



Main Building European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder). Foto: Heide Fest



Gravity Building Heilbronn – Home of Campus Founders. Foto: <https://heavenskitchen.rocks/heilbronn/>

# “ERLab Startup Bootcamp: Bridging Ecosystems between East and West”

Seminar „Hinsehen“ – Kritische Perspektiven auf die globalisierte Welt (SoSe 2026) –

**Viadrina-Examination No.** BA: 6078 / MA: 6798

**Language:** English

**Dates:** May 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026 plus virtual Meeting April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026

**Viadrina Instructors:** Meike Joseph, M.Sc. & Prof. Dr. Albrecht Söllner

**Partner Universities**

- **Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius**
- **New Bulgarian University, Sofia**
- **SWPS University (Wroclaw & Krakow)**
- **European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)**

## Course Description

The *ERLab Startup Bootcamp* is an intensive, interdisciplinary, and international seminar designed to foster entrepreneurial thinking as a response to societal challenges in a globalized Europe. It will be hosted by the Entrepreneurship Research Lab (ERLab) – the joint research initiative of Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder) and Campus Founders, Heilbronn. The Bootcamp is embedded in the European Reform University Alliance (ERUA), the course brings together students from partner universities in Eastern and Western Europe to collaboratively develop innovative, socially relevant (startup) ideas.

Throughout the bootcamp students will be taking a close look at people's real-life conditions, economic realities, and institutional frameworks. By combining perspectives from social sciences, management, and technology, students critically examine how entrepreneurship, innovation, and democratic values can contribute to sustainable societal development.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the bootcamp, students will be able to:

1. Apply entrepreneurial and management methods (e.g., design thinking, lean startup) in an international setting.
2. Develop an entrepreneurial mindset focused on societal challenges.
3. Work effectively in diverse, international, and interdisciplinary teams.
4. Enhance intercultural competence through close collaboration with ERUA partners.
5. Strengthen communication, analytical, problem-solving skills, and emotional intelligence.

## Course Structure & Schedule (5 Days in Heilbronn, Germany)

- **Virtual Preparation-Meeting:** April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026
- **Day 1 (May 4):** Problem discovery, analysis, and validation of real-world challenges
- **Day 2 (May 5):** Problem refinement using assumption-based validation and testing methods
- **Day 3 (May 6):** MVP development using digital tools, including AI and no-code solutions
- **Day 4 (May 7):** MVP validation through real-world user feedback (“get out of the building”)
- **Day 5 (May 8):** Pitch deck preparation and final presentation to a professional jury

## Teaching & Learning Methods

- Interactive workshops
- Team-based project work
- Mentorship sessions with startup experts
- Peer feedback and reflective learning
- Excursions and networking activities within the Heilbronn entrepreneurship ecosystem

## Assessment

- Active participation throughout the seminar
- Team-based startup project and MVP
- Final pitch presentation to a professional jury

6 ECTS are achieved through active participation and involvement in the whole seminar and the successful innovation journey in connection with the defined bootcamp including all assignments.

## Funding

- The selected Viadrina students will be accommodated free of charge in double rooms in Heilbronn. A (proportional reimbursement of train travel costs, if applicable) is also provided for.

## Application for Seminar-Participation

Please explain in a short letter of motivation (300 words) OR a one-minute video what it means to you specifically to “build bridges” between different innovation ecosystems. Please discuss where you currently see the greatest barriers, but also the greatest potential for stronger cooperation between Eastern and Western European innovation ecosystems. Please also name a characteristic or skill that makes you particularly qualified to participate in the event and to work in the group. Show us that you are the right person for this innovation journey! Please also attach a CV (max. 1 page)!

Generic letters of motivation created solely by LLMs (e.g., GPT, BARD, or LLaMa) are unfortunately not very meaningful. An authentic letter of motivation should always come from you. However, LLMs can serve as competent sparring partners if you work with them transparently and creatively. So let us know which creative prompts you used or whether you chose not to use LLMs.

Please note that the application deadline is **February 23**, as registration for the course in Heilbronn must be completed in February. For application details, please refer to the homepage of the Chair of International Management. Early applications are now possible and encouraged! Participants will be selected on an ongoing basis and places are limited.

Please note that by participating in the “Hinsehen” seminar, any photos and videos taken of you may be published by the organizers for PR purposes in print media, on the Viadrina website, on media sharing sites such as Flickr and YouTube, and on social media channels such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. If you do not wish to be photographed or filmed, please inform the organizers in advance.

Furthermore, you grant the organizers of the seminar and the European University Viadrina the right to make full use of the works and content created during the seminar. This includes use in modified or unmodified form without any restrictions on the factual, spatial, technical, or temporal scope of use.