Activity 9.1, O1: Dissemination plan

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Abstract

The Dissemination plan for the ECIU University is created at the first year and serves as a working document that is updated and aligned with the various project milestones. Dissemination part in the central ECIU level is a tool for aligning various dissemination and communication activities across partner institutions, meaning at the institutional level and different ECIU University work packages.

The Dissemination plan consists of key target audiences, dissemination goals, main activities, channels and timeline. The plan is updated continuously and renewed annually, depending on the results and feedback of the previous year and the work package planning for the year. The ECIU level and institutional activities are monitored every 2 quarters by the ECIU and institutional reports that are based on the dissemination plan.

Symbols, abbreviations and acronyms

AAU   Aalborg University, Denmark
DCU   Dublin City University, Ireland
EC   European Commission
ECIU   European Consortium of Innovative Universities
KTU   Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania
LiU   Linköping University, Sweden
TAU   Tampereen Korkeakoulusäätiö sr, Finland
TUHH   Hamburg University of Technology, Germany
UA   Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal
UAB   Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
UiS   University of Stavanger, Norway
UNITN   Università degli Studi di Trento, Italy
UT   University of Twente, Netherlands

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1. Communication and dissemination strategy

1.1. General communication goals and themes

Communication and dissemination activities focus on the general goals and target audiences that were described in the Erasmus+ proposal, as well as the structure of communication that was outlined in the strategy and planning of the first project years.

Communication activities, when relevant, also are aligned with the ECIU University Vision 2030 document, as values and key elements of ECIU University are outlined there.

The ECIU University communication and dissemination activities also follow these principles:

- **Targeted communication and timing.** It means being precise in what to communicate and to whom. An important focus on a few key activities/issues.
- **Relevance and concreteness.** Need to talk about the value and benefits to a specific target audience; communicate the exact pathways to how a community can become a part of ECIU University.
- **Stories and people.** Continue to share the stories, experiences and testimonials of students, teachers, staff and stakeholders working on ECIU challenges.
- **Good practise and cooperation.** Share good practice and experiences between institutions and continue working together more closely.

Communication and dissemination structure by themes is indicated Table 1 below:

Table no. 1 Communication and dissemination structure by themes

AWARENESS (problem and solution)	OUTPUTS (milestones and news)	RESULTS (outcomes)
Brand ECIU University as tomorrow's European University. Give insight about main features that distinguishes ECIU University from other Universities. The main aim is to raise awareness.	Make sure external and internal target groups are aware of the progress of ECIU university: most important milestones, implemented activities and events that drive ECIU University forward. The main aim is to engage stakeholders to take part.	Tell success stories of problems solved and impact made by using ECIU University innovative tools. Stories raise awareness, engage, and facilitate changes.

1.2. Communication audiences, channels and forms

Target groups as per the ECIU University project proposal:

- **International**: ECIU stakeholders, partners in the application, Brussels-based institutions and organisations.
- **National**: HE authorities such as ministerial units of HE, research councils, politicians, among others, media, industry, prospective students and the general public, other universities.
- **Regional**: municipalities/politicians, industry and other important stakeholders for each partner university.
- **Internal**: students, researchers, teachers, staff of partner universities and institutions.

The target audience remains the same, namely learners, in general, can be split into two groups, in particular (1) students from ECIU University members and (2) life-long learners outside members. This split is necessary for engagement purposes.

Figure 1 **Main target audiences of ECIU University**
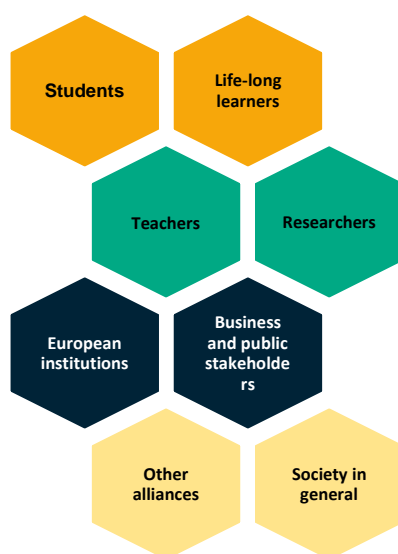
WP9 activities can be split into two levels, **central ECIU level**, in charge of eciu.org and challenge platform (WP5), ECIU social media and centrally planned events; **institutional level** that include all channels that member universities are in charge of. Third part of communication channels is **external**: external websites, platforms, events.

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Main communication channels are the social media as it is a proven tool for wider audience reach and convenience to spread information.

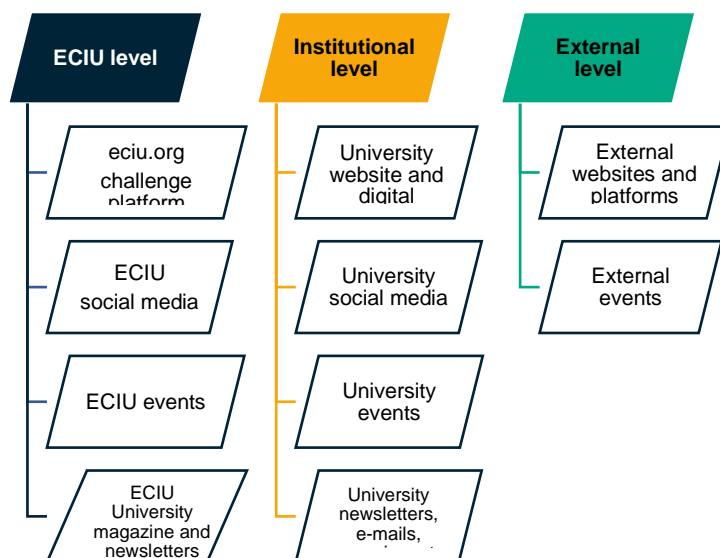*Figure 2 Communication channels at the ECIU and institutional levels*

1.3. Communication goals and content

Dissemination goals by target groups as per the ECIU University project proposal:

- Within the alliance members, **to inform staff, students, researchers and societal partners** relevant to the ECIU University in concrete and the European Universities Network at large on the progress and achieved results.
- Stakeholders outside the alliance: **to inspire stakeholder groups and when possible, to engage them into the challenge-based approach** or **adopt new challenges** proposed by external stakeholders.
- HEIs within and beyond the EEA: **to teach them what the added value of the challenges based approach** and the focus on co-creation with students, industry and society can be for them.
- General public**: to showcase how active cooperation among universities and stakeholder groups** can benefit societies to a broader extent in addressing societal challenges holistically through a joint innovation ecosystem.

The dissemination and communication activities focus on the 3 main goals, in particular awareness building and engagement, as indicated in Table 6:

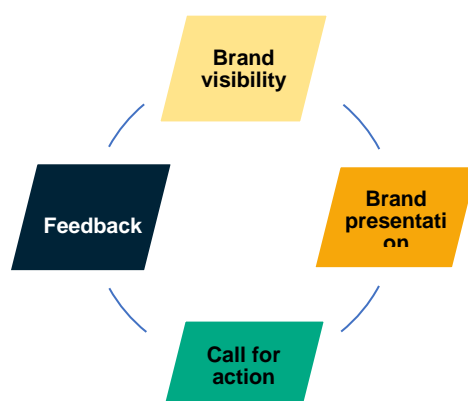7 A9.1, O1: Dissemination plan (Overview 3 years)

Table no. 2 Communication and dissemination goals

Awareness building	Engagement
Presenting the ECIU University to the main target audiences, mainly at member universities, via: o Events for university communities and stakeholders, o Special sections or sub-pages in member university websites, o Sharing ECIU University updates and developments in websites and social media channels.	Promoting certain activities to the target audiences, so they can engage in joining teams and taking action). The information should contain value proposal and clear way to engage. o Communicating open challenges and micro-modules, o Promoting event and other activities for the communities to join in. o Telling stories of participants, especially in challenges and micro-modules, by that setting example for others to join.

To facilitate changes in policy (EU and national levels)

To communicate ECIU University as a front-runner of European University Alliances, in cooperation with ECIU Brussels Office. The EU level communication is done through:
    o Participation in EU and European Alliance level events.
    o Writing and coordinating joint ECIU and European Alliance level position papers and statements.

1.4. Communication planning

The communication and dissemination activities in the ECIU University can be described as a cycle (see Figure 3) including brand visibility and presentation ensuring its awareness, and call for action and feedback steps ensuring engagement.

Figure 3. The cycle of communication and dissemination activities

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Table no. 3 Communication cycle in 4 steps

Awareness		Engagement	
Making ECIU University Brand visible	**Presenting ECIU University**	**Call for action**	**Getting feedback from participants **
- ECIU University logo/information in posters, banners, videos in facilities and campuses - ECIU University visibility in events and meetings	- Sections about ECIU University in websites, intranet, community newsletter, etc. - Post series about ECIU University in social media. - ECIU University integration into brochures, leaflets, magazines. - ECIU University presentations in events and meetings.	- Engaging posts about ECIU University in social media - Banners and messages in websites, newsletters, direct emails to target audiences - Events and meeting to engage to take action	- Testimonials of participants in articles, post and video formats - Meetings with participants in events

The detailed ECIU University communication and dissemination plan is filled separately in Excel document form and involves all activities, target audiences, channels, forms, content, ECIU central and member universities institutional level. The results of the implementation of the plan are filled in every 6 months, based on the excel document form.

2. Results of dissemination and communication activities

2.1. Overview

The first year of ECIU University was dedicated to three main activities that established the ground for the rest of the 3 years and the following phase of ECIU University.

1. The first draft of **communication strategy, plan and reporting process**, revised at the beginning of each year.

2. **Communication and dissemination matrix** inside work package 9 and between the work packages, establishing the flow of communication between responsible work package leads and point of contacts (PoC) at each institution.

   WP9 PoC are in charge of coordinating ECIU University communication and dissemination activities in their universities, but also serve as an expert group for WP9 as it combines

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marketing and communication specialists from the ECIU partner universities. Meetings every one or two months are organised to share information, good practices and give feedback.

Figure 4 Communication matrix between work packages
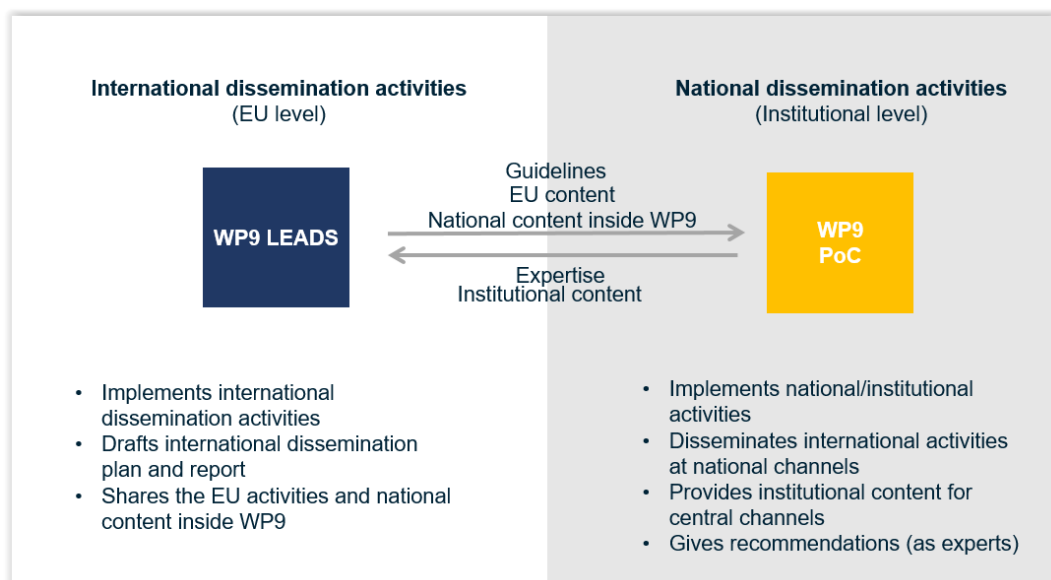
3. The creation of the new ECIU/ECIU University **brand and visual identity** (https://www.eciu.org/news/the-new-eciu-university-visual-identity-to-reflect-who-we-are).

The ECIU University logotype and visual identity were created, ensuring the solid and sustainable ECIU brand architecture that reflects the main values and goals of the ECIU University.

Figure 5 ECIU university logo variations

4. The launch of the **new website** for ECIU university (www.eciu.org) and **challenge platform** for posting and promoting challenges (https://challenges.eciu.org/).

5. Maintaining ECIU University **social media presence**: establishing Linkedin profile https://www.linkedin.com/company/eciu and using ECIU Twitter (https://twitter.com/ECIUniversities) and Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/eciuorg/) profiles for ECIU University communication.

The second and third year of communication and dissemination focused on:

- Building the visual identity further
- Maintaining and updating ECIU University communication channels
- Planning, coordinating and implementing communication and dissemination activities

- Coordinating WP9 group so ECIU university activities are disseminating not only at central but at the institutional levels as well.

2.2. Building the visual identity further

Activities included creation of the new information materials, like ECIU University PowerPoint presentation, "Make a real impact" campaign visuals for promotion of challenges; various other materials for ECIU University website and social media channels.

Figure 6 Examples of information materials in line with ECIU University Brand identity:

The ECIU University is an EU-funded initiative that creates a ground-breaking and innovative educational model on a European scale. www.eciu.org

2.3. ECIU University communication channels

The channels mainly included social media channels, websites and newsletters; ensuring that relevant information is to the target audiences. ECIU University Linkedin and Twitter channels were used very actively, ensuring the growth of new users and their engagement.

All ECIU University social media accounts were grown organically, without paid advertisements.

ECIU Linkedin community has grown up to 1850 followers (October 2021), in more than 2 years since launch (Linkedin page was launched September 2020).

The organic impressions of posts in ECIU University Linkedin page ranges between 5000 and 18.000 per each post, depending on the activity of the month. The organic engagement rate ranges from 5 until 11 percent per each post. The most engaging posts, sometimes peaking at 20 percent, are those that tell stories about events and people, showing pictures, proving again, that social networking is the key-role in social media.

Figure 7 **Linkedin page post example, resulting in more than 20 percent of engagement rate.**

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6937728518357196800/


As of October 2022, ECIU University Twitter had 1976 followers.

Twitter differs from other social media with speed, so it is more used to spread news. Therefore, the most popular tweets in ECIU University account in the last year were connected to news about the financing of next phase of ECIU University (July 2022) resulting in more than 7000 impressions, nearly 100 likes and shares. Another popular tweet was about the ECIU University Rectors and Presidents
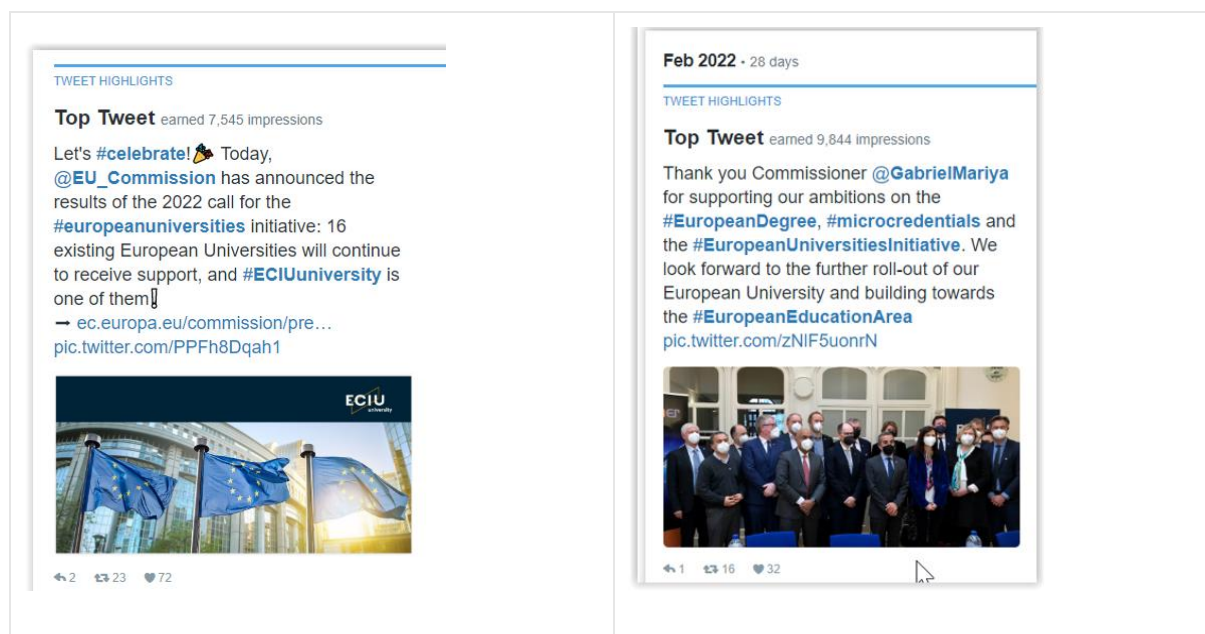
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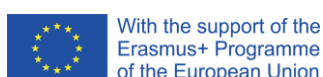
<u>meeting</u> with European Commissioner Mariya Gabriel (February 2022), resulting in nearly 10.000 impressions and 48 likes and shares.

Figure 8 **Twitter** *page posts examples of 2022*

Social media, especially Linkedin, is a useful tool to engage with senior year students, teachers, researchers and alumni in ECIU University member universities. For example, most of ECIU University Linkedin followers come from the areas where member universities are situated, and nearly half of all users are related to education and research activities.

Social media also goes beyond higher education area, as ECIU University Linkedin page followers also come from IT, Software development, Business consultancy and other sectors.

ECIU University Linkedin page ranks top 3 if comparing engagement rates at European Universities Linkedin accounts. Linkedin statistics show that ECIU University Linkedin page is among the top 5 pages when comparing the number of followers and new followers (new influx per year, September 30th 2021 until September 30th 2022).

Figure 9 ECIU University Linkedin page among other European universities accounts

Page		Total followers	New followers
Follower metrics			Ranked by new followers
1	Una Europa	3,270	1,922
2	EUTOPIA EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY	1,907	1,086
3	ECIU	1,841	921
4	YUFE Alliance	1,993	896
5	YERUN - Young European Research Universities	2,064	852
6	Arqus European University Alliance	1,293	844
7	EU-CONEXUS	1,363	761
8	EPICUR University Alliance	1,222	703
9	CHARM-EU	1,008	627

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Organic content metrics ⓘ		Ranked by total engagements	
Page		Total engagements	Total posts
1 Una Europa		4,845	196
2 ECIU		3,694	124
3 EU-CONEXUS		3,111	129
4 EPICUR University Alliance		2,451	95
5 Arqus European University Alliance		2,256	240
6 YUFE Alliance		1,746	62
7 YERUN - Young European Research Universities		1,681	74
8 CHARM-EU		1,659	53
9 EUTOPIA EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY		1,613	73

2.4. Planning and implementation

For ECIU University activities, various channels were used for communication, namely websites, social media, magazines, newsletters, among others. All channels can be separated into two levels:

- **ECIU level**: ECIU websites and social media, ECIU University magazine, newsletters to the community and students, etc. These channels are administered by ECIU University top-level management, and WP9 Leads.

- **Institutional level**: the ECIU University member channels (university websites, social media, newsletters, etc.) that are administered by the member universities.

In total, nearly 3000 messages were shared in institutional and ECIU University channels. The second year (Q5-Q8) and third year (Q9 – Q12) of the project saw the significant growth ECIU University communication items (messages in websites, social media, events, etc.). The increase was mainly due to the fact that ECIU University challenges and micro-modules were launched at the second project year, boosting the efforts to promote ECIU University and its opportunities to students and teachers.

Table no. 4 Number of the ECIU University-related messages in 3 years

Project quarters	Number of messages
Q11 and Q12	417
Q9 and Q10	515
Q7 and Q8	696
Q5 and Q6	608
Q3 and Q4	270
Q1 and Q2	273
Total	**2779**

The ECIU is in charge of several channels: ECIU.org, social media (Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook) accounts, the ECIU University magazine and newsletters.

Institutional channels play an important role in overall ECIU University communication and dissemination activities, 65 % of messages in 3 years were communicated institutional channels. When 12 member institutions and their communications channels are added, the communication toolbox and reach expands significantly. Moreover, institutional channels are closer to the community at member universities, so they are important for engagement activities.

Table no. 5 Ratio of messages in the ECIU vs Institutional channels, 3 years (tweets, events, articles, reports, etc.)

Communication Level	Total	
ECIU	**966**	35%
Member universities	**1813**	65%
Grand Total	**2779**	

During 3 years, the most active member universities communicating ECIU University activities in their channels were: Kaunas University of Technology (KTU), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), University of Aveiro (UA), University of Stavanger (UiS), University of Trento (UniTN), and University of Twente (UT).

All member universities have established sub-pages in their university websites dedicated to ECIU activities. They also publish ECIU University related news, to raise awareness in the communities about ECIU University, for example:

- University of Aveiro: https://www.ua.pt/en/eciu-university
- Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, https://www.uab.cat/web/eciu-university-1345821747819.html
- University of Twente, https://www.utwente.nl/en/organisation/collaboration/eciu-university/

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- University of Trento https://www.unitn.it/ateneo/82953/eciu-the-european-consortium-of-innovative-universities
- University of Stavanger https://www.uis.no/en/eciu
- Kaunas University of Technology, https://eciu-en.ktu.edu/ https://eciu.ktu.edu/
- Hamburg University of Technology: https://eciu.tuhh.de/
- Dublin City University: https://www.dcu.ie/research/eciu-university
- INSA: https://www.groupe-insa.fr/partager/eciu-university
- Linkoping: https://liu.se/en/article/eciu
- Tampere University: https://www.tuni.fi/en/services-and-collaboration/international-tampere-university/eciu-european-consortium-innovative-universities
- Aalborg University: https://www.en.aau.dk/cooperation/international-cooperation/eciu/

Since the second project year, about 50 percent of all messages across ECIU and institutional channels focused on the promotion of challenges and micro-modules to the students, also sharing students' and teachers' experience in working on a challenge and good practices. The rest of the messages were related to big ECIU University events and meetings, and various institutional activities to raise awareness about ECIU University.

*Table no. 6 Most actively communicated activities, ECIU and institutional channels*

Project quarters	Most actively communicated activities
Q11 and Q12	Autumn Semester 2022 Promotion and communication of challenges and micro-modules
	Testimonials of participants in challenges and micro-modules
	Various institutional activities
	General Awareness events/ Funding for Phase 2
Q9 and Q10	Spring Semester 2022 Promotion and communication of challenges and micro-modules
	Various institutional activities
	Testimonials of participants in challenges and micro-modules
	XR Campus developments
Q7 and Q8	Autumn semester 2021 challenge and micro-module promotion to learners
	Sharing challenge experiences and results
	Student Agora, May 2021
	XR Campus opening, September 2021
Q5 and Q6	Spring semester 2021 challenge promotion to students
	Testimonials of students and teachers
	Vision 2030 launch, November 2020
	Micro-credentials: Open Master Class (MOOC), February 2021
	ECIU University micro-modules launched, September 2020

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Q3 and Q4	Erasmus days 2020: what are the keywords for the European University
	Happy new academic year from the ECIU University
	Horizon 2020 support for the ECIU university SMART-ER
Q1 and Q2	European Universities Kick-off in Brussels, November 2019
	ECIU University Kick-off event in Barcelona, November 2019
	Society Quest workshop, February 2020
	Conference Brussels, March 2020

There is a variety of channels that were used across the ECIU and institutional levels, but around 70 percent of the channels are the social media ones: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Linkedin.

Figure 10 Number of messages in the types of communication channels

Number of messages in communication channels, 3 years

- Social media
- Websites
- Other channels
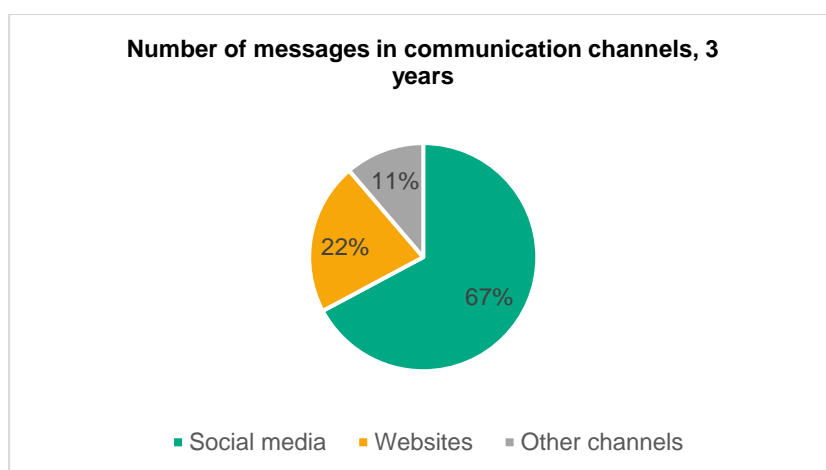
3. Resources and additional information

1. WP9 Dissemination plans and reports
2. Strategic guidelines to deliver ECIU university promotional events for students, staff and enterprises within project partner institutions
3. Social media accounts and Google Analytics for eciu.org

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