



**DIRECTION DES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES**

# UNIVERSITIES **ACROSS** AND **BETWEEN** THE **THREE SEAS**

## HOW UNIVERSITIES CAN SHAPE THE FUTURE OF EUROPE'S GLOBAL CITIES

FIRST FORUM: 14-18 DECEMBER 2026

**Europe owes its existence as a human community to the rivers and roads connecting the three maritime networks of Western Eurasia: the Mediterranean, the North Sea and the Baltic.** The economic, cultural and scientific map of today's Europe is the product of these flows between the three seas, relying on hotspots and hubs: free, connected and multicultural cities, either on the seashore or at the crossroads of the routes connecting maritime areas. At the heart of these cities, universities perpetuate that spirit of innovation, cosmopolitanism and freedom.

**The Forum of the Three Seas brings together universities anchored in these European hubs.** Whether they are Mediterranean ports or Hanseatic cities, border posts between former empires, or industrial and commercial hubs on the Rhône, Tyne, Rhine or Elbe, our cities are places of confluence, cultural mixing and trade. Today, Europe is facing considerable challenges for its economic future, its democratic model and its ability to overcome the ecological crisis. Our universities remain faithful to the heritage of the free and cosmopolitan cities where they have been thriving. They intend to position themselves as actors in the democratic and social revitalisation of the European civic model, starting from the territories.

Bringing together university governance bodies, socio-economic partners, actors in the cultural and democratic life of the regions and members of the academic community, the Forum of the Three Seas defines itself as **an academic, economic and political forum whose participants share a history and principles.** Its purpose is to connect cities across the continent. Through this forum, our institutions intend to discuss their practices and proposals across national borders, in order to rethink the missions of universities and their roots in their territories. The discussions initiated during these first meetings will feed into future European structural cooperation projects, white papers and reflective actions in the institutions.

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**La Région**  
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

## PROPOSED PANELS

### Cultural and linguistic diversity

1. Experiencing and organising cultural and linguistic diversity in our cities.
2. Cultural and linguistic diversity at university.
3. Identifying and promoting strategic European and international skills for the workforce of tomorrow.

### Universities at the heart of European citizenship

1. Between academic freedom and democratic responsibility: what contribution can universities make to the public sphere in Europe, and what form of governance is needed for free universities in free cities?
2. Alliances, networks, agreements: what form of university cooperation is needed for a Europe of knowledge?
3. Europeanising academic disciplines: what programmes, what obstacles, what successes?

### Green transition

1. What territorial imaginaries and what university model should we promote for a greener society?
2. Universities and local authorities: what partnerships should we forge in the interest of the ecological transition?
3. What strategy of circulation for persons, goods and innovations should we develop for the sake of responsible academic, commercial and industrial internationalisation?



## DIRECTION DES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES

### MAILING ADDRESS

**UNIVERSITE JEAN MOULIN LYON 3**  
1C avenue des Frères Lumière | CS 78242  
69372 LYON CEDEX 08 - FRANCE

### GEOGRAPHIC ADDRESS

**CENTRE DE LA RECHERCHE  
EUGÈNE CHEVREUL**  
18 rue Chevreul  
69007 LYON - FRANCE

### CONTACT

**2if@univ-lyon3.fr**

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Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes