

2022



ANNUAL REPORT



CONTENTS

1. OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES	4
2. MANAGEMENT	5
2.1. Leadership Team	5
2.2. Advisory Board	5
3. ACTIVITIES & INITIATIVES	6
3.1. HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT 2022	7
3.2. CA Cooperation Funds	7
3.3. CA Publications	8
3.4. CA Conversations	9
3.5. CA Happy Hour	9
3.6. CA Website and newsletter	10
3.7. Building opportunities for members	10
3.8. Outreach activities	11
4. MEMBERSHIP	13
5. FINANCES	15

FOREWORD

2022 started as a year of hope, a year in which we finally could get rid of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sadly enough, another of the five ‘Ps’ was brutally violated on 24 February, when the unimaginable happened in the east of Europe. This war makes transformative learning for sustainable development more pressing than ever.

But we do not give up hope. Instead it motivates us to keep on going with our vision to help people and institutions in co-creating solutions for the challenges of today and tomorrow, adhering to our values of respect, collaboration and walking the talk. However, more actions are needed, and 2023 will be the year in which we will revise and update the CA Action Plan thereby increasing CA’s engagement for and with its members.

Looking back at 2022 though, the past year made it possible to reconnect face-to-face again during our Higher Education Summit from 6-8 September 2022. With almost 150 participants from 26 countries we discussed, experimented and networked on “Daring to transform learning for a future-proof economy”. Meanwhile, we reformed our Cooperation Funds, including an increase in the potential support per initiative from 1,000 to 2,000 EUR, in order to stimulate members’ initiatives to collaborate in higher education for sustainable development. To discover the possibilities, we encourage you to have a look on section 3.2 and check out the conditions on our website.

In 2022, we also launched the CA Happy Hours. We want to make these monthly informal get-togethers more valuable by changing their format, for instance, inviting members who want to develop a project, or to discuss some interesting readings, or sharing insights from ongoing projects such as *TRACCSkills* and *SDG-iLevel*.

The recent year also marked the advent of a few new members: We warmly welcome the University of West Attica (Greece), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium), University of Padua (Italy), and Ala-Too International University (Kyrgyz Republic) as an Institutional Observer.

We would like to congratulate the former leaders of the CA (Dr. Anne Zimmermann, former President and Dr. Ingrid Mulà, former Executive Director) as newly elected members of our Advisory Board. A very sincere ‘thank you’ for your relentless enthusiasm and commitment to the COPERNICUS Alliance! We would like to close this foreword with one big wish for our members: Have a very inspiring year and keep up the good work as ambassadors of transformative learning in higher education for sustainable development!



Asst. Prof. Elisabeth Hofmann
Co-President

Asst. Prof. Tom Kuppens
Co-President

Prof. Eglė Staniškienė
Co-President

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 “Cooperation 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

The CA has a rotating Secretariat and Leadership Team. Since 1 January 2022, the Leadership Team consists of three elected Co-Presidents: **Asst. Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Hofmann** (Université Bordeaux Montaigne), **Asst. Prof. Dr. Tom Kuppens** (Hasselt University & Vrije Universiteit Brussel), and **Prof. Dr. Eglė Staniškienė** (Kaunas University of Technology). They are complemented by the Network Manager Mario Diethart.



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 Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland
- ✦ **Dr. Estibaliz Saez de Camara Oleaga** Member representative
Director of Sustainability at University of the Basque Country, Spain

As of 1 January 2023:

- ✦ **Asst. Prof. Dr. Ingrid Mulà** Member representative
Assistant Professor at University of Girona, Spain
- ✦ **Dr. Anne Zimmermann** Extended Advisory Board Role
Associate Senior Research Scientist, Centre for Development and Environment, University of Bern, Switzerland

3. ACTIVITIES & INITIATIVES

In the CA Action Plan 2019-2020 five priorities were identified that characterize the CA's unique strengths and important areas of action. These priorities remain valid to this day. 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**, activities and initiatives were organized in relation to the above-mentioned goals throughout the year 2022. We report on them below.

3.1. HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT 2022



-  Goals 1, 2, 3, 5
-  6-8 September 2022
-  Hasselt, Belgium
-  ~150 participants
-  26 countries

After a series of online events in the previous years, in 2022 the COPERNICUS Alliance and Hasselt University organized a physical conference again:

From 6-8 September 2022 Hasselt University opened its doors to the conference highlight of the year: Well over a hundred participants from 26 countries gathered at the **Higher Education Summit 2022** in Hasselt, Belgium. Under the theme **"Daring to transform learning for a future-proof economy"** the summit brought together changemakers in the field of transformative learning for sustainable development within higher education. The program offered plenary sessions, interactive workshops, inspiring talks, onsite excursions, lots of networking opportunities and thought-provoking keynotes by Guia Bianchi, Sam de Muijnck, Vivek Gilani, Liesbeth Huybrechts, Kate Raworth, Gustavo Rodriguez, Olivia Rutazibwa, Stephen Sterling, Lilian Trechsel and Renate Wesselink. Resources including recordings of the keynote debates and photos are available on the conference website. [Read more](https://higher-education-summit.com)

3.2. CA Cooperation Funds



-  Goal 5
-  1 initiative supported
-  3 member institutions involved
-  1,422.22 €

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 2,000 EUR. In 2022, one initiative was supported through CA Cooperation Funds:



Meet-up of Green Offices in Belgium

21-22 October 2022

Participating CA members: Hasselt University, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Duurzaam Educatiepunt, KU Leuven

From 21-22 October 2022, students and staff from Belgian Green Offices (GO) gathered for a meet-up. The two-day meeting served for knowledge exchange and joint workshops with partner organizations. A wide range of workshops took place which were hosted by partners and GOs themselves. One was hosted by Duurzaam Educatiepunt on how to tackle projects with a Whole Institution Approach in mind. Further sessions were dedicated to student-led learning (UGent) and Living Labs (VUB and ULiège). [Read more](#)

3.3. CA Publications



Goals 2, 3, 4



3 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 co-authors.



"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](#)



"Online Transformative Learning: An ongoing enquiry"

Yes, transformative learning works online! That was the main conclusion of the Erasmus+ project [Online Transformative Learning \(OnTL\)](#). Its ambition was to explore the opportunities for and limitations of transformative learning in virtual settings. The findings were summarized in this book. [Read more](#)



"Online Transformative Learning: Online Alchemy - How to boost transformative learning online - A practical guide"

In addition to the publication above, a practical guide with tips and tricks on how to boost transformative learning online was published by the *OnTL* project partners. [Read more](#)

3.4. CA Conversations

...what helped you convince your colleagues at eight different faculties to participate in designing a new Sustainable Development study programme? Do colleagues from the eight faculties also teach in the programme?

AB: We gained experience for the past 30 years by running the interdisciplinary programme in Environmental Protection (MSc), which is based on involvement of seven faculties: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography and Regional Studies, Geology, Economic Sciences, Law and Administration. For Sustainable Development we also invited the faculty of Management to participate. So the cooperation was well established. Still to develop the curriculum, it took us almost two years. Some of the subjects were developed with involvement of these different faculties. And yes, colleagues from all eight faculties teach in our programme. You can imagine what a challenge this implies for managing the programme.

AZ: I find it fascinating to hear that interdisciplinary collaboration existed already 30 years ago at the University of Warsaw! This is remarkable... So it seems that the university's tradition was able to maintain its dedication to interdisciplinarity!

And during the preparation stage, we were also able to benefit from consultations with both academics (including the ESD team of the University of Bonn, thanks to our connection through the COPERNICUS Alliance) and experts who had practical experience of the academic world. Networking has led to another advantage of the programme: an excellent team of lecturers and experts.



Goals 1, 3, 5



1 interview

In our series "A conversation with..." we put CA members and their activities in the spotlight. In 2022, we published one interview.

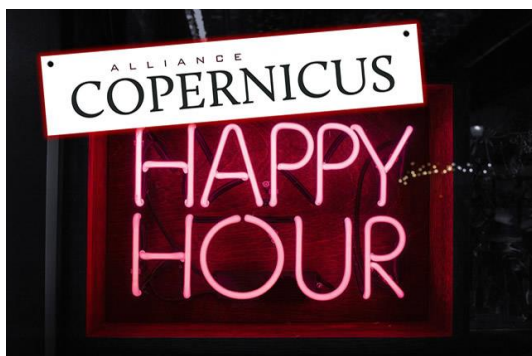


Hasselt University (Belgium), Tom Kuppens (Asst. Prof. Education for Sustainable Development), Bernard Vanheusden (Rector), Griet Verbeeck (Sustainability coordinator):

"To face sustainability challenges, it is crucial for students to develop sustainability competences."

[Read more](#)

3.5. CA Happy Hour



Goal 1, 3, 5

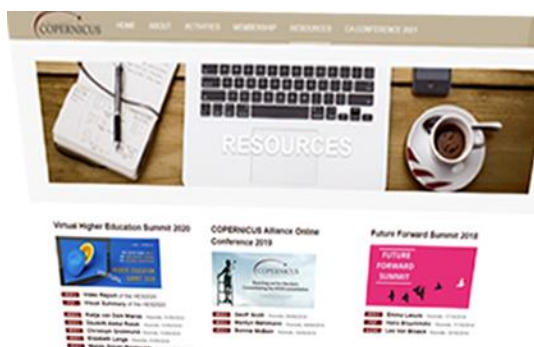


7 sessions

The "Happy Hour" was introduced as a new format to provide an opportunity for exchange and networking. It is a one-hour informal online-get-together once a month with no set agenda. Members can share ideas,

ask questions, receive feedback, find partners for new projects, promote activities, or simply have a chat. Throughout seven Happy Hours in 2022, we experimented with the format to make it attractive for members. For 2023, new ideas will be implemented such as concrete discussion topics, presentations of publications, project updates and more. [Read more](#)

3.6. CA Website and newsletter



Goal 5



22 website news entries



5 newsletters



371 newsletter recipients (+20)

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 370 subscribers about CA initiatives, members' activities, as well as ongoing developments in the field of HESD.

In the ["Resources"](#) section on the CA website we provide **open access** to materials from past conferences, webinars, as well as a selection of publications. In the ["Partners"](#) section we highlight organizations that we collaborate with.

3.7. Building opportunities for members



Goals 2, 5



2 projects

The CA has developed a profile that has made our non-profit network an attractive partner for European projects: In 2022, the CA was actively involved in two Erasmus+ projects. 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's goals.



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

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

TRACCSkills is an Erasmus+ project implemented by Legacy17 (lead), the CA, and Visionautik Akademie. During 14 months, the project partners develop a practice-oriented draft compendium 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. As part of this project, a [pilot course on "Transformative Decision-Making"](#) took place at Leuphana University Lüneburg from 6-8 December 2022 followed by a 6-week online course on "Transformational

People Skills for the SDGs" focusing on basic skills to lead and facilitate transformation processes. [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 an Erasmus+ project led by the University of Girona. During 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 creates 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. Among other results the project will produce an Online Visibility Booster, a Self-Nudging Online Toolkit, and Policy and Implementation Guidelines. [Read more](#)

3.8. Outreach activities



Goals 4, 5



Participation in 7 national or international events and committees

The COPERNICUS Alliance was invited to join a workshop on “**The future of university networks – What is their added value for each member university and for the network?**” at BOKU Vienna. The workshop on 24 May 2022 was organized on the occasion of BOKU’s 150th anniversary which was celebrated with a memorable event entitled ["Featuring Future Conference"](#). Former CA President **Anne Zimmermann** represented the CA at the workshop next to eight other networks. The aim was to analyze benefits of being member in a university network and members’ expectations. The process will continue with follow-up meetings online.

[Advance HE](#) invited the CA to the international module of their **Top Management Programme**, which is a training programme for senior positions in the management of higher education institutions. Advance HE is a member-led, sector-owned charity that works with institutions and higher education across the world (but mainly well established in the UK, Australia and New Zealand) to improve higher education for staff, students and society. On 20 September 2022, CA Co-President **Tom Kuppens** hosted a workshop on “**Daring to transform learning for a future-proof economy**”, in line with this year’s topic of the Higher Education Summit.

On 13 October 2022, the CA participated in the **annual meeting of the France & Benelux chapter of PRME** ([Principles for Responsible Management Education](#)) at the Rotterdam School of Management of Erasmus University. This year’s topic was “Responsible Management Education: How to Drive Positive Change”. PRME is UN’s largest movement to transform management education.









Upon invitation by Prof. Kelum Gamage, Co-Director of the [Centre for Educational Development and Innovation \(CEDI\)](#) at the University of Glasgow, former CA President **Anne Zimmermann** gave a presentation on 31 October 2022 at the Sustainability in Learning and Teaching Seminar held by CEDI. In her contribution **“Embedding Transformative Learning in HEIs and Adapting Quality Assurance”** she spoke about stumbling blocks that prevent rapid adoption of transformative learning in higher education institutions and how these stumbling blocks can be addressed. The seminar series is offered by CEDI in collaboration with the [Advance HE Sustainability in Learning and Teaching](#) network.





On 22 November 2022, the CA was invited to be a stakeholder at the **Future Generations Summit** of the Belgian Foundation for Future Generations. Each year, this foundation issues the HERA (Higher Education & Research Awards) awards for young researchers and students who think and act according to a 360° perspective, i.e. taking a holistic stand towards sustainable development. CA Co-President **Tom Kuppens** took part in a debate on the topic **“How should business schools evolve to leverage societal transformation?”**.

The CA is represented in the **Ubuntu Committee of Peers** for the **Regional Centres of Expertise (RCEs)** by **Jana Dlouhá**, CA Advisory Board member. She participated in the [meeting of the Ubuntu Committee from 14-15 December 2022 in Tokyo](#) (see photo). 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. Over 170 RCEs in the global network contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Through **Anne Zimmermann**, the CA is represented on the **Advisory Board** of [Legacy17](#), an 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.

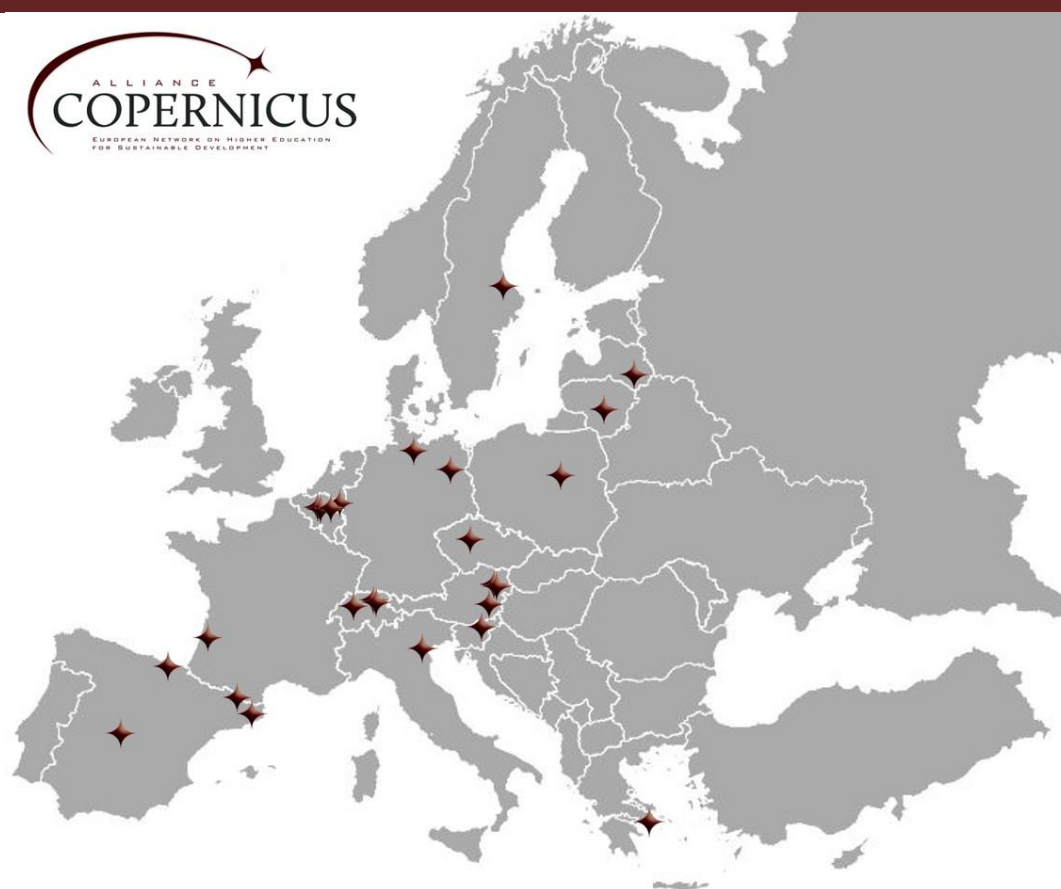
4. MEMBERSHIP

Members in 2022 according to membership type and change to 2021			
Institutional Members	Trial Members	HE NGOs, Associations & Agencies	Observers & Individual Members
 	 	 	 
20 +1	2 ±0	3 ±0	3 +1

Members in 2022			
			
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
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

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 Member	2021
Université Bordeaux Montaigne	France	Institutional Member	2021
Hochschule für nachhaltige Entwicklung Eberswalde	Germany	Institutional Member	2021
University of West Attica	Greece	Institutional Trial Member	2022
Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Belgium	Institutional Trial Member	2022
University of Padua	Italy	Institutional Member	2022
Ala-Too International University	Kyrgyz Republic	Institutional Observer	2022
Individual Researchers	1 Belgium 1 Ireland	Individual Members	

Location of Institutional Members in 2022



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 2022, the membership fees contributed € 23,300.00 (from 28 member institutions/members) to the annual budget. Funding from EU projects is not included in this report.

Expenditures






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

The Higher Education Summit 2021 Online Teaser and the Higher Education Summit 2022 Physical Conference in Hasselt were co-organized by the CA and Hasselt University. Most expenditures related to both events were covered by in-kind contributions from Hasselt University as well as additional financial support from donors. Overall, the CA contributed with € 4,305.46 to the organization of both events. One Cooperation Fund was granted to foster collaboration between members.

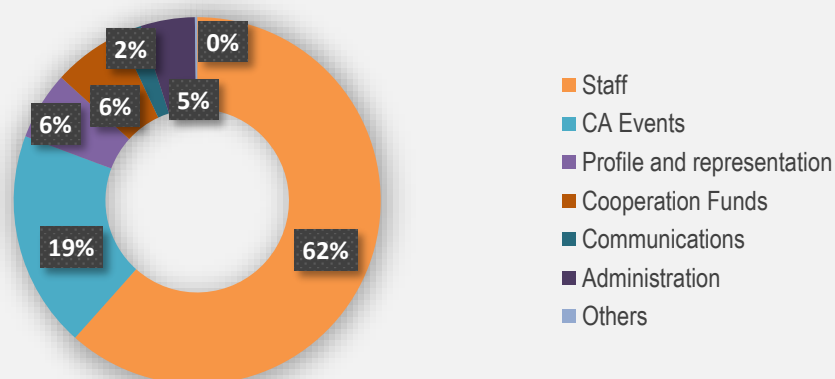
In addition to the described expenditures an important part of the CA workload is covered by in-kind contributions of the whole CA Leadership Team.

The year 2022 closed with a positive balance of € 781.54, resulting in a total account balance of € 25,034.00 at the end of 2022.

Finances in 2022 (in €)

	Membership fees 21 Institutional Members 20,000.00 2 Institutional Trial Members 1,200.00 3 HE NGOs, Associations & Agencies 1,800.00 3 Individual Members and Observers 300.00 23,300.00	
	13,867.75 Staff 4,305.46 CA Events Higher Education Summit 2022 + 2021 1,352.00 Profile and representation incl. membership in IAU 1,422.22 Cooperation Funds 450.27 Communications 1,075.39 Administration 45.37 Others 22,518.46	
	781.54	Balance 2022
	24,252.46	Carried forward from 2021
	25,034.00	TOTAL BALANCE

Allocation of expenditures in 2022



COPERNICUS ALLIANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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