasmus+ project *OnTL* focusing on exploring the possibilities and limitations of transformative and online learning. One of the key roles of the CA in the project was to convene a group of experimenters within higher education to try out and reflect on approaches and methods of transformative learning in a virtual environment. The CA also contributed to the two outputs. The results are available in the form of two nicely designed publications including a practical guide with tips and tricks on how to boost transformative learning online. Read more



SDGs Labs – Making the SDGs our business

EU Erasmus+ project, 01/2019-12/2021, 8 partners from 4 countries

The CA was invited by one of its members, Vienna University of Economics and Business, to join the *SDGs Labs* project as a network partner. *SDGs Labs* fostered collaboration and knowledge exchange between different stakeholders involved in agribusiness and food production. Businesses, NGOs and start-up incubators jointly developed a free online learning tool: The SDGs Academies helps incubators, start-ups and companies to implement the SDGs into their business practices. Read more



TRACCskills – Transformational, cross-cutting people skills for the SDGs

EU Erasmus+ project, 01/2022-03/2023, 3 partners from 2 countries

TRACCskills is a new Erasmus+ project implemented by Legacy17 (lead), the CA, and Visionautik. For 14 months, participants will work on a practice-oriented draft compendium that will be tested for use in designing and delivering high-quality, future-fit adult education. The intended users of the compendium are adult educators within the formal and non-formal sector who dedicate their work to ESD and the SDGs, and are open to rethinking and renewing their teaching practices. Read more





SDG-iLevel – Leveraging Individual SDG Contributions by University Staff

EU Erasmus+ project, 01/2022-01/2025, 6 partners from 4 countries

SDG-iLevel is a new Erasmus+ project led by the University of Girona. Over the coming three years, it aims to drive innovation and achieve sustainable impact in three topical areas of higher education: (1) sustainable development, (2) digital innovation, and (3) mental well-being of higher education staff. The project will create approaches, methods, and tools aimed at uncovering, harnessing, and strengthening the individual contributions of higher education employees to the SDGs in order to improve their mental well-being, job satisfaction, productivity, and teamwork and to promote further SDG contributions.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES





Goals 4, 5



Participation in 7 national or international events and committees

From 15-25 March 2021 the University of Girona, in collaboration with the Global University Network for

Innovation (GUNi), organized a webinar series entitled <u>"Innovation for SDGs: inspirational tools towards sustainability challenges"</u>. On behalf of the CA, Network Manager Mario Diethart gave a presentation on Education for Sustainable Development illustrated by examples and good practices from the CA network.

The University of Maribor, Slovenia, organized the 16th IRDO International Scientific Conference on "SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CHALLENGES OF 2021: Challenges and Opportunities of Digitization for a Sustainable Future": More than 80 authors from ten countries participated in this online (and partly hybrid) conference, offering almost 40 papers, incl. one by CA President Anne Zimmermann and coauthors, entitled "Creative virtual conferencing and networking to advance higher education for sustainable development" (see sub-chapter "CA Publications").

The CA Leadership Team was involved in the organization of the 2021 International Transdisciplinarity Conference (ITD), hosted by the Transdisciplinarity Lab (TdLab), ETH Zurich in Switzerland, and the Network for Transdisciplinary Research (td-net) of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences. CA President Anne Zimmermann was part of the Strategic Board of the conference; CA Executive Director Ingrid Mulà and Network Manager Mario Diethart joined the Programme Board. The online conference took place online from 13-17 September 2021 and focused on "Creating spaces and cultivating mindsets for learning and experimentation".

From 28-29 October 2021, the Rede Campus Sustentável in Portugal celebrated its annual <u>Sustainable</u> <u>Campus Conference (CCS2021)</u> and invited CA Executive Director, Ingrid Mulà, to discuss the need for



collaboration among higher education institutions to advance progress of transformative learning for sustainable development. The Conference was attended by over one hundred participants and important relationships with this Portuguese network were established.



CA President Anne Zimmermann was invited by the **HEP Vaud** (pedagogical and teacher training university in Lausanne) and the **Foundation éducation21** to speak to an audience of researchers and future teachers on 17 November 2021. Relying on experiences and learnings garnered during the *OnTL* project, she introduced the audience to the topic of transformative learning in the context of a meeting on "ESD and schools: creative forces leading to change for a resolutely optimistic future". She explained how transformative learning can contribute in a creative way to sustainable development and what didactic practices can foster it. An additional invited guest was Pécub, a well-known Swiss cartoonist who calls himself a Business Philosopher. His provocative illustrated comments on what he heard were a great way of triggering a productive discussion.

The CA continues to be represented in the **Ubuntu Committee of Peers** for the <u>Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs)</u> by Jana Dlouhá, CA Advisory Board member. The global network of RCEs is coordinated by the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS Tokyo). UNU-IAS has contributed to the effective implementation of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development by mobilizing actors, experiences, and expertise worldwide. Now the over 170 RCEs in the global network contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Through Anne Zimmermann, the CA continues to be represented on the **Advisory Board** of Legacy17, a growing international cooperative of leading-edge practitioners of the 'people skills' needed to work effectively with transformative, regenerative processes in education, leadership, and community development, in the spirit of the SDGs. This collaboration between partners in higher education and adult education has been very fruitful and will continue.



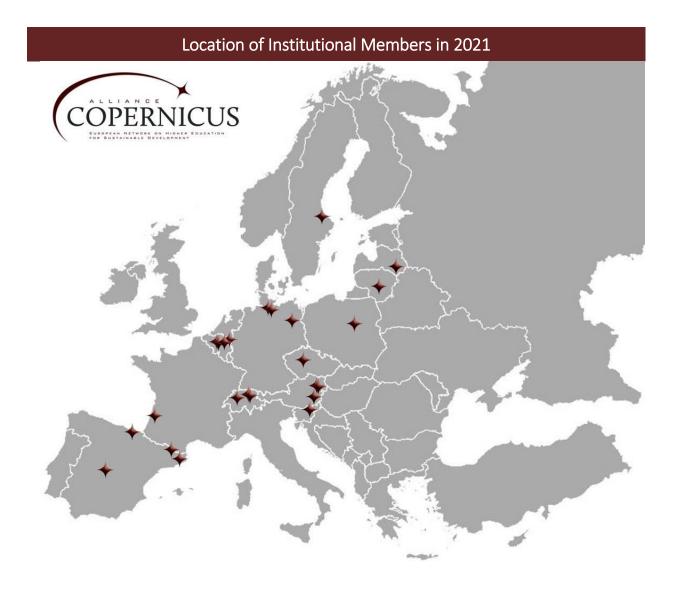
4. MEMBERSHIP

Members in 2021 according to membership type and change to 2020							
Institutional Members		Trial Members		HE NGOs, Associations & Agencies		Observers & Individual Members	
222	<u>~~</u>	***	مسر	***	<u>~~</u>	222	مسر
19	±0	2	+2	3	±0	2	-1

Members in 2021						
^	9	Ö	(1)			
Vienna University of Economics and Business	Austria	Institutional Member	2010			
University of Graz	Austria	Institutional Member	2010			
Leuphana University of Lüneburg	Germany	Institutional Member	2010			
Open University in the Netherlands	Netherlands	Institutional Member	2010			
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna	Austria	Institutional Member	2012			
Charles University Environment Centre	Czech Republic	Institutional Member	2012			
CRUE (Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities)	Spain	NGO	2012			
University of Basque Country	Spain	Institutional Member	2013			
The University of Warsaw	Poland	Institutional Member	2014			
Flemish Ministry of Environment, Nature and Energy	Belgium	Governmental Agency	2014			
University of Zurich	Switzerland	Institutional Member	2015			
University of Maribor	Slovenia	Institutional Member	2016			
University of Bern	Switzerland	Institutional Member	2016			
University of Girona	Spain	Institutional Member	2017			
University of Gävle	Sweden	Institutional Member	2017			



Autonomous University of Madrid	Spain	Institutional Member	2019
KU Leuven	Belgium	Institutional Member	2019
Kaunas University of Technology	Lithuania	Institutional Member	2019
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education of Andorra (AQUA)	Andorra	Governmental Agency	2019
Daugavpils University	Latvia	Institutional Member	2020
Hasselt University	Belgium	Institutional Member	2020
PH Zurich (Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich)	Switzerland	Institutional Trial Member	2021
Université Bordeaux Montaigne	France	Institutional Trial Member	2021
Hochschule für nachhaltige Entwicklung Eberswalde	Germany	Institutional Member	2021
Individual Researchers	1 Belgium 1 Ireland	Individual Members	





5. FINANCES

The CA is officially acknowledged as an NGO under German law. 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 Organization serving society with a research and science purpose.

Income

The figure below provides an overview of the CA's finances. The CA's income consists exclusively of membership fees. In 2021, the membership fees contributed € 21,200.00 (from 26 member institutions/members) to the annual budget.

Expenditures

Expenditures relate to staff (Network Manager), events, Micro Funds, communications, profile and representation (includes memberships, travel, subsistence and fees to participate in important events where the CA profiles its work and activities).

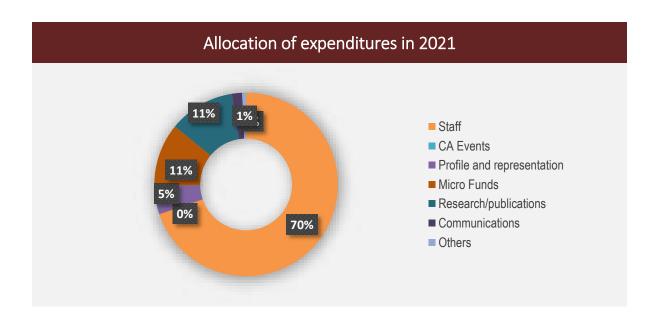
As in 2020, expenditures for travels were reduced to zero due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Higher Education Summit 2021 Online Teaser was co-organized by the CA and Hasselt University. Hasselt University, as the hosting institution, covered the main part of the expenditures including extensive inkind contributions by staff members. Costs for this event are not included in the 2021 budget, since the final calculation will be made after the Higher Education Summit 2022 Physical Conference as a combined budget for the two events. Two Micro Funds were granted to foster collaboration between members. As another outreach and research activity, the CA Leadership Team wrote a book chapter for a Taylor and Francis publication upon invitation by the editors (see sub-chapter "CA Publications"). For the underlying research and the main authorship a researcher was contracted for € 2,000.

In addition to the described expenditures an important part of the CA workload is covered by in-kind contributions of the whole CA Leadership Team.

The year 2021 closed with a positive balance of € 3,992.42, resulting in a total account balance of € 24,252.46 at the end of 2021.



Finances in 2021 (in €)					
L					
Membership fees 19 Institutional Members 2 Institutional Trial Members 3 HE NGOs, Associations & Agencies 2 Individual Members 200.00		12,000.00 0.00 870.00 1,909.47 2,000.00 309.00 119.11	Staff CA Events Higher Education Summit 2021 Profile and representation incl. membership in IAU Micro Funds Research/publications Book chapter Taylor and Francis Communications Others		
	21,200.00	17,207.58			
$ \sqrt{1} $	3,992.42		Balance 2021		
7	20,260.04		Carried forward from 2020		
	24,252.46		TOTAL BALANCE		





COPERNICUS ALLIANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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