

Summer School for Young Researchers: Resilience X-Factor of a City

16. – 20. June 2025, Košice

The Technical University of Košice ([TUKE](#)) organised a second edition of **Ulysseus Summer Institute**, this time focusing on the theme of **Resilience X-Factor of a City** from 16 to 20 June 2025. The aim of the event, intended for PhD students and young researchers, was to enable participants to identify and define the X-factor of the city of Košice, as a combination of unique qualities and characteristics that make it attractive and exceptional, across five themes: *15-Minute City*, *Green Climate Resilient City*, *Smart City*, *Sustainable Economics*, *Citizen Science and Engagement*. The summer school, initiated by the [Faculty of Economics](#) at TUKE in cooperation with [Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Informatics](#) as well as [Faculty of Civil Engineering](#), welcomed world-renowned experts in urban development to Košice, sparking stimulating discussions and providing valuable insights for the development of Eastern Slovakia's metropolis.



The summer school was an activity of the [European University Ulysseus](#), organised under the auspices of the [Regional Science Association International \(RSAI\)](#) and prepared in cooperation with partner university: [Université Côte d'Azur](#) (UniCA; France). Moreover as

such, the activity was a practical outcome of the first [joint Ulysseus research group](#) focused on the economy and smart cities.

Esteemed experts such as [Carlos Moreno](#) (author of the [15-minute City concept](#)), **Peter Nijkamp** and **Karima Kourtit** (Netherlands), **Neil Reid** (USA), **Alexandru Banica** (Romania), **Luca Zamparini** (Italy), and **Umut Türk** (Turkey) brought the highest level of current and specialised knowledge to the event. Ulysseus was actively represented by researchers **Paulo de Moura** and **Guilhem Lecouteux** (UniCA), and a team from the Faculty of Economics at TUKE (**Peter Džupka**, **Miriam Šebová** and **Lenka Maličká**), Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Informatics at TUKE (**Erik Kajáti** and **Ľubomír Urblík**) and Faculty of Civil Engineering at TUKE (**Martina Zeleňáková** and **Natália Junáková**).

Participants of the Summer School

The summer school hosted a total of **23 PhD students** and **young researchers** from nine universities: 18 PhD students from Ulysseus member universities (USE, UniCA, UniGe) and other partner universities of TUKE (Liverpool John Moores University, UK; University of Pardubice, Czech Republic; Technical university Dresden, Germany; Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urban Planning Bucharest, Romania; and Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania). Three participants from Slovakia (Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Mechanical Engineering TUKE) complemented the group of international participants. They came from **4 continents** and **11 countries** (Cuba, France, Germany, India, Iran, Myanmar, Pakistan, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Slovakia).

The summer school was organised as a [Blended Intensive Programme](#) (BIP), supporting the internationalisation and mobility of students.

Diversified Programme

The programme offered a diverse mix of high-quality lectures, workshops, fieldwork, and practical activities, allowing participants to explore various aspects of urban development in Košice.



Introductory online kick-off meeting introduced the topic and organisation of the following onsite part of the event.

The event was officially **opened** at the TUKE USP TECHNICOM by the vice-rector for science, research and doctoral study, Ivo Petráš and dean of the Faculty of Economics, Michal Šoltés, as well as distinguished guests. Invited experts introduced the summer school theme through lectures. The first day culminated at Kasárne Kulturpark in an international conference from **Leading Minds** Series on Urban Development and Innovation, titled [Cities as engines of growth and well-being in a fragmented global economy](#). The conference program featured speakers such as Paul Krugman, Nobel laureate in Economics

(USA/online), Carlos Moreno, Peter Nijkamp, Karima Kourtit, and Michal Hladký. The conference was organised by Creative Industry Košice in cooperation with the City of Košice, TUKE, and other partners.



Lectures, workshops but also **intensive team work sessions** (as part of the *Hack the City* block) fulfilled the following days taking part mainly in the [University Science Park TECHNICOM](#). Students had the opportunity to consult with invited experts daily during the *Meet the Professors* block. The programme also included fieldwork: visits to partner companies (Siemens Healthineers, Košice Airport), selected laboratories within the TUKE campus, TUKE Student Dormitories on Jedlíkova street, and a guided tour of the city of Košice.

On the fourth day, during the *Bootcamp* block, teams finalised their proposals for the X-factors of Košice and attended an innovative lecture by the globally renowned Professor [Neil Reid](#) (*The Beer Professor*) from the University of Toledo (USA) at the Hostinec Brewery.



The week-long efforts culminated on the final day, with teams presenting their findings and proposals. Discussions with experts and invited guests followed the teams' presentations.

What did participants say about the event?

Victor Marquet-Saget (University of Seville, Spain): *"As a PhD Candidate in Architecture, I found fascinating the different approaches that were given to the concept of resilience in the Ulysseus 2025 Summer Institute: "The Resilience X-Factor of a City". Either by student proposals during our bootcamp projects or by great lecturers such as Carlos Moreno,*

Karima Kourtit or Paul Krugman among many others, the insights given on such a complex concept were of great help for my research. The whole program was a very complete event where we had the opportunity to learn, but also to work in groups through workshops from which I was part of the “15-minutes university” group, a very insightful concept I was more than happy to be part of. I feel also deeply thankful for the assistance offered to me as a visually impaired student, the organizers and students were always there for anything I needed and even some specialized tools were available to me in order to keep up with any lecture. I am looking forward to the following events!”

Htoo Sunn Thawdar (University of Pardubice, Czechia): “Participating in the TUKE Ulysseus BIP Summer Institute was an eye-opening experience. The program brought together a great mix of lectures, group work, individual meetings with professors, and field activities that helped us to explore the complex challenges facing cities today. We gained insights not only from respected professors and experts but also through meaningful exchanges with fellow PhD students and young researchers from across Europe. Each day was filled with stimulating discussions both in formal sessions and during casual moments spent exploring the beauty of Košice. The city itself became part of the learning process. This experience pushed me to view my own research in new ways and reminded me that learning can be just as much about people and place as it is about theory.”

Nayab Ali (University of Genoa, Italy): „Attending the Ulysseus BIP Summer Institute was a really meaningful experience for me. The program gave us the chance to explore the idea of what makes a city resilient, not just through lectures, but also by going out into the city and learning from real-life examples. I enjoyed working in groups with students from different countries, it helped me see things from new perspectives. The atmosphere was friendly, and the organizers were very supportive throughout the week. Overall, it was a great balance of learning, sharing ideas, and experiencing the culture of Košice

Syed Amir Hashmi (Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania): „Participating in the Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) at TUKE University, Košice, Slovakia, titled “Resilience X-Factor of a City,” was truly an incredible experience. From the moment we arrived, the program was full of memorable highlights — starting with a guided campus tour where we saw the fascinating doorless lift “Paternoster” for the first time, a symbol of innovation in itself. Throughout the week, we had the opportunity to engage with professionals and researchers from diverse fields who delivered insightful presentations on urban resilience and sustainable city development. Each session offered fresh perspectives and practical solutions that cities can adopt to enhance their resilience to future challenges — environmentally, socially, and economically. One of the major themes of the program was focused on the enhancement of the TUKE campus, not just physically but also intellectually and socially — turning it into a model of sustainability and resilience. The multidisciplinary approach taken by TUKE and its partners made the learning process highly engaging and forward-thinking. As a participant representing Kaunas University of Technology, I felt honoured not only to learn from such an esteemed group of presenters — including some with connections to Nobel-level achievements — but also to contribute actively by presenting in a group setting. This was a valuable platform for both knowledge exchange and personal growth. Beyond the academic experience, the hospitality and organization of the event were truly outstanding. From the welcome dinner to the farewell gathering, everything was thoughtfully arranged, fostering connection among participants and providing a wonderful cultural introduction to Košice. In summary, this BIP program was a perfect blend of education, collaboration, cultural exchange, and innovation. I return to Lithuania with new knowledge, great memories, and stronger

academic connections, and I wholeheartedly thank TUKE University and all organizers for making this such a meaningful experience.”

Pouria Motalebi (Liverpool John Moores University, Great Britain): „The opportunity to participate in the Summer Institute “Exploring the X-Factor of a City” in Košice was an enriching and inspiring experience. The daily “Meet the Professors” sessions were a highlight, offering valuable feedback and advice for my PhD research. Engaging with international experts and peers fostered a collaborative academic environment, and the lectures and workshops provided insightful perspectives on urban challenges. Košice’s vibrant culture and heritage enriched the overall experience, combining academic growth with meaningful cultural exploration. This programme was highly beneficial for both my research and professional development.”



Conclusion and Thanks to Partners and Sponsors

The Summer School "Resilience X-Factor of a City" delivered a wealth of inspiring moments and innovative ideas with the potential to positively impact the university campus and the development of Košice. An intense week, filled with lectures, workshops, fieldwork, and dynamic discussions, transformed Košice into a hub of innovative thinking and international collaboration in urban development.

The final presentations clearly demonstrated that Košice's "X-factor" lies not only in its rich history and culture, but primarily in its exceptional capacity for adaptation and innovation. The proposals and visions presented by young researchers offered concrete and implementable solutions that can significantly contribute to improving the quality of life on the TUKE campus in connection with the city.

The successful realization of this summer school would not have been possible without the tireless support and effective cooperation among the Technical University of Košice (TUKE), its partner universities (especially within the European University Ulysseus), renowned experts from around the world, and the extensive contributions of sponsors and partners.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who participated in making this event a reality. We are confident that similar initiatives will enable us to further explore and define the key

"X-factors" of our city. Especially we thank to event partners and sponsors: [The Regional Science Academy \(TRSA\)](#), [RSAI](#), [Creative Industry Košice](#), [VISIT Košice](#), [Cyklokuchyňa Košice](#) and [CTP Invest SK, spol. s r.o.](#)

About Ulysseus

The vision of Ulysseus European University for 2030 is to develop an excellency-recognized and internationally attractive open to the world, persons-centred and entrepreneurial European University for the citizens of the future. By doing so, our ambition is to contribute to shape the European Higher Education and Research Areas, and hence the future of Europe.

Ulysseus, one of the 65 alliances of European Universities selected by the European Commission to become the universities of the future, opens up opportunities for students, teachers, and researchers from partner universities for their education, mutual mobilities, and new cutting-edge research projects. The Ulysseus European University was established in 2020, and its current members are the [University of Seville](#) (Spain, alliance coordinator), the [University of Genoa](#) (Italy), [Université Côte d'Azur](#) (Nice, France), [Technical University of Košice](#), [MCI | The Entrepreneurial School](#)® (Innsbruck, Austria), [Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences](#) (Helsinki, Finland), [University of Münster](#) (Germany), and the [University of Montenegro](#) (Podgorica, Montenegro).

The Ulysseus European University in Slovakia is supported by resources from the European Union and the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic.

Further information about the Ulysseus European University: www.ulysseus.eu

More information

- The event was co-financed from Erasmus+ programme funds
- For more information about the event and its outcomes: summerinstitute.tuke.sk
- More information on Ulysseus European University: www.ulysseus.eu

Photo credits: Daniela Surmiková, Katarína Valentová.

Contacts: Peter Džupka (peter.dzupka@tuke.sk), Katarína Valentová (katarina.valentova@tuke.sk)



Co-funded by
the European Union