The European University Alliance FORTHEM discusses achieved results and future plans

On June 7-10, the European University Alliance FORTHEM came together in Riga, Latvia, for its final project meeting. Alongside the seven established partner universities, two new members – the University of Agder (Norway) and the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu (Romania) – joined the meeting to discuss the essential points of the first project as well as FORTHEM plans for the future.

FORTHEM Transnational Higher Education Strategy was the main topic of discussions in the meeting of FORTHEM Steering Committee. All members had been asked to reflect on core values, transversal items, communication objectives and other important issues for the finalisation of the Strategy through interactive dialogue. The participants proposed their own suggestions for slogans for the FORTHEM Alliance and for its missions, and later they were asked to choose from the variety of options. Moreover, the participants agreed that the FORTHEM Strategy should be a living document, reflecting the joint objectives of FORTHEM beyond 2026.

In addition, FORTHEM Steering Committee discussed the reports on the missions (Mobility, Labs and Outreach), covering both success stories and achievements as well as problems and challenges.
Furthermore, the FORTHEM Digital Academy has been launched, and its structure, platform and available courses were presented, including seven language courses. A special session, prepared in seven FORTHEM Labs, was dedicated to the courses, and the practical launch of the courses developed by the Labs was discussed during the session Digital Academy Beyond 2022.

Several sessions were dedicated to practical issues, focusing on the final report, operational structure for the next period, and practical issues of FORTHEM mobility beyond 2022. It is highly important to implement the FORTHEM General Secretariat and rotation system of the main FORTHEM governing bodies (Presidency, Steering Committee, and Coordination Commission);

therefore, these topics were thoroughly discussed. The FORTHEM members were informed about recent developments and possible solutions, as well as possible advantages and disadvantages if the Alliance were to become a legal entity. All in all, the face-to-face discussions during the workshops and informal breaks, as well as the exchange of views and experiences has definitely strengthened the ongoing development of FORTHEM.
The University of Latvia welcomes RIGA FORTHEM CAMPUS students

In spring term 2021/2022, the University of Latvia welcomed RIGA FORTHEM CAMPUS students who had taken up studies at our Faculty of Law and Faculty of Business, Management and Economics. In total, 4 students from FORTHEM partner universities in Spain, Italy and France had chosen the University of Latvia as their study destination.

Upon returning to in-person studies and extracurricular activities, the Mobility Division of the Department of Study Service organised an informal excursion around Old Riga on April 26, 2022. It was attended not only by students from FORTHEM partner universities, but also by UL students who had taken the opportunity to participate in short-term mobility at partner universities. During the event, the students shared their impressions of Latvia and the studies at the UL. The fact that all students already knew where the “small” Latvia is located was a pleasant surprise; the first impressions regarding the arrival in Latvia differed, however. A student from France stated that the Latvian weather “did not surprise me, as I myself come from a colder region of France where it rains often.”

For a Spanish student, however, the first months of spring turned out to be quite the challenge, as her living conditions had not involved such cold weather before. She admitted that “when the temperature dropped to -7°C, I started to wonder how one can even survive in such conditions [...] I was surprised that the coldness didn’t stop Latvians from going for long walks.” On the whole, all students have concluded that Latvian mentality is “northern”; in practice, it means that we are somewhat more quiet than other Europeans. All students expressed great satisfaction with the fact that the University of Latvia is gradually returning to in-person studies, praising the work of lecturers and the Mobility Division. The student from Spain noted that she was “[..] greatly surprised to see that lecturers and professors are so forthcoming and dedicate so much time to each individual student”, whereas the student from France stated that she was “pleasantly surprised to get such quick and comprehensive answers from the Coordinators of the Mobility Division. [...] Such communication makes a student’s daily life significantly easier.”
The Model European Union Mainz (MEUM) takes “Experiencing Europe” to another level. During a four-day simulation, participants assume roles of the Ministers of the Council of the European Union (CEU) or of the members of the European Parliament (EP), while two experienced attendees act as European Commissioners.

Mirroring the actual legislative processes, real EU directive are proposed to be discussed and amended. Being one of the oldest EU simulation projects, this 12th edition of MEUM launched its call as a FORTHEM collective short-term mobility and attracted about 50 international students from nine countries who met in Mainz from 22nd to 26th June.

Once again, the student organisation “Bringing Europeans Together Association” (BETA), alongside professor Michèle Knodt from TU Darmstadt and professor Arne Niemann and his team from JGU, were instrumental in coordinating the MEUM 2022.

The legislation proposals chosen for this year's debate covered subjects such as reaching climate neutrality and reforming migration policies. This made for intense and controversial debates.

Arne Niemann stresses the value of the MEUM format: holding sessions and discussing within the model chambers, allows students to become more knowledgeable and gives them a real idea of the demanding process involved in reaching international and intercultural consensus. To balance out the full days of debating, voting, and defending the subsequent amendments, participants relaxed in the evening with social activities like wine tasting and visiting local garden pubs. Thanks to clever timing, participants also had the opportunity to enjoy one of the highlights in the city's events calendar: the “Johannisnacht Mainz”. It's a four-day celebration around St John's Eve with concerts and carnivals dedicated to the city's famous son and JGU namesake Johannes Gutenberg. The participants spent their final evening together at the traditional “European Night", sharing dishes and stories about their home countries.
3rd FORTHEM Campus “Diversity and Migration” – Università degli Studi di Palermo

A first FOTHEM campus on “Foods and fooding” was held in Dijon, France end of 2021, then a second one covering “Resilience, Life Quality and Demographic Change” took place early 2022 in Riga.

Now Professor Annalisa Mangiaracina, at the University of Palermo (UniPa), will be coordinating this third campus on “Diversity and Migration”. It will be held from September 26, 2022 to February 24, 2023. This campus is an innovative form of Erasmus+ mobility for study.

The intensive and interdisciplinary one-semester programme allows students to collect 30 ECTS from 3 modules:

- Disciplinary module, which includes the courses that can be attended by the students;
- Transversal module, which includes activities such as seminars, workshops and labs;
- Open module with activities such as internships, language courses and visits.

FORTHEM Campus UniPa will be held from the 26th of September 2022 to the 24th of February 2023. Further details regarding this opportunity can be found on the FORTHEM Alliance website.

FORTHEM Initiatives: Support for orphanage in Ukraine

European citizens now face daily reminders of this terrible war on Ukraine. Teams at each of the FORTHEM alliance universities have implemented measures to use their institution’s infrastructures to help students and colleagues affected by this conflict.

The FORTHEM partners have reallocated funds to the University of Opole to set up language courses for Ukrainian students. They are also helping the orphanage of Iwano-Frankiwsk located in the west of Ukraine.

All nine FORTHEM universities are collecting monetary donations. Building upon their longstanding partnership, the state of Rhineland-Palatinate will spend this money on goods needed by the Ukrainians, while the Voivodeship of Opole will organise the transportation of these goods to those affected by the war.

Additionally, students from the universities of València, Jyväskylä and Mainz have created a Civic Engagement Project to support this initiative by implementing a donations campaign on GoFundMe and raising awareness on social media.

"Anima azzurra", by Zino Citelli ("Diversity and Migration").
UL Library visited by colleagues from FORTHEM Alliance partners

As part of an Erasmus project, from May 23 to May 27 the Library of the University of Latvia welcomed guests – fellow librarians from FORTHEM Alliance partner universities: University of Valencia, University of Burgundy, University of Jyväskylä, and Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz.

The aim of the visit was to get an in-depth insight into the various work processes and professional achievements of the UL Library – from digitisation capabilities to the modern library environment at the UL Academic Centre.

The visit to the UL Library started out at a historical building in Riga: Kerkovius’s House, home of the Library at Kalpaka Boulevard, where the foreign guests got acquainted with the history, mission and structure of the UL Library; it was followed by a tour of the historical mansion of L.W. Kerkovius and an introduction to the library environment, as well as the exhibition “Ancient Rhetoric”. Our foreign colleagues visited the UL central building at Raiņa Boulevard 19 as well; they went on a tour around the historical building led by a UL Museum guide and discovered fascinating facts about the history of Latvia. After enjoying the Riga panorama from the viewing platform on the roof of the building, our colleagues headed to the Library at Raiņa Boulevard, where they gained an insight into the range of services offered by the UL Library and discussed the future development of academic libraries.

Furthermore, while getting to know the experience of the UL Library in organising training for different groups of readers, foreign colleagues and local experts discussed different models of cooperation between university libraries and the academic staff. Views were also exchanged on the role of the librarian in promoting information literacy among students. The free elective course “Introduction to Information Literacy” offered by the UL Library attracted attention, as such a training format is not implemented at any of the university libraries our guests work for.

In addition, the informational needs of doctoral students and researchers were highlighted in the context of research and publication.

The UL Library is actively working to prepare the collection for the UL House of Letters, currently under construction at the UL Academic Centre. A visit to the Library of Humanities allowed the guests to witness the intense work firsthand; work organisation and how professional issues are dealt with were the topics that interested them the most. The guests explored the exhibition dedicated to the works of writer Zigmunds Skujinš. It was in this branch library where the first UL self-service unit was unveiled. The foreign guests received both a demonstration of the unit, as well as details on its name “Visvaldis” (literally, “the one who rules everything”).
They highly appreciated the idea of naming the unit after a prominent figure from Latvian history, thus both linking the name of the street (Visvalža Street) where the Faculty of Humanities and the Library are located and symbolically highlighting the crucial role of library technologies in library service advancement.

During the visit, the guests attended the Collection Usage and Development Department of the UL Library, where they learned about the development and creation of traditional and electronic collections, as well as their preservation for future generations. Colleagues showed considerable interest in the organisation of the information resource acquisition process at the University. A major focus of the exchange of experience was the subscription process for electronic resources and electronic resource accessibility issues. Guests were shown the technical processes of digitisation in action, as well as one of its final results: digital collections and virtual exhibitions; in addition, they gained an insight into the Collection of Rare Books and Manuscripts. They also had the opportunity to see some of the most fascinating items of the collection: its oldest book, the oldest publications in Latvian, magnificently designed original deed of gift of a manor, unique original engravings published by Institut d’Égypte (founded by Napoleon) and other materials. Colleagues also got an insight into the extensive book collection.

The active week was concluded with a visit to the UL Academic Centre, where the guests had an opportunity to discover both the state-of-the-art study and research environment in Latvia, as well as the UL Library experience in providing 24/7 library services at the two newest branch libraries located at the House of Nature and the House of Science. The benefits of a student-centred library were discussed; in addition, professional challenges of working in an open library model were highlighted as well. Sharing experiences and improving knowledge is essential for modern library professionals.

The meeting served as a platform for the exchange of ideas, which provided inspiration for further work. While sharing our experience of working in university libraries, we learned that university libraries are able to change with the times and even stay ahead of the curve. And one of the key conclusions is this – we have things to show off and to be proud of!
At the end of May, I had the opportunity to take part in the first FORTHEM week for university library staff, the “FORTHEM Staff Week for Librarians” held in Riga on 23-27 May 2022, by the University of Latvia. The week turned out to be the best for a long time. Even so, that I started to think whether JYU could arrange the next similar FORTHEM Library Week?

FORTHEM = plenty of opportunities
When I left for the trip, I knew very little of the FORTHEM alliance. However, already during the trip I became more familiar with the issue and noticed that there has been a lot of joint activity between JYU and other FORTHEM universities already, partly in my own unit, and even in my own team. As the situation in other universities seemed to be the same, ie only little was known about FORTHEM co-operation or the FORTHEM contacts already established by our own organizations, the first common idea of development came immediately. In other words we thought, that individual visits are not enough for real networking, but FORTHEM co-operation must also take place within one’s own university, between different departments - whenever the subject to be promoted is interdisciplinary - and especially within one’s own unit.

And take care of it ourselves as well. That is to ensure that subsequent participants are aware of their unit’s previous FORTHEM cooperation. Who has previously established FORTHEM contacts, what issues promoted, and whom met.

Only in this way real networks can be created and we are able to ensure that the message conveyed is mutual, supportive and integrated so that next participants can build wider content and networks on top of the connections already established.

From history to the Soviet era and to a modern library
The actual program for the week was extensive. Our hostesses in Riga, as they said, had really waited for us and it indeed was easy to believe. Such a great hospitality! There were several presenters, but everywhere we felt welcome – which is an important feeling for visitors.

We received an extensive overview of the University of Latvia’s diverse library services and visited various library units and to the magnificent National Library of Latvia. We heard about the Latvian OpenAIRE co-operation as well as the co-Baltic citizen science project. A discussion arose in each unit about the respective services, differences, and similarities at each university.

Small group, big advantage
There were only four of us in the group: one from Finland, one from France, one from Germany, one from Spain. The small group was a great thing. We got to know each other right away, we always sat at the same lunch table and worked as a group the
whole week. The conversation was easy and there was a lot of it. Which is one of FORTHEM’s strengths, I believe. In other words, FORTHEM, thanks to its moderate size, offers the opportunity for genuine networking, getting to know each other, not just a casual meeting or visits by individuals.

Some themes and observations
It was enlightening to understand, that the situation of universities is very different in different countries. And the reasons for that are diverse (structure, history, funding, hierarchical levels, a different way of gathering research data, technical infrastructure, etc.) In order to achieve real cooperation and results, it would be important to understand what is the situation in each university, which are the target groups that needs to be reached and what are those problems that needs to be solved.

Otherwise, the message will either drown or no context for it will be found. There were also concerns whether students will return to the library at all after COVID-19 restrictions.
I tried to ease others, that according to the JYU’s experiences there is no need to worry - students will come back.
Also concerns about the future of the libraries existed. Which theme, the new role and new duties of libraries, likewise would be a theme in which JYU could have something to give to other FORTHEM partners.
All in all, the week was great and spoke on many levels: historically, socially (the current world situation could not be unaffected), culturally and, best of all, was very rewarding especially for the work-related issues.
I therefore encourage anyone interested in FORTHEM co-operation to join in.
FORTHEM Mosaic at University of Burgundy

On Thursday, April 14 and Friday, April 15, the University of Burgundy hosted two online sessions for the second FORTHEM Mosaic event. The goal of this event is to promote international interaction between students, researchers, academic and administrative staff from the nine Alliance partner universities. This time, the participants had the opportunity to get to know the University of Burgundy, explore the region of Burgundy, its capital city Dijon, and its culinary traditions, learn a bit of French and discover the great mobility opportunities within the FORTHEM Alliance.

On both days, the sessions began with short videos about Burgundy and Dijon; on Thursday, Pierre Ferrey, a teacher of French for foreigners, gave the participants a crash course in French, provided tips on the pronunciation of a number of words and sentences, as well as presented an overview of the francophone countries in the world. Afterwards, Daria Plantak, an International Office representative, introduced the University of Burgundy, provided all the necessary information for students coming over to study for a semester or a shorter time period, and also challenged participants’ stereotypes about the French culture.

On Friday, professor Frédéric Debeaufort gave a lecture about the different regional culinary specialities: Cassis liquor, anise of Flavigny, Epoisses cheese and, of course, Dijon mustard!

Both sessions ended with a quiz designed especially for the event. The questions were quite challenging, as even some Burgundy natives or long-time residents had difficulties to answer them. Congratulations again to all the participants!

Staff visits at University of Burgundy

In early May 2022, the International Office of the uB had the chance to host two colleagues from the University of Sibiu (Romania), our new partner. Delia Stefanel, Head of the Mobility Division, and Georgiana Ungureanu, now working for FORTHEM, participated in meetings and working sessions, visited the Campus, made use of our services and enjoyed the art de vivre of Burgundy.

We hope to welcome them and other colleagues who wish to visit us again soon!
International staff training “Boost Up Your Competences+” at the University of Latvia

From May 9 to May 13 (2022), the Mobility Division of the Department of Study Service of the University of Latvia organised already the second international training for administrative and academic staff from various universities in different countries; the participants included colleagues from FORTHEM Alliance partner universities. In total, 10 participants from the University of Burgundy (France), University of Jyväskylä (Finland), Metropolitan University of Tirana (Albania), “Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati (Romania), Polytechnic University of Madrid (Spain) and Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal University (Turkey) had confirmed their participation.

The training programme was based on examples of good practice in the academic world, including current themes in staff competence development. The participants had an opportunity to participate in lectures and seminars on team building (prof. I Reinholde), stress management (Dr. A. Kertudo), conflict and time management (D. Silina), various personality aspects (A. Zaksa) and development of intercultural communication competences (G. Lo Bello). In addition, Marta Vilkauša, international coordinator at the UL DSS Mobility Division, presented the results of the FESC (Framework for Erasmus+ Staff Competencies) project during the training; University of Latvia was one of the project partners. As the participants noted, “[the event] provided a perfect balance between theoretical and practical classes. The chosen lecturers were very inspiring.” The statements are also reinforced by lecturers’ performance assessment: the participants gave most lectures and seminars the highest possible grade. All participants were very pleased about the organisation of the event and the planning of lectures. The participants noted that “everything about the organisation [of the event] met the highest possible standards.” One of the participants stated that it was their “first work-related business trip. An event like this is a strong start.” In addition to lectures and seminars, the participants were offered supplementary activities, such as getting to know the history of the UL central building and visiting the historic student solitary confinement cell, exploring the UL Academic Centre, as well as going on a guided tour around the most beautiful Old Riga sightseeing spots and enjoying Jūrmala. Despite the overall rather chilly spring, the weather turned out to be lovely during the participants’ stay, and some of them were even brave enough to dip their toes in the sea.
Short term mobility programme “Communication across cultures in the digital age” at the UL

From May 30 to June 3 (2022), the Mobility Division of the Department of Study Service of the University of Latvia organised the first short term mobility programme for FORTHEM Alliance partner university students. The participants of the short term mobility programme comprised of 25 students from the University of Burgundy (France), University of Jyväskylä (Finland), Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (Germany), University of Opole (Poland), University of Valencia (Spain) and University of Palermo (Italy).

The FORTHEM short term mobility programme was designed with the aim of improving the students’ knowledge of communication theories and their practical skills in intercultural communication. The students were offered lectures and practical classes on effective political communication (lecturer S. Struberga), on theoretical aspects of intercultural communication (associate professor I. Ijabs), on effective team communication (professor Reinholde/lecturer M. Stučka), on intercultural communication skills (lecturer G. Lo Bello), on the cognitive perspective in intercultural communication (professor J. Šķilters), and on (in)effective intercultural communication (lecturer L. Ločmele).

In addition to the lectures and seminars, the students went on a study visit to LATO (Latvian Transatlantic Organisation) and the Faculty of Social Sciences of the UL; moreover, a representative of the National Youth Council of Latvia visited the students as well – all part of the short term mobility programme. Professors and lecturers involved in the short term mobility programme had only high praise for the students. Lecturer Sigita Struberga noted that “these students are excellent: they have questions even after the lectures and they wish to participate in discussions; being able to work with students like that brings great satisfaction to the lecturers.” The group of students that participated in the short term mobility programme was very friendly and engaged. When not attending lectures, the students visited several museums (including the Latvian War Museum), went on an excursion in Jūrmala and took a walk around the streets of Old Riga. All in all, this short term mobility programme was like a breath of fresh air for the FORTHEM partner university students after the COVID-19 period, with life finally returning to the University along with face-to-face studies.
UniPa FORTHEM Summer School 2021-2022: a positive balance

The four FORTHEM summer school organised by professors and students’ associations of the University of Palermo have just ended, and the balance of this experience is more than positive.

The summer schools were: “Workshop: Palermo, a city of stratification of culture and dialogue”, organised by SEARCH association and proff. Margagliotta, Corrao and De Marco; “Sustainable Agrofood Production”, led by prof. Inglese’s team; “Migrants’ Rights in European Space”, hosted by prof. Todaro and his team and the last, which has recently concluded, “Practices of language mediation”, coordinated by proff. Rizzo and Rudvin.

95 students from all the partner universities took part in the four collective short-term mobilities, which were related to topics such as the intercultural dialogue, the importance of the correct nutrition, the protection of migrants and the language mediation.

The feedback received from students confirms that they are satisfied from their FORTHEM mobility experience, that allows them to deepen their knowledge of a certain study field and to discover Palermo’s beauty.
Online courses between University of Opole and University of Latvia

In April this year, two free-of-charge exchange courses started within the FORTHEM Alliance at the University of Latvia (UL) in cooperation with the University of Opole (UO).

One of FORTHEM’s objectives is to create the Digital Academy, a common platform that could be linked with the existing e-study environments of the universities and which would offer various courses in English at all study levels and disciplines across all universities. Exchange courses are a highly important step in fulfilling the objectives of the FORTHEM Alliance; the course exchange between the UL and the UO is among the first significant steps in this process.

The interest in applying for the courses among the UL students was overwhelming: the maximum number of applications was reached on the very first day, meaning that unfortunately it was impossible to accept everyone interested. Due to the strong interest in the courses, the UO created two groups, increasing the number of students, a similar activity is planned for the next year.

The study course “Mindfulness and Creative Performance”, offered by the UO, is going to be delivered via remote learning and in English; the first UL group of students started it on April 6. The course offers students an opportunity to become acquainted with new trends in personal development, practise mindfulness, and further develop their creativity. The students will explore sensory perception, develop creative thinking through reflection and self-actualisation, learn various techniques and forms, multi-medial presentations, synchronous and asynchronous tasks, mindfulness and creative thinking.

Dr. Małgorzata Adams-Tukiendorf, professor at the University of Opole, delivers the course to the UL students; she has highlighted the UL students’ good knowledge of English, communicativeness, openness and interest in taking the course. The students of the UO, on the other hand, already started the course “Innovative Pedagogy for Addressing Diversity”, offered by the Adult Pedagogical Education Centre of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art, on April 1. The objective of the course is to further improve the participants’ knowledge and skills in applying innovative solutions in pedagogical work with various learners, and the course covers innovation theories, as well as understanding of diversity and innovative pedagogy. The students will have an opportunity to create or implement a pedagogical diversity solution (a new method, tool, task etc.) of their choice by applying the knowledge and skills acquired during the course.

Dr. Ieva Margeviča-Grīnberga, associate professor at the UL, delivers the course to the students of the University of Opole. The students’ impressions about the first lectures are positive; during the first class, students actively participated in a discussion on modern challenges concerning education and the need to look for innovative solutions in terms of diversity. Upon reflecting on what they have gained from the first class, the students highlighted their delight in having a chance to look at many current issues from various perspectives that are new to them.

Upon successful completion of the course students of both universities shall be awarded a certificate worth 3 ECTS (2 credit points).

After successful piloting of both courses, the FORTHEM Alliance plans to expand the offering of study courses by involving an increasing number of Alliance partner universities.
FIT FORTHEM News

Upcoming: mid-term FIT FORTHEM project meeting and conference in Opole.

During the FIT FORTHEM conference at the University of Opole on June 28-30 (2022), the FIT FORTHEM team is going to wrap up the work done in the first half of the project's duration (months 1-18) and summarise the main achievements of its work packages. Each partner university is going to present what was planned and what has been done in the area it coordinates, as well as share some of the transformational organisational practices and innovations that FIT FORTHEM has fostered.

The actions undertaken in FIT FORTHEM include: enhancing staff members’ professionalism and intercultural sensitivity (WP2, coordinated by JGU), overview of the collected good practices and the analysis that informs the development of joint research and innovation agenda (WP3, UVEG), the progress in collecting data about each university’s resources and creating an entry point for sharing them (WP4, UNIPA), the recommendations from matchmaking workshops and developments in co-creation projects funded by FIT FORTHEM (WP5, JYU), the set-up and objectives of the Joint Research Services and Policy Office that will assist in research integration and liaising with policy-makers (WP6, uB), and the current and future publicity actions and dissemination strategies (WP7, UO and all partners). Participation from Brussels officials invited to the conference – project officer Rinske van den Berg, and policy officer Stijn Delaure – is planned.

Meanwhile, the FIT FORTHEM External Advisory Board will be asked to give their opinions and recommendations; as its members represent various non-academic fields, they can provide insights as to how the post-pandemic economic, social and political settings have evolved and what implications these changes may have for the academia. The participants of the conference are going to evaluate progress, share success stories and discuss the challenges confronted so far in more detail. Special sessions are going to be devoted to open science and co-creation, human capital and research resources, and ways of making cultural heritage accessible. Professor Stefan Müller-Stach, project coordinator and JGU’s Vice President for Research, will be presiding over the meeting of FIT FORTHEM General Assembly, where important decisions will be taken on how FIT FORTHEM is going to continue to support the Alliance with regard to its research and innovation dimensions. On behalf of the local organiser, professor Jacek Lipok, UO’s Vice Rector for Research, will present an overview of the plans for the future Research, Innovation and Transfer Mission of the FORTHEM Alliance. In the next few days, the rectors and top decision-makers from each university will have a chance to discuss how the partner universities have been integrating into FORTHEM, thus making it a true alliance, and which aspects should be prioritised in the future.

Considering the milestones of both FIT FORTHEM and FORTHEM this summer, the conference is going to map alignments and synergies with FORTHEM of the future. The new partners of the FORTHEM Alliance – University of Agder and Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu – will be given opportunity to make their priorities and future contributions known during the sessions.

The conference will conclude with a session on how FORTHEM can actively support Ukrainian scholars.

The intense work programme is going to be supplemented with a social activity programme that includes optional tours of Opole Old Town centre, regional historical attractions in Kamień Śląski and opportunities to enjoy the regional cuisine.

Author: Katarzyna Molek-Kozakowska
FORTHEM partner universities

Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz), Germany

University of Burgundy (Université de Bourgogne), France

University of Jyväskylä (Jyväskylän yliopisto), Finland

University of Opole (Uniwersytet Opolski), Poland

University of Palermo (Università degli Studi di Palermo), Italy

University of Lavia (Latvijas Universitāte), Latvia

University of Valencia (Universitat de Valencia), Spain

University of Agder (Universitetet i Agder), Norway

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu (Universitatea „Lucian Blaga” din Sibiu), Romania