Bringing innovation to local SMEs
UniTrento launches two challenges for ECIU students

The University of Trento is inviting students from the 12 universities of the ECIU network to solve two challenges launched with the City of Trento and Digital Innovation Hub Trentino Alto Adige. The participants will have to find solutions to real problems, taking advantage of the lessons learned in the classroom. With ECIU University, students experience the work environment, while universities explore new ways to design courses. The goal is to build the future European university: innovation oriented and focused on responding to local needs.

Trento, 23 June 2021 – Two new challenges, two real-world problems to solve for important local actors, and an opportunity to put into practice the lessons learned in the classroom. UniTrento participates in the new round of challenges that are launched every six months for the students of the dynamic and innovative universities that are part of ECIU University. The challenges, organized by the School of Innovation, are a learning opportunity for students, who have the chance to focus on real problems to find effective and feasible solutions for public and private organizations. While at work, they have to keep in mind the UN sustainable development goals, and in particular the goal 11: sustainable cities and communities. The School of Innovation of the 'Università di Trento has launched two challenges for the next semester, with important local partners.

The students of the 12 universities of the ECIU network are welcome to participate: Aalborg University (Denmark), Dublin City University (Ireland), Hamburg University of Technology (Germany), Institut National des Sciences Appliquées - INSA Group (France), Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania), Linköping University (Sweden), Tampere University (Finland), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain), University of Aveiro (Portugal), University of Stavanger (Norway), University of Trento (Italy), University of Twente (the Netherlands).

From Farm to Fork – In collaboration with the City of Trento, the purpose of this challenge is to organize and manage the distribution and delivery of local food products to support local producers and promote a healthy lifestyle and diet. Students will have to identify the target consumer and find innovative solutions to shorten the distribution chain and facilitate direct interactions between consumers and producers, especially using non-conventional communication channels.

Students can apply to join the teams until 20 September at all the participating universities. The applicants (about twenty), from all universities, will be divided in teams. Team members
will work on the challenge for four weeks, mostly in remote mode. In the last week of work, however, students will meet in person, in Trento.

The challenge will be officially presented in mid-November and will continue, with the international team of students at work, until mid-December. The team that will develop the best solution with a concrete implementation plan will win the challenge.

**Help SMEs play the Innovation game** – This challenge has been proposed by the University of Trento and Digital Innovation Hub Trentino Alto Adige (DIH), whose goal is to help businesses, SMEs for the most part, on the road to innovation 4.0, digital transformation and sustainable growth. The challenge is about the ability of Digital Innovation Hub to provide this type of assistance. The participating students will have to find a way to strengthen the role of DIH as a bridge between the ever-evolving innovation 4.0 and small and medium enterprises, which may have not invested enough in research and development.

The challenge will run for five weeks, and includes classroom and team work. Students can apply to join the teams until 20 September. Both challenges, like all ECIU challenges, will be in English.

**Past challenges** – With the launch of these two challenges, UniTrento becomes even more involved in ECIU initiatives. The University launched other challenges in the previous semesters, with Sanifonds, and HIT Hub Innovazione Trentino, which attracted a good number of students and led to the development of interesting solutions for the partners.

**The School of Innovation** is a unique institution: the extracurricular training courses it provides place the University of Trento among the leading universities offering innovation management education. Students from Trento and partner universities, PhD candidates, professionals from different areas and common citizens participate to solve challenges but also to learn advanced management skills.

**About ECIU** - ECIU University is one of the European universities alliances selected by the European Commission within the Erasmus+ programme, where students and researchers work together with public and private organizations to solve real challenges. This innovative model of university was launched in November 2019 by the European consortium of innovative universities, ECIU, of which UniTrento is a proud member.

The objective of the members is to establish a new concept of European university, going beyond the Erasmus mobility programmes and international relations with new academic, research and knowledge transfer methods which are more flexible, international and based on the resolution of real-life problems.