

CONNECT 2025: A Young Researcher's Perspective

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Abstract: Intending to empower young researchers and shape their ideas for potential future discoveries to mitigate the growing risk of global problems, the Conference CONNECT 2025 made meaningful contributions. This event resulted in the exchange of knowledge and experiences among Western Balkan countries and partners from Germany, Hungary, and Turkey. During the Conference from 25th to 29th August, participants gained new insights into the importance of networking through interactive sessions between students and experts. The most meaningful aspect of the event was the supportive atmosphere, which contributed to active engagement and strengthened collaboration across the European research network.

Keywords: networking; interdisciplinary; collaboration

1. Introduction

As a participant in CONNECT 2025, I feel excited to share my reflections on this genuinely valuable event. What made the event even more successful was the atmosphere filled with passion, curiosity, and motivation to make an impact in the world.

Hereby, I would like to reflect on how CONNECT 2025 provided me with insights into the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and networking. The concept of the European Research Area (ERA) was based on the value of making connections and collaborations among countries to create a unique research space. A unique research space already holds power and credibility in its saying. It indicates that to make some changes, researchers, experts, and early-career students need to create and communicate together.

2. Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Networking at CONNECT 2025

I have gained my personal view on the capabilities of networking and interdisciplinary approaches throughout my ongoing studies. This event helped me expand my connections among peers from diverse fields, where we developed, for a short duration, solutions for various topics. Besides that, the role of mentors provided to us, their support, guidance, and dedication, genuinely contributed to our further career development. As a young researcher with mobility and studying

abroad experiences, this event left a meaningful impact on my further academic growth. The biggest triggers in that sense were the discussions with experts who had similar career paths that I could relate to. This left me inspired, motivated, and ready to pursue every challenge that stands in front of my personal and academic growth.

Interestingly, the approach of sharing knowledge and empowering the participants through interactive workshops, such as world café, group projects, and public speaking exercises, resulted in a successful mechanism to engage the curiosity and motivate young researchers to create a research network across Europe.

This event has managed to create a vision for transformation and collaboration between Western Balkan countries with the leading European research centers, intending to mitigate the global problems. Fortunately, for the CONNECT 2025, I have gained new perspectives that provided me with new perspectives on the importance of an interdisciplinary approach and networking for applied solutions. The other aspect of this event's success resulted in creating beautiful memories and friendships with other participants.

3. Interactive Learning and Mentorship at CONNECT 2025

A defining element of CONNECT 2025 was its emphasis on interactive learning formats, including world café workshops, group projects, and public speaking exercises. These activities encouraged active participation, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas among students and mentors.

Through these formats, participants were actively involved in shaping discussions, developing ideas, and receiving constructive feedback. The supportive and inclusive environment fostered open communication, strengthened confidence, and facilitated meaningful engagement between early-career researchers and experienced experts (Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1. Atmosphere from the World Café workshops.



Figure 2. Discussion with mentors regarding the final projects.

4. Conclusion

CONNECT 2025 represented an academic and personal experience that reinforced the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, networking, and open exchange among young researchers and experienced experts. Through interactive formats, mentorship, and meaningful dialogue, the conference provided a supportive environment for developing ideas, building confidence, and strengthening professional connections across the European research network.

Beyond the academic perception gained, the conference had a lasting personal impact, fostering motivation, inspiration, and a sense of belonging to a wider research community. The experiences and connections established during CONNECT 2025 will continue to shape my future academic path and reaffirm the value of collaboration in addressing contemporary scientific and societal challenges.

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