

FOREWORD

Dear colleagues,

A new academic year brings fresh opportunities to reconnect, exchange ideas and collaborate within the SGroup network.

In this autumn edition, we share the latest news, upcoming activities and opportunities from across our community. Please share the Newsletter with colleagues and keep sending us initiatives that could bring SGroup members together.

The next edition will be published in December 2026. To ensure that your international events and opportunities are featured, please submit invitations open to SGroup members via [this form](#) by **1 December 2026**. Eligible submissions may include conferences, seminars, winter schools, staff weeks, and other international activities for which registration remains open after 1 January 2027.

We wish you an inspiring start to the academic year!

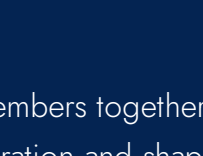
Communication Working Group

Contact us

Stay connected with us



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We invite you and your colleagues to follow SGroup on social media for the latest updates, news and opportunities

Last chance to register!

SGroup Annual Meetings 2026

13–15 October 2026

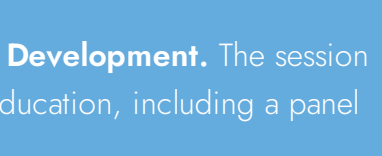
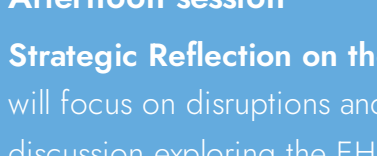
Silesian University of Technology, Gliwice, Poland

Registration

Extended deadline: 2 October 2026

The **SGroup Annual Meetings 2026** will bring SGroup members together to reflect on emerging challenges in higher education, strengthen collaboration and shape our shared strategic priorities for the future.

This year, the Annual Meetings will feature a **slightly different format**, combining strategic discussions, professional development, workshops, project activities and key SGroup governance meetings.



Save the date

Professional Development and Strategic Reflection

14 October 2026

Silesian University of Technology, Gliwice, Poland

Morning programme

A dedicated **Professional Development & Peer Learning** session, focused on the use of Artificial Intelligence:

- Workshop **“Boosting Your Productivity with AI”** will explore AI implementation and practical examples.
- **AI4UNI** session will offer further opportunities for learning and peer exchange.

Afternoon session

Strategic Reflection on the Annual Theme & Structural Development. The session will focus on disruptions and innovations in global Higher Education, including a panel discussion exploring the EHEA as of 2027.

Do not miss it!

Join us online

Engagements Session

TTSMU Session in November: Social Mission Revisited

5 November 2026

10:00–11:00 CET

Online

Join the Zoom session

Join us for the November session of **Engagements**, the SGroup conversations series dedicated to Social Mission in Higher Education, where participants share practice, challenges and ideas on the role of universities as agents of societal change.

The session will be led by **Dr Deborah Husbands** (University of Westminster), in conversation with **Prof. Emerita Alex Hughes** from the SGroup Think Tank for the Social Mission of Universities, focusing on the requirements, practicalities and challenges of implementing social mission successfully.

In advance, participants are encouraged to reflect on the social mission priorities, activities and best practices at their institution. Please share this invitation with colleagues working in this area.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

ICON Programme

The **ICON** (Inter-Continental Academic Exchange Programme) continues to create opportunities for researchers and academic staff to connect across continents, exchange knowledge and build lasting international collaborations.

Recent grantees have shared how their mobility experiences contributed to new research, strengthened partnerships and opened doors to future collaboration.

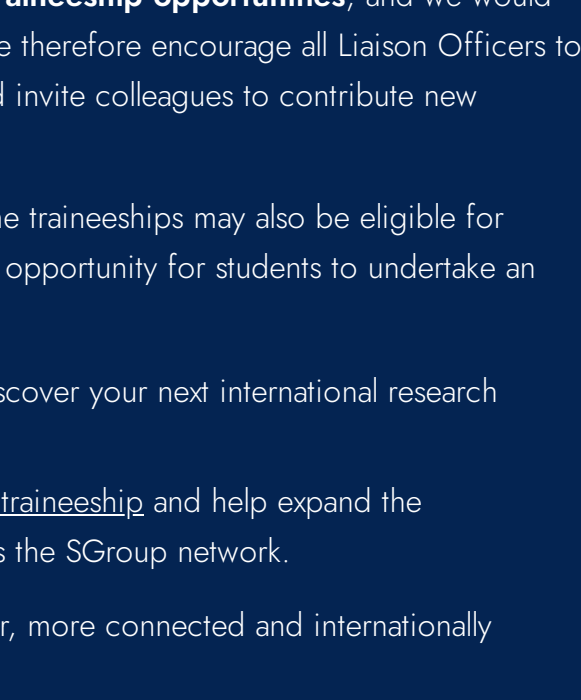
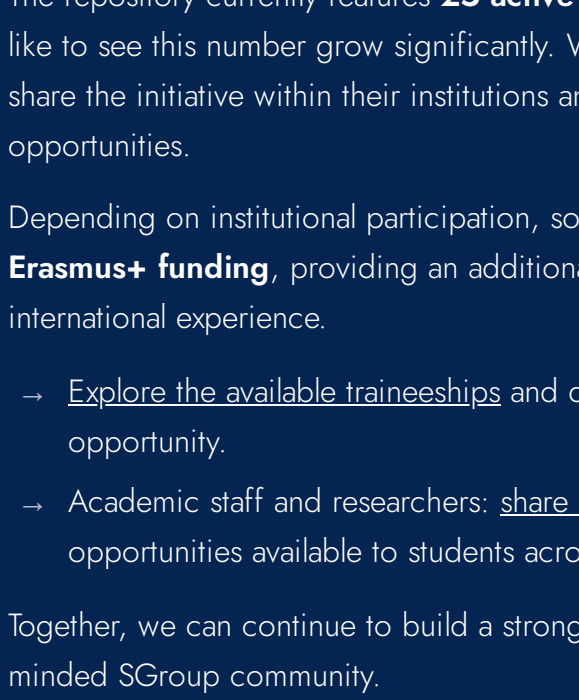
Prof. Miguel Rocha · University of Minho

Prof. Miguel undertook a mobility at the University of Tunis El Manar and Institut Pasteur de Tunis, focusing on research and pedagogical collaboration in AI and Systems Biology. Beyond the academic outcomes, Prof. Miguel described the visit as a *“growing experience at all levels”*, highlighting the value of cultural exchange and gaining a better understanding of different ways of working.



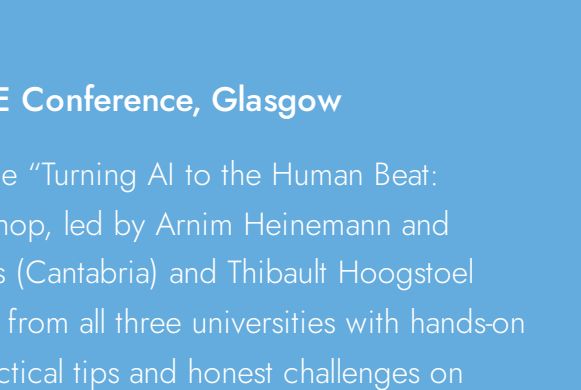
Marina Domínguez Quintero · University of Cantabria

Marina undertook a mobility at UC San Diego in the United States, spending three months working on gene regulation in cyanobacteria through advanced omics and bioinformatics. She worked on genetic engineering and fitness profiling using RB-TnSeq, conducted competition assays under different environmental conditions, and received hands-on training in BarSeq protocols and Next Generation Sequencing. Through bioinformatic analysis of fitness scores, she generated preliminary data and established a pipeline that can be transferred to her home laboratory. Both groups plan to work together on a joint manuscript and explore future research stays. Marina described the mobility as *“scientifically very satisfying”*, resulting in *“robust data that will make a significant contribution to my PhD thesis”*.



PHD CUP 2026

Selection Results



The selection process for the **SGroup PhD CUP 2026** was completed, bringing together an impressive pool of doctoral researchers from across the SGroup network.

PhD CUP 2026 in Numbers

- 58 applications from 17 SGroup member institutions
- 48 participants selected to take part in the programme
- 5 finalists chosen to present their research and compete for the top positions

The Five Finalists

#	Finalist	Institution
1	Tihana Gašpert	University of Maribor
2	Patricia Caballero	Ghent University
3	Maïté Verstraeten	Ghent University
4	Lisa Sonleitner	University of Lille
5	Jean Mayoko	University of León

The finalists are invited to travel to Gliwice, Poland, to present their pitch during the Annual Meetings. Please note that, as established in the PhD CUP call for applications, all travel, accommodation, and subsistence expenses must be covered by the home institution.

We congratulate all finalists!

TRAINEESHIP REPOSITORY

Discover and share international research opportunities through the SGroup Traineeship Repository

The **SGroup Traineeship Repository** is a growing resource connecting **Master's and PhD students** with international research and traineeship opportunities across the SGroup network.

Academic staff, researchers and professors are invited to **share available traineeship positions** at their institutions, helping to create new opportunities for talented students while strengthening international collaboration within the SGroup community.

The repository currently features **25 active traineeship opportunities**, and we would like to see this number grow significantly. We therefore encourage all Liaison Officers to share the initiative within their institutions and invite colleagues to contribute new opportunities.

Depending on institutional participation, some traineeships may also be eligible for **Erasmus+ funding**, providing an additional opportunity for students to undertake an international experience.

- [Explore the available traineeships](#) and discover your next international research opportunity.
- Academic staff and researchers: [share a traineeship](#) and help expand the opportunities available to students across the SGroup network.

Together, we can continue to build a stronger, more connected and internationally minded SGroup community.

A LOOK BACK AT OUR RECENT ACTIVITIES

Turning AI to the Human Beat: Supporting International Relations

8 September 2026

EAIE Conference, Glasgow

At EAIE 2026 in Glasgow, SGroup ran the “Turning AI to the Human Beat: Supporting International Relations” workshop, led by Annim Heinemann and Hanna Müller (Bayreuth), Eugenio Bringas (Cantabria) and Thibault Hoogstoel (Ghent). The session mixed real examples from all three universities with hands-on AI tool time, letting participants trade practical tips and honest challenges on using AI in international relations work.



SGroup Gathering in Glasgow

10 September 2026

Glasgow

SGroup members came together for an informal gathering during the EAIE Conference – a great opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and enjoy some time together.



Members' information

Please submit your invitations to international events open to SGroup network members via our [contribution form](#). Contributions are requested by **1 December 2026**.

Eligible submissions may include conferences, seminars, winter schools, staff weeks, and other international activities for which registration remains open after **1 January 2027**.

- [KTU Invites Partners to Join Partner Days 2027 Event](#)

2026

SGroup Calendar Highlights

September 2026 • EC Meeting at Silesian Univ. Technology • Annual Meetings in Gliwice • PHD CUP Final	October 2026 • EC meeting online • Preparation for the Annual Meetings	November 2026 • TTSMU Engagements Session	December 2026 • Preparation for 2027 activities • Office Closed
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