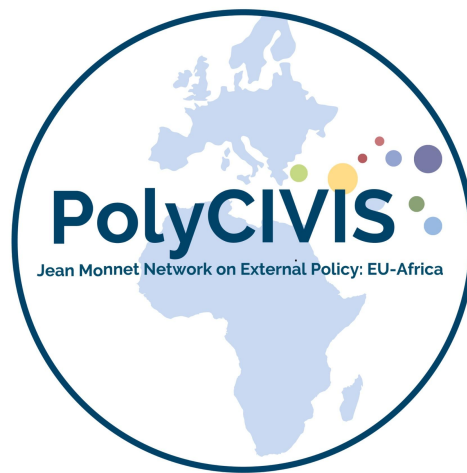


PolyCIVIS in Casablanca: When dialogue becomes action

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Introduction

Under the bright skies of Casablanca, the 1st African-European CIVIS Forum on Research & Education unfolded as more than just a gathering; it became a space where ideas met lived realities and where collaboration across continents took a tangible, human form.

Hosted with remarkable warmth by Hassan II University of Casablanca, the forum welcomed scholars, students, and experts into an atmosphere of exchange, curiosity, and genuine connection. Beyond the sessions and discussions, it was the spirit of hospitality and openness that made the experience truly memorable, reminding us that cooperation is not only institutional but deeply human.

PolyCIVIS takes the stage

At the heart of the forum, PolyCIVIS brought its core mission to life: making sense of today's interconnected crises through research, dialogue, and action.

During the panel *"Building on PolyCIVIS Insights,"* voices from across the network, Brussels, Aix Marseille, Tunisia, and Maputo, engaged in a dynamic exchange that reflected the very essence of the project: interconnected thinking. Rather than isolated interventions, the discussion unfolded as a chain of reflections, each speaker building on the other.

What emerged was clear: the concept of *polycrisis* is no longer theoretical. Through **15 policy papers already published, and more on the way**, the project has contributed to reframing how we understand complexity. From climate change to governance and water management, these works highlight not only the interconnectedness of crises but also the need for *polysolutions*, responses that are as interlinked as the challenges themselves.

Concrete examples brought this to life. Water management, for instance, was framed within a broader food–water–energy–climate nexus, where pressure in one domain triggers cascading effects in others. Addressing such challenges, therefore, requires integrated, adaptive, and equitable approaches.

Another key highlight of the panel was the upcoming **PolyCIVIS edited volume**, which brings together a wide range of contributions from across the network. Designed as a space for interdisciplinary and cross-continental dialogue, the book aims to deepen the understanding of polycrisis by showcasing diverse perspectives and case studies from both African and European contexts. The discussion highlighted the collaborative authorship and reflected the project's commitment to co-producing knowledge that is both globally relevant and locally grounded.

Communicating complexity

Yet producing knowledge is only part of the journey. A key question raised during the panel was how to ensure that research reaches policymakers in an already saturated landscape. From advocacy efforts in Brussels to upcoming collaborations with international organizations and media platforms, PolyCIVIS is actively exploring ways to translate research into impact.

Communication has been central to this effort. Through digital platforms, newsletters, interviews, podcasts, and Polycrisis Talks webinars, the project has worked to make the complex idea of polycrisis accessible to diverse audiences. This has not been without challenges; translating an abstract, multidisciplinary concept into engaging content requires constant experimentation, but the response has been encouraging. What resonated most was the ability to bring together diverse voices, academics, students, and practitioners into a shared conversation.

Education in motion: Learning through complexity

Across the forum, education emerged not just as a response to crisis, but as a space of transformation.

Panel discussions on forced displacement and migration highlighted how education systems can foster inclusive, multilingual, and multicultural societies, recognizing not only formal qualifications but also lived experience and informal knowledge. In this context, mobility, recognition of skills, and cross-border cooperation become powerful tools for inclusion.

This reflection was taken further in the panel *“Teaching Complexity Through Real-World and Collaborative Pedagogies.”* Here, the classroom was reimaged as a laboratory of experimentation.

From digital technologies supporting the teaching of polycrisis, to simulation games that immerse students in decision-making under uncertainty, innovative approaches are reshaping how complexity is taught. Other contributions demonstrated how students can engage directly with real-world challenges, co-designing projects with communities, participating in fieldwork simulations, and navigating the realities of migration, identity, and policy gaps.

What united these approaches was a shared ambition: to move beyond passive learning and foster **critical thinking, empathy, and action-oriented skills**. Teaching complexity, it became clear, is not about simplifying reality—but about equipping learners to engage with it.

Co-creating knowledge across continents

If one idea consistently echoed throughout the forum, it was this: **knowledge must be co-created**.

In sessions dedicated to experimentation and experiential knowledge, participants explored how universities can work alongside communities, institutions, and non-academic actors to address shared challenges. These discussions questioned traditional notions of expertise, asking what counts as “data,” and how local, embodied, and traditional knowledge can coexist with academic standards.

This same spirit was at the core of the Tandem Talk on Equity and Inclusion in African–European Knowledge Partnerships. Drawing from years of collaboration across institutions, speakers reflected on what it truly means **to build equitable partnerships**.

Beyond principles and frameworks, the conversation addressed the *realities* of collaboration: differences in resources, institutional structures, and epistemic traditions. Through experiences of “learning, unlearning, and relearning,” the session highlighted that equitable cooperation is not automatic, it is something that must be **actively built, negotiated, and sustained**.

And yet, within these challenges lie opportunities. By embracing mutual respect, contextual understanding, and the integration of local knowledge systems, African-European partnerships can move toward more **inclusive, ethical, and resilient models of collaboration**.

Looking ahead: Sustaining the network

As the current phase of PolyCIVIS approaches its conclusion, the conversation naturally turned to the future.

What comes next is not an end, but a transition. New ideas are already taking shape—from joint programs and innovative teaching formats to continued dialogue platforms like the BIPs and the Polycrisis Talks series. More importantly, there is a shared commitment to sustaining the network beyond project timelines, embedding its spirit within broader CIVIS Alliance actions.

Conclusion: A forum to remember

Beyond the panels, beyond the presentations, what will remain is a feeling. In the conversations between sessions, in the shared moments across cultures, and in the generosity of our hosts, the forum captured what African-European cooperation can truly be **collaborative and inclusive**.

As we left Casablanca, one idea stayed with us: The dialogue is ongoing. The partnerships are growing. And the transformation, though still unfolding, is already in motion.

PolyCIVIS: confronting the polycrisis in Europe and Africa

PolyCIVIS is a Euro - African collaboration that brings to the forefront the global polycrisis, allowing a better understanding of the impacts of several concurrent major societal crises challenging the world in the form of a polycrisis.

In the wake of the global polycrisis, urgent challenges have emerged, prompting PolyCIVIS to take action. Our initiative is dedicated to addressing these pressing global issues and their interconnected consequences.

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