

Title: Europa Junior Challenge

Topic: Smart and Sustainable Regions

Author/s: PATACAS Cristina; NUNES Nuno; PINTO Sandra; (all from Polytechnic Institute of Setubal)

In today's world, we, as a society, face unprecedented challenges, such as aging, environment degradation, pressure over food security and health systems, scarcity of raw materials and others. We, as a society, look for innovative solutions that need to be balanced between economy and environment with a social view. And we, as a society, need to empower young people, to act as game changers, as soon as possible.

1. Idea conceptualization

For young people all over the world, the concern with sustainability has assumed a great relevance in our days. We propose to encourage younger generations, inside their schools, guided by teachers and mentors, to think about their regions, in a long-term vision, and address adaptable solutions that can be capable of responding clearly to global challenges, using technology as a mean to innovation. In a contest format and following EntreComp structure (Reference Framework for Entrepreneurship Competence), the project aims to contribute to promoting their entrepreneurial spirit, through three interrelated and interconnected areas of competence: ideas and opportunities; resources; and action, stimulating their creativity and preparing them for future careers and global challenges.

2. Participants and stakeholders

University as a knowledge pivot; secondary schools as a living element of teachers and young students; regional organizations such as municipalities, companies, associations, business incubators, as challenge integrators and solutions experiment.

3. Activities to be developed

Europa Junior Challenge adopts the format of a business idea competition for students in secondary schools from the E³UDRES² countries, organized by the corresponding higher education institution. The focus of the competition is to inspire innovation, creativity and to generate new ideas that add value and accelerate the economic and social development of the regions that take part in E³UDRES². The competition can be divided in five main stages:

1st Stage - Each regional Junior Challenge starts with the regional call to action, consisting of driving attention to the competition and incite teams from all secondary schools, to register in the regional entering stage. **2nd Stage** - Each local organizer develops a series of entrepreneurship workshops in each participating secondary schools, providing the young students with concepts, basic knowledge of entrepreneurship and the tools needed to ideate, create and accelerate their idea, develop a simple business model and to successfully pitch their ideas before a crowd of potential investors (elevator pitch). **3rd Stage** - Each local Junior Challenge ends in a Regional Awards Ceremony to find the best regional idea, where all participating teams can present their ideas, before a jury. **4th Stage** - The best regional teams compete to find the best European idea, in a major European event, that takes place over 3 intense days of immersion in entrepreneurship, innovation, creativity and multiculturalism. This great European final is carried out alternately in each of the organizing countries (rotating host format). **5th stage** - In each region, the challenge integrators and solutions experiment, assign resources so that the best ideas are put in place and get validation.