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## HEDforALL – Holistic Approach to Higher Education for All

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### Newsletter No. 4

Welcome to the fourth edition of the **HEDforALL project** newsletter, a publication dedicated to promoting inclusion and accessibility in Higher Education. This issue highlights our ongoing efforts to share groundbreaking research and collaborative achievements that are transforming educational access for everyone.

In this edition, we are delighted to feature **Dr. Rafael Molina Carmona**, a professor at the University of Alicante (UA), Spain, who offers valuable insights into inclusion and accessibility in education, as well as his contributions to the project.

We also review **two key deliverables** made in the HEDforALL project, showcasing notable outcomes that are laying the groundwork for a more inclusive educational environment:

- **RES3 (D3.1):** Creation of accessible educational resources.
- **RES3 (D3.2):** Accessible Materials Guide.

Additionally, we share highlights from the recent **Transnational Project Meetings in Thessaloniki**, where partners assessed progress and outlined future steps for the project.

As always, we encourage you to explore the content, share your perspectives, and support our mission to create a more inclusive and accessible higher education system.

The **HEDforALL project** is funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action "Partnerships for cooperation and exchanges of practices," within the "Cooperation partnerships in higher education" action type. The project spans 36 months, running from February 1, 2022, to January 31, 2025.

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## Meet the HEDforALL Project Partners: University of Alicante



**Dr. Rafael Molina Carmona** received his B.Sc. and M.Sc. in Computer Science from the Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain in 1994, and his Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Alicante, Spain in 2002. He is a professor at the University of Alicante, and he belongs to the department of **Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence**. He is the director of “Smart Learning”, research group on Intelligent Technologies for Learning: adaptive learning, learning analytics and predictive systems, gamification, video games and digital transformation of educational institutions. His research and teaching activity focus mainly on the use of information technologies to

transform society and technological innovation. In particular, he works on the digital transformation of learning, innovation management and Artificial Intelligence applications in different fields: computer-aided design and manufacturing, computer graphics, learning, gamification, IT governance and information representation. He is now the **Vice-President for Digital Transformation** in the University of Alicante. Its competences include all digital infrastructures and services, the training of university staff and the digital accessibility unit.

### Three questions to Rafael Molina Carmona

#### What is your role in the HEDforALL project?

*“In the HEDforALL project I am the principal investigator of the tasks assigned to the University of Alicante (UA). My role is to coordinate all the actions of the UA, from my double facet: as a researcher in learning technologies and as responsible for complying with all the accessibility parameters in all the digital resources and media of the university. In recent years we have become the most digitally accessible Spanish university, according to the accessibility observatory of the Ministry of Digital Transformation of the Spanish government, of which we are very proud at the UA.”*

#### Why is accessibility in higher education so important?

*“Digital accessibility in higher education is not an option. All students have the right to access education and we must ensure that students with different abilities can participate fully in academic activities, all with the same opportunities. In addition, it is about fostering diversity, which enriches the learning environment and draws on the different perspectives and experiences of all students. In short, it is about creating an equitable and non-discriminatory learning environment.*

*Digital materials, if accessible, offer features that are difficult to achieve in analogue environments: ease of navigation, clarity, conciseness and encouragement of learner autonomy.*

*Being accessible to all also has a positive impact on the institution, enhancing reputation, attracting diverse students and benefiting everyone in general. In addition, we must not forget the legal compliance to which all educational institutions are subject.*

*In short, digital accessibility in higher education is a moral, legal and practical imperative.”*

#### How is the HEDforALL project contributing to improving accessibility?

*“The HEDforALL project contributes to the improvement of digital accessibility by defining a set of practices for the development of educational resources and methodologies for Distance Education in Higher Education. These practices and methodologies aim to make digital education more accessible. It is based on universal design which seeks to create resources that are accessible from their origin at the design stage. The use of techniques such as subtitling and audio description, alternative texts, accessible formats, and technological adaptations allow us to help people with different abilities.*

*Not only that, the HEDforALL project also promotes the training of teachers in the use of assistive technologies and in the creation of accessible educational materials. In addition, the project provides resources and tools to help educational institutions implement digital education in an accessible way.*

*In short, the HEDforALL project will impact the improvement of digital accessibility in the participating institutions and also in higher education in general, from results that will be of interest to all institutions.”*

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## RES3 (D3.1). Development of accessible educational materials

This report summarizes the activities and outcomes of “Project Result 3 (RES3)”, which focuses on the creation and adaptation of accessible educational materials to support Students with Disabilities (SwD) in higher education. The document also includes an Accessible Material Guide, which provides practical methodologies and tools for designing inclusive learning resources.

The report encompasses a variety of educational formats and technologies, including:

- Accessible books (in formats such as PDF, DAISY, and EPUB).
- Tactile materials for visual impairments.
- Verbal descriptions for images and multimedia content.
- Accessible mathematical and chemical content.
- Audio-tactile and accessible video resources.

These materials were developed following a comprehensive needs assessment and with direct input from both SwD and educational professionals. The outcomes aim to enhance educational accessibility and address the barriers faced by SwD in digital and physical learning environments.

Additionally, the report outlines the procedures employed for the creation of these resources, as well as the results of pilot testing conducted in collaboration with SwD and stakeholders.

- Read the [RES3 \(D.3.1\). Creation of accessible educational resources](#).

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## RES3 (D3.2). Accessible Material Guide

This report, part of the “Project Result 3 (RES3)” initiative, presents a comprehensive Accessible Material Guide designed to support higher education institutions in creating inclusive and accessible educational materials. The guide offers detailed methodologies, best practices, and practical tools for ensuring that educational materials meet accessibility standards and cater to the diverse needs of Students with Disabilities (SwD).

The guide addresses various aspects of accessibility, including:

- Designing accessible documents using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and PDF.
- Creating digital books in EPUB format.
- Producing accessible multimedia materials with subtitles, audio descriptions, and tactile graphics.
- Adapting complex content such as mathematical and chemical equations.

The guide also includes step-by-step instructions for using accessibility tools, checking compliance, and incorporating alternative text for non-textual elements like charts and graphics.

By adopting the recommendations outlined in this guide, educators and institutions can contribute to removing barriers and fostering equitable learning opportunities for SwD.

- Read the [RES3 \(D.3.2\). Accessible material guide](#).

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## Transnational Project Meeting

The HEDforALL project team convened a key transnational meeting to evaluate progress and coordinate future activities, fostering collaboration to ensure project success.

- **Progress Meeting in Thessaloniki (October 3-4, 2024).** The meeting, hosted by **University of Macedonia (UOM)**, focused on the progress, status and future planning of the project. The partners provided input and updates on various work packages (RES 2 to RES 8), including administrative and

financial matters. The partners concentrated on the requirements for finalizing the 2nd phase of the study on knowledge, experience and skills of teaching staff and accessibility advisors (RES2), the development of the accessible material guide (RES3), the publications on the evaluation results of educational materials by SwD (RES4) and the assessment of quality and educational outcomes from the ongoing pilot implementations of accessible distance education courses (RES5). The meeting also included discussions on the ongoing development of the online repository of accessible educational materials (RES6) and the production of the educational YouTube videos (RES8). It concluded with discussions on project management, administrative and financial matters. The meeting facilitated partner discussions and decisions while serving as a crucial tool for ensuring the success and clarity of the project focus as it moves forward.

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## Project Partners

There are four partner organizations from four EU countries working together inside the HEDforALL project. All of them bring a different perspective to the project according to their profile.



**University of Macedonia (Greece)**  
**COORDINATOR**



Universitat d'Alacant  
Universidad de Alicante

**University of Alicante (Spain)**



**National Research Council of Italy**  
**Institute for Educational Technology (CNR-ITD) (Italy)**

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## Contact:

### Project Coordinator

Prof. **Konstantinos Papadopoulos**  
University of Macedonia, Department of Educational and Social Policy  
156 Egnatia Str., GR-540 36 Thessaloniki, Greece  
<https://www.uom.gr/en/kpapado>



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