

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)

10:00 - 13:00

Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

(Meeting point: the entrance of KTU School of Economics and Business, Gedimino g. 50)

13:00 - 14:00

EC Lunch

(Recommendation to taste Lithuanian cuisine at "Berneliu smukle", K. Donelaičio g. 11)

Meniu:

Main dishes and soups | Deserts

Please pre-order to save out time.

14:00 - 17:00

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

(Recommendation to taste a local craft honey beer at Avilys, Vilniaus g. 34)

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 Bayreuth)

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 (TTSMU)

"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. Dan Bendrups & Dr. Meagan Tyler (La Trobe University), Prof. Dr. Vijay Khare (Savitribai Phule Pune University), Dr. Unggul Wasiwito (Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember, ITS), Mr. Mu Zhao (Shanghai International Studies University)

11:15 - 11:45

TTAfrica and TTAmericas: Global Partnerships
Funding Opportunities for Higher Education

Erasmus+ Funding Opportunities

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

11:45 - 12:00

Coffee Break, kindly offered by KTU

12:00 - 13:00

TTAfrica and TTAmericas: Global Partnerships
Funding Opportunities for Higher Education

Moderation: Bárbara Claeys (University of Ghent)

Funding opportunities with respect to Africa and the Americas: U.Ghent good practices

- VLIR-UOS, Global Minds and UGhent-specific calls for collaboration
Dr. Steven Schoofs, Ghent University
- Horizon Europe opportunities
Dr. Evi Lippens, Ghent University

Overview and Funding Opportunities at Stellenbosch University

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

Overview and Funding Opportunities at University of Lagos

Dr. Ismail Ibraheem (University of Lagos)

13:00 - 14:00

Lunch (on site)

14:00 - 15:30

TTAfrica and TTAmericas: Global Partnerships
Funding Opportunities for Higher Education

Introduction: Barbara Claeys, Ghent University

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)

Funding Opportunities from and with the Americas
Barbara Claeys (Ghent University)

Discussion on challenges and opportunities related to funding mechanisms and intercontinental collaboration
Moderator: Barbara Claeys (Ghent University)

Conclusions

15:30 - 16:00

Wrap-up and Conclusions

16:00 - 16:30

Coffee Break, kindly offered by KTU

16:30

Departure of participants