

# D5.10 UNIGreen Diversity, Inclusion and Multiculturalism Charter



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AUI</b>	Agricultural University of Iceland (Iceland)
<b>AUP</b>	Agricultural University - Plovdiv (Bulgaria)
<b>BoD</b>	UNIGreen Board of Directors
<b>DIM</b>	Diversity, Inclusion & Multiculturalism
<b>EACEA</b>	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>JIC</b>	UNIGreen Joint International Centre
<b>JRC</b>	UNIGreen Joint Research Centre
<b>GA</b>	UNIGreen General Assembly
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>HEIs</b>	Higher Education Institutions
<b>HEPL</b>	University-College of the Province of Liège (Belgium)
<b>PUC</b>	Polytechnic University of Coimbra (Portugal)
<b>SupBiotech</b>	SupBiotech Engineering School of Biotechnology (France)
<b>UAL</b>	University of Almería (Spain)
<b>UNIMORE</b>	University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy)
<b>SGGW</b>	Warsaw University of Life Sciences (Poland)
<b>WP</b>	Work Package
<b>WPs</b>	Work Packages
<b>WP5</b>	Work Package 5

## About UNIgreen

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UNIgreen is an Alliance of **eight European Higher Education Institutions** that are committed to promoting excellence in education, research and education in the fields of Sustainable Agriculture, Green Biotechnology, and Environmental and Life Sciences, which are pivotal areas of expertise for achieving a resource-efficient, circular, digitised and climate neutral economy and for boosting the resilience and sustainability of our food system.

The UNIgreen Alliance is working towards becoming **The green European University**: the leading European University in the fields of **Sustainable Agriculture, Green Biotechnology, and Environmental and Life Sciences**, where students and the entire Academic Community develop the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and competences to become **agents for the transition towards a climate-neutral and resource-efficient economy**, supported by an ecosystem that connects education, research, innovation and society to promote sustainable development.

The transnational and interdisciplinary dimension of UNIgreen will open up a wide range of **collaborative opportunities for students, teaching and non-teaching staff, and researchers**, who will study, train, teach, do research and work in any of the Alliance countries, as well as will benefit from new mobility formats, shared services across institutions, and from many initiatives to develop their technical and soft skills and exercise their active citizenship.

The UNIgreen Alliance vision is aligned with, and will offer an answer to, several challenges that strongly impact European Higher Education Institutions, notably:

- Specific challenges linked to the European Education Area, the European Higher Education Area, the Bologna Process and the objective of building resilient and forward-looking education and training systems in the EU.

- Sustainable development challenges that are global by nature but must be tackled at local level, which refer to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals and European Green Deal.
- The need for Higher Education Institutions to be contributors to regional development, and, in that sense, their scope of intervention must support national and regional innovation priorities and strategies.

### UNIGreen Alliance Members



More information:

[unigreen-alliance.eu](https://unigreen-alliance.eu)

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## Executive Summary

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The UNIGreen Diversity, Inclusion and Multiculturalism Charter will describe the principles and rules of conduct on which the Alliance is founded. In that sense, the rules of conduct will determine the basic standards of behaviour for the Alliance and all its members, regardless of position, gender, age, education, degree, among others. Its main objective will be to determine the limits of acceptable behaviour of all Alliance members, at the same time emphasizing the protection of Academic Community members with disabilities, care needs and specific needs, from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or at risk of exclusion.

One of the main principles underpinning this activity is the fact that rights need to be enjoyed in a non-discriminatory manner. As such, in line with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and national laws in force in Alliance countries, all members of the Academic Community will have the right to equal opportunities and treatment, without discrimination based on: gender, nationality, ethnic or national origin, skin colour, disability, religious or philosophical conviction, sexual orientation, age, fortune, marital status, political conviction, union conviction, state of health, physical or genetic characteristics, birth, social origin, or language. The Charter will be interlinked with the Alliance vision, mission and values, focusing on rules and governance. At the same time, it will support and promote an accreditation of Quality Assurance on Higher Education taking into account the concepts of Diversity, Inclusion and Multiculturalism. Consultations will take place within the Alliance.

## 1. Introduction

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### 1.1. Context and Justification

Supported by the European Universities initiative of the Erasmus+ programme, UNIgreen is a thematic Alliance of Higher Education institutions with a specific focus on the topics of Sustainable environmental development. Green Biotechnology and Environmental and Life Sciences, which are pivotal areas of expertise for achieving a resource-efficient, circular, digitised and climate neutral economy by 2050 and for boosting the resilience and sustainability of our food system. Nonetheless, despite its importance, this topic remains underexplored. Hence, the UNIgreen Alliance aims at reverting this fact.

The transnational and interdisciplinary dimension of UNIgreen will open up a wide range of collaborative opportunities for students, teaching and non-teaching staff and researchers, who will study, train, teach, do research and work in any of the Alliance countries, as well as will benefit from new mobility formats, shared services across Universities and many initiatives to develop their technical and soft skills from a lifelong learning perspective and exercise their active citizenship.

UNIgreen intends to provide a European-wide Inter-University Sustainable Campus where students, staff and researchers can move seamlessly to study, train, teach, do research, work, or share services in any of the UNIgreen HEIs.

Excellence in Teaching, Learning, Innovation and Research is pivotal to the professional development of a new generation of citizens working for transition towards a climate-neutral and resource-efficient economy. However, this is not enough: all members of the UNIgreen Academic Community need to develop soft skills and transversal competences to succeed in a world and labour market that continues to change rapidly.

To achieve this vision, UNIgreen has set three main goals:

GOAL 1: To raise awareness and educate the Alliance academic community on the topics of Diversity, Inclusiveness and Multiculturalism;

GOAL 2: To create a welcoming environment for the Alliance academic community;

GOAL 3: To increase the visibility of the integration of groups that are underrepresented or at risk of discrimination and reduce the barriers.

## 1.2. Objectives of the Charter

The UNIgreen Diversity, Inclusion and Multiculturalism Charter will describe the principles and rules of conduct on which the Alliance is founded. In that sense, the rules of conduct will determine the basic standards of behaviour for the Alliance and all its members, regardless of position, gender, age, education, or degree, among others. Its main objective will be to determine the limits of acceptable behaviour of all Alliance members, at the same time emphasising the protection of Academic Community members with disabilities, care needs and specific needs, from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or at risk of exclusion.

One of the main principles underpinning this activity is the fact that rights need to be enjoyed in a non-discriminatory manner. As such, in line with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and national laws in force in Alliance countries, all members of the Academic Community will have the right to equal opportunities and treatment, without discrimination based on: gender, nationality, ethnic or national origin, skin colour, disability, religious or philosophical conviction, sexual orientation, age, fortune, marital status, political conviction, union conviction, state of health, physical or genetic characteristics, birth, social origin, or language. The Charter will be interlinked with the Alliance vision, mission and values, focusing on rules and governance. At the same time, it will support and promote an accreditation of Quality Assurance on Higher Education taking into account the concepts of Diversity, Inclusion and Multiculturalism. Consultations will take place within the Alliance.

## 2. Vision and Commitments

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### 2.1. Institutional Vision for an Inclusive Culture

UNIgreen strives to offer a working environment that is free from prejudices and shaped by acceptance and mutual trust. We are committed to giving all members the same development opportunities, promoting their professional development and enabling them to combine work and private life in a balanced manner. All UNIgreen organs, departments and staff profess diversity and commit to the principle of equal treatment, mutual respect and acceptance.

We strive to improve our working conditions for all employees to give them the flexibility they need to conduct excellent research. At the same time, we will analyse and adjust the working conditions and environment to create or improve conditions for people with disabilities, care needs or specific needs.

We want to attract and retain the best employees and be a leading employer when it comes to diversity, gender equality and inclusion, which should become intrinsic parts of the UNIgreen culture and be implemented at all organisational levels and into all structures. All employees should be able to be represented at all organisational levels, regardless of their sex/gender, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age or physical abilities. This means that some beliefs, attitudes and unconscious biases that undermine or prohibit progress towards equality and equity need to be challenged and dismantled.

### 2.2. Commitment to Dignity, Equality, and Non-Discrimination

UNIgreen mission is to provide an inclusive and blended education environment based on the principles of equality and diversity, free of all types of violence, harmful speech, discrimination and gender, ethnic, age, social, religious and all the discriminatory stereotypes, where members of the Academic Community can thrive as critical-thinking, problem-solving, multicultural, multilingual, entrepreneurial, creative, responsible and socially engaged citizens that share a common European identity and that works towards becoming role models in combatting all these issues.

## 3. Promote an Inclusive Culture

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### 3.1. Valuing Diversity, Inclusion, and Multiculturalism

At UNIgreen, we recognise the diversity, differences and similarities of the people that form the UNIgreen community. We believe that diversity and an appreciative culture are key drivers for creativity, innovation and inventions. Our ability to deliver excellent results depends on and is driven by the anchoring of diversity and inclusion in our actions. This will have a positive impact on us achieving our goals and on our reputation with our partners. We know that having varied perspectives helps generate better ideas to solve the complex problems of a changing and increasingly diverse research environment.

It is, therefore, our duty to ensure that all actions are carried out based on the premise of respect for equal rights for all, without any differentiation or discrimination.

We are also committed to empowering and promoting the social and political inclusion of the entire academic community, ensuring equal opportunities and the progressive elimination of inequalities through the elimination of discriminatory practices.

### 3.2. Integration in Teaching, Learning, and Research

At UNIgreen, we recognise the need to train researchers, students and academic staff on diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism in relation to research activities.

It is important to integrate and promote transformative programs designed to support underrepresented groups in overcoming barriers in their career advancement while ensuring transformative practices towards gender equity and equal opportunities in academia.

It is also our duty to ensure access to quality inclusive education and promote equal teaching, learning and research opportunities for all teachers and students.

The training will be based on the principles of equality and diversity.

## 4. Foster a Respectful Environment

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### 4.1. Promote Mutual Respect and Cordiality

All UNIgreen members profess diversity and commit to the principle of equal treatment, mutual respect and acceptance.

### 4.2. Creating a Good Working and Study Environment

UNIgreen strives to offer a working environment that is free from prejudices and shaped by acceptance and mutual trust. We are committed to giving all employees the same development opportunities, promoting their professional development and enabling them to combine work and private life in a balanced manner.

We are also committed to making an effort to ensure the provision of egalitarian, sustainable and healthy infrastructures that contribute to the humanisation of the academic community and allow social inclusion, reducing inequalities and increasing the sense of community.

## 5. Training and Awareness

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### 5.1. Training on Diversity, Inclusion, and Multiculturalism

All UNIGreen partners are committed to promoting training on Diversity, Inclusion, and Multiculturalism, based on the principles of equality and diversity.

Special training activities will be introduced to enrich and diversify the experience of students and staff who would learn, train, or teach. These activities are characterised by high flexibility and by an innovative integration between virtual and face to face activities.

### 5.2. Raising Awareness on Harassment, Discrimination, and Intimidation

At UNIGreen, we recognise the importance of education against harassment, discrimination and bullying.

The widespread use of digital technologies and social media could contribute to the organisation of seminars, initiatives on specific thematic issues, release of documents/guidelines. They will be communicated and advertised to widen and promote participation.

## 6. Communication and Support

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### 6.1. Fight Against Harassment, Discrimination, and Intimidation

UNIGreen's culture is based on gender equality, equal opportunities and inclusion, which must be implemented at all organisational levels and in all structures of the Alliance. All employees must be able to be represented at all organisational levels, regardless of their gender, culture, sexual orientation, religion, age or physical ability. This means that certain beliefs, attitudes, biases and practices that undermine or prevent, prohibit progress towards equality and justice, such as harassment, discrimination and intimidation, have no place in the Alliance and must be challenged to be removed.

All communication should be based on inclusive and respectful language.

### 6.2. Implementation of Confidential Communication Channels

Each partner should have or create privileged channels where, with a guarantee of anonymity, the victims of harassment, discrimination and intimidation be able to report their abusers and be accompanied and guided during the process.

## 7. Accessibility

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For UNIGreen, inclusion is one of the essential premises. We strive to improve our working conditions for all members to give them the flexibility they need to achieve good results in all areas. The UNIGreen Alliance look to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities, care needs and specific needs.

To achieve this, we must:

- promote the accessibility of the entire campus with gains in functionality, ensuring a better quality of life for all users;
- ensure that all Alliance websites meet the requirements necessary for all citizens to consult them;
- Promote the accessibility of communication and information to the entire community, including citizens with disabilities, care needs and specific needs.
- Try to meet the Alliance's members' needs and give them the tools to complete their objectives successfully.

## 8. Well-being and Support

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### 8.1. Promoting Social, Religious, Spiritual, Mental, and Emotional Well-Being

All members of the alliance should actively contribute to the safety, comfort and tranquillity of their communities.

UNIGreen strives to foster a campus climate that is equitable, inclusive, and welcoming to all members of the UNIGreen community by cultivating an environment that supports and respects individuals of all backgrounds.

Achievement gap plans will be developed and implemented to identify and reduce barriers to student success and well-being.

Access to art, culture, leisure and sport must be guaranteed in order to promote the well-being of all and provide the opportunity for human development of each one, without discrimination.

### 8.2. Providing Support and Opportunities for Underrepresented Students

All UNIGreen partners will offer services especially devoted to students with disabilities, to citizens from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds to people with migrant backgrounds, or to refugees and students fleeing war zones.

For this purpose, student demographic data will be collected, analysed and reported in order to understand the composition of enrolled students, while maintaining the strictest confidentiality of personal information. Students' needs will be explored to best meet their expectations and increase their attendance and success, while ensuring the strictest confidentiality of personal information.

## 9. Social Action Measures

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UNIGreen Alliance cares about the well-being of the underrepresented groups and seeks to implement measures to reach this objective.

UNIGreen aims to design and deliver activities on diversity, inclusion and non-discrimination offered in various forms and draw inspiration, if applicable, from existing programs of the various partners from UNIGreen.

All UNIGreen members must have or create strategies to detect and support underrepresented groups, respecting cultural diversities and with the main goal of their full inclusion in the community.

To help the UNIGreen Alliance put measures in place, the Diversity, Inclusion & Multiculturalism will provide a Multiculturalism Programme Handbook and do, annually, a survey in which all members will be able to tell the amelioration they want to see.

## 10. Human Resources Policies

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UNIGreen should work towards ensuring that selection, recruitment, employment, and retention processes are inclusive, promoting diversity and equality and promoting non-discriminatory performance appraisal processes.

It should also foster opportunities for promotion and career development based on the principles of professional merit, ensuring the use of fair assessment methods.

UNIGreen aims to provide resources to develop and maintain a resource guide to remove barriers and increase satisfaction and retention of staff with disabilities and pay special attention to recruitment processes and regulations in terms of maternity, paternity, parental leave and care duties.

The proposition to strengthen policies for Inclusion, Diversity and Multiculturalism will be gathered in the UNIGreen Gender Equality Plan and the Gender Equality in Leadership and Management Programme Guidelines.

## 11. Dissemination Plan

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One of UNIgreen's higher goals is to embrace growing diversity and therefore stands the Multiculturalism Programme as a testament to the values of inclusivity, tolerance, and mutual respect. The Programme focuses on "promoting the acquisition of skills to successfully communicate, collaborate, engage and work with people from different cultures and cultural backgrounds thanks to an intercultural training available to the entire UNIgreen Academic Community; incoming and outgoing mobility beneficiaries, students, researchers, teaching and non-teaching staff."

The DIM's Plan aims to guide the UNIgreen alliance universities in fostering multiculturalism and embracing the richness of diverse backgrounds of the alliance. The main goal of the Programme is to create an inclusive university where individuals from various cultural, religious, and language backgrounds can gain higher education harmoniously. The Multiculturalism Programme at the European University reflects UNIgreen's dedication to fostering an inclusive academic environment where diversity is celebrated, and students and staff from all backgrounds are treated with respect and equality.

In order to make possible the dissemination of this Plan, all members commit to promoting actions, to promote cross-cultural awareness, strengthen intercommunity bonds, advocate for inclusivity and celebrate cultural diversity, creating cultural mobility opportunities where diverse groups within the European University can exchange academic research, intellectual insights, and perspectives and workshops focusing on multiculturalism and inclusiveness in academic settings.

To promote, implement and give visibility to the Diversity, Inclusion and Multiculturalism Plan, UNIgreen will be promoting it during some of its events, like the UNIgreen Equality Days or the Summer Festival.

## 12. Assessment and Ongoing Commitment

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### 12.1 Evaluation Mechanisms

Each member of UNIGreen is responsible for collecting evidence on the implementation of the DIM's Plan in their university, forwarding these results to WP5, which will make an annual report on the progress of this implementation, noting the difficulties, pointing out the levels of execution and proposing improvements.

### 12.2 Charter Review and Revision

The Charter should be reviewed annually based on the annual reports produced by WP5.

### 12.3 Ongoing Commitment to Multiculturalism, Inclusion, and Diversity

All members of the Alliance must commit to making every effort so that the DIM's Plan can be implemented continuously and in the best possible way, always with the objective that UNIGreen is a Multicultural, Inclusive entity that respects and encourages Diversity.

## Conclusions

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The UNIGreen Diversity, Inclusion and Multiculturalism Charter represents a collective commitment by the Alliance to promote an academic environment where diversity is recognised as a strength and inclusion is actively fostered across all institutional activities. In a rapidly changing global context, higher education institutions have a responsibility not only to provide academic excellence but also to ensure that learning, research and working environments are equitable, respectful and accessible to all members of the academic community.

Through this Charter, UNIGreen reaffirms its dedication to building a community founded on the principles of dignity, equality and non-discrimination. By embedding these values into governance structures, teaching and learning practices, research activities and human resources policies, the Alliance aims to ensure that every individual—regardless of their background, identity or circumstances—can fully participate in and benefit from the opportunities offered within the UNIGreen ecosystem.

The measures outlined in this Charter demonstrate the Alliance's intention to move beyond principles and translate them into concrete actions. Initiatives related to training and awareness, accessible infrastructures, confidential reporting mechanisms, support services and inclusive recruitment processes represent important steps towards removing barriers and promoting equal opportunities. Special attention is given to individuals and groups who may face greater obstacles to participation, including persons with disabilities, individuals from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, migrants, refugees and other underrepresented communities.

At the same time, the Charter recognises that promoting diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism is an ongoing and evolving process. Achieving meaningful change requires continuous reflection, dialogue and cooperation among all members of the UNIGreen Alliance. The evaluation mechanisms and annual reviews described in this document are therefore essential to ensure that progress is monitored, challenges are addressed and new opportunities for improvement are identified.

Ultimately, the success of this Charter depends on the active engagement of the entire UNIGreen community. By working together and embracing diversity in all its forms, UNIGreen seeks to cultivate an academic environment that not only reflects the values of the European Higher Education Area but also contributes to a more inclusive, sustainable and socially responsible society.

Through this shared commitment, the UNIGreen Alliance aspires to become a model of inclusive academic cooperation in Europe, demonstrating that diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism are fundamental drivers of innovation, collaboration and excellence in higher education.