

Think Tank Academy Spring Conference 2026

Disruptions and Innovations in Global Higher Education

20-21 April 2026 | Kaunas University of Technology (KTU), Lithuania

19 April | Sunday

Local Time (Eastern European Time - EET)

09:30 - 13:00

Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

13:00 - 14:00

EC Lunch

14:30 - 16:45

EC Meeting

17:00 - 19:00

Kaunas guided tour kindly offered by KTU to all TTA participants
(Meeting point: [Church of St. Michael the Archangel](#))

19:30

EC Dinner

20 April | Monday

Local Time (Eastern European Time - EET) | Address: Studentų g. 48 (Central Library, KTU)

08:45 - 09:45

Welcome of participants at KTU

10:00 - 10:20

Opening words

Dr. Eugenijus Valatka, Rector (KTU)
Dr. Arnim Heinemann, SGroup President (University of

10:20 - 10:40

Signing Ceremony for Academia–Industry Collaboration

- Dr. Eugenijus Valatka, Rector (KTU)
- Dr. Toshiyuki Sato, President (Fukuyama City University)
- Mr. Rimvydas Melkūnas, CEO (JSC Hoptrans Holding)
- Mr. Motoyuki Murata, Managing Director (The Shibuya Ikueikai Foundation)
- Mr Shigehiro Komaru, CEO (Fukuyama Transporting Co.)

Ceremonial Addresses by Dr. Eugenijus Valatka, Rector (KTU) and HE Mr. Shinsuke Shimizu, Ambassador of Japan to Lithuania

Moderator: Dr Giedrė Šadeikaitė-Gjorsheski, Director of International Relations (KTU)

10:40 - 11:00

Coffee Break, kindly offered by KTU

11:00 - 12:30

Think Tank for the Future (TT4Future)

*Reflection and discussions on the Annual Topic of SGroup:
Disruptions and Innovation in Global Higher Education*

Group/Panel Discussion:

- Rethinking Global Higher Education: Innovation, Disruption and New Horizons
- Insights on the evolving landscape of Higher Education Institutions

Dr. Arnim Heinemann, SGroup President, (University of Bayreuth)

Dr. Kathleen O'Connor, SGroup Vice President (University of Lille)

Dr. Peter Zakar, Vice-Rector (University of Szeged)

12:30 - 13:30

Lunch (on site), kindly offered by KTU

13:30 - 15:00

Think Tank for the Social Mission of Universities (TSMU)

"Workshop & Engagements: Social Mission, Research, Knowledge Acquisition, and Exchange: What Does Good/Innovative Practice Look Like in the Social Mission Arena?"

Moderators:

Adina Fodor, PhD (Babeş-Bolyai University)

Prof. Emeritus, Alexandra Hughes, PhD (University of Westminster)

Prof. Emeritus Cecilia Christersson, PhD (University of Malmö)

Speaker:

Kinga Hening, PhD, Executive Coordinator of the Technology Transfer

15:00 - 15:30

Coffee Break, kindly offered by KTU

15:30 - 16:45

Language Schools Meeting

"Introducing the research group 'NTES- New Trends in English Studies. Aims and future activities'"

16:45 - 17:30

The SGroup's Think Tank Academy Strategy

Dr. Arnim Heinemann - SGroup President (University of Bayreuth)

17:30 - 18:30

Site Visit: Campus Tour

21 April | Tuesday

Local Time (Eastern European Time - EET) | Address: Studentų g. 48 (Central Library, KTU)

08:00 - 08:30

Welcome of participants at KTU

08:30 - 09:45

PhD Schools Meeting (TTPhD)

"Effectiveness and Collaboration in Doctoral Education: Doctoral Schools, Joint Programmes, and Co-tutelle Models"

Dr. Jaroslaw Korpysa (University of Szczecin)

Dr. Péter Mezei (University of Szeged)

Dr. Arnim Heinemann (University of Bayreuth)

Dr. Joanna Misiukajtis (University of Szczecin)

09:45 - 11:15

TTAsia& Pacific: Global Disruptions, Regional Responses: Perspectives from the SGroup Associate Members in the Asia–Pacific Region

Moderator:

Philipp Dengel; Dr. Irina Herrschner and Michael Schneider (University of Bayreuth)

Speakers:

Dr. Xiaohong Mao (Shanghai International Studies University) Dr. Astria

Nur Irfansyah (Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology)

11:15 - 11:30

Coffee Break, kindly offered by KTU

11:30 - 13:00

TTAfrica and TTAmericas: Global Partnerships

Funding Opportunities for HE – Opportunities and Perspectives from "Erasmus+", from the Americas and Africa

Introduction & Moderation: Bárbara Claeys (University of Ghent)

"Erasmus+ A Global Programme with Regional Ring-Fencing"

Dr. Adrian Veale, Representative from the European Commission - DG EAC (International Cooperation Unit)

"Overview and Funding Opportunities at Stellenbosch University"

Dr. Cornelia Malherbe and Dr. Sarah van der Westhuizen (Stellenbosch University)

"Overview and Funding Opportunities at University of Lagos"

Dr. Ismail Ibraheem (University of Lagos)

Funding opportunities from Brazil and Colombia

- Overview
- Inter-continental opportunities
- Insights from local experts: tips and tricks

13:00 - 14:00

Lunch (on site)

14:00 - 15:30

TTAfrica and TTAmericas: Global Partnerships

Funding Opportunities for HE – Opportunities and Perspectives from EU side

Discussion on challenges and opportunities related to funding mechanisms and intercontinental collaboration

U. Ghent: Funding opportunities from EU side (with respect to Africa and the Americas)

- Erasmus+ opportunities - Barbara Claeys (University of Ghent)
- VLIR-UOS, Global Minds and University of Ghent - Calls for Collaboration - Dr. Steven Schoofs (University of Ghent)
- Horizon Europe opportunities - Dr. Sylvia Burssens (University of Ghent)

ULiège: Projects and Exchange Programs with African institutions

Christine Dasnoy (University of Liège)

Horizon Europe: Calls for African Partners - Focus on Calls for Proposals Targeting African Countries, Including a Preview of an Upcoming Call,
Dr. Zoé Lejeune (University of Liège)

15:30 - 16:00

Wrap-up and Conclusions

16:00 - 16:30

Coffee Break, kindly offered by KTU

16:30

Departure of participants