

ERUA VENTURETHON 2027

Three days. One idea. Real evidence.

5 May – 7 May 2027 · Online intensive, with an in-person hub in Vilnius, Lithuania

Hosted by Mykolas Romeris University on behalf of the European Reform University Alliance

An invitation to build

Every meaningful venture begins the same way: someone notices a real problem and refuses to look away. The ERUA Venturethon is three days designed to take that instinct and turn it into something tested, sharpened, and ready to stand in front of a room.

This is not a lecture series about entrepreneurship. It is entrepreneurship - compressed, intense, and evidence-driven. Over three days you will move an idea through the same disciplined journey that real founders use: define exactly who you serve, prove the problem is real by talking to actual people, design the smallest thing that demonstrates value, test whether anyone will pay, and pitch the result to a jury. No business plan written in a vacuum. No applause for ideas that sound good but have never met a customer.

Across the eight universities of the European Reform University Alliance, we share a belief that the best learning happens when students stop performing and start doing - when they are trusted with a hard, open-ended challenge and the tools to meet it. The Venturethon is that belief made concrete. You will work in international teams, think across disciplines, and leave having built something real with people you had never met three days earlier.

Bring an idea, or bring your curiosity and join one. Bring your discipline, your doubt, and your willingness to be proven wrong by the evidence - because that is exactly the muscle a founder needs most.

Three days from now, you will have a validated venture concept and the confidence that you tested it honestly. Come find out what you can build.

At a glance

What	An intensive, evidence-gated venture-building sprint
When	5 May – 7 May 2026 (Wednesday–Friday) Plus an online intro session on 6 April, 19:00 (CET) - what the Venturethon is and what to expect
Format	Live online session, open to all ERUA universities, with an in-person hub in Vilnius
Host	Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania
Who	Students and early-career researchers from across the ERUA alliance - all disciplines welcome
Team size	3–5 people; teams formed on Day 1
Cost	Free to participate
You leave with	A validated venture concept, a pitch, and a method you can reuse for life

The method: the Venturethon in three days

The Venturethon runs on a simple principle: proof, not promises. An idea does not advance because a session ended - it advances when it clears a proof bar, a concrete piece of evidence that the idea is real. Over three days your team works through nine validation blocks, organised into three phases, each ending in a decision gate where you make an honest call: Go, Pivot, or Kill.

A word on evidence, because it is the heart of the method. Not all signals are equal. A signed pre-order or a paid pilot is worth far more than a polite “sounds useful.” You will learn to weigh evidence on a strength ladder - from costly, hard-to-fake commitments down to easy verbal approval - and one strong disconfirming signal will count for more than a dozen weak positives. This is the discipline that separates wishful thinking from a real venture.

The preliminary programme

All session times are shown in Vilnius time zone. An online session is live; in-person activities take place at Mykolas Romeris University.

Day 1 — Wednesday 5 May · Prove the problem

Time	Session
09:30	Welcome & kickoff — opening from the ERUA host and the rules of the sprint
10:00	Venturethon methodology presentation & Challenge announcement
10:30	Team formation — pitch-ins, skill matching, teams locked
11:00	Block 1 · Segment — define your early customer profile (ECP) and ideal customer (ICP). Who exactly are the first people you can reach?
11:45	Block 2 · Customer ecosystem - map the actors, factors and mechanisms that shape your customer's decisions
13:00	Lunch
14:00	Block 3 · Problem - a customer-interview sprint. Talk to real people using “Mom Test” discipline: ask about past behaviour, never pitch
16:00	Block 4 · Market size & timing — your beachhead market and a sharp “why now”
17:00	Gate A — Problem-fit verdict — is there a severe, repeated problem in a reachable segment? Go / Pivot / Kill
19:00	Welcome dinner (Vilnius, in person) — meet your cohort, ERUA mentors and local founders, entrepreneurs and investors over food and conversation

Day 2 — Thursday 6 May · Prove the demand

Time	Session
09:30	Stand-up — what last night's evidence changed
10:00	Block 5 · Solution (MVP) - the smallest thing that proves your value. Keep it boringly small
11:15	Block 6 · Value proposition & messaging - your one-sentence pitch, then a comprehension test on real strangers
13:00	Lunch
14:00	Block 7 · Pricing & Block 8 · Channels - who pays, how much, and how you reach them
15:00	Experiment sprint - run a live test and score the result on the evidence-strength ladder
15:30	Gate B — Demand verdict - is there real, costly evidence that people want this?
15:45-18:00	Exploring the Lithuanian startup ecosystem - a guided visit into one of the region's fastest-growing tech scenes

Day 3 — Friday 7 May · Prove the business & pitch

Time	Session
09:30	Block 9 · Defensibility - what gets stronger as you grow: data, network, switching costs, brand?
10:30	Evidence assembly - build your scorecard and weigh your proof honestly
11:30	Pitch lab - craft a three-minute pitch: problem, evidence, solution, ask
13:00	Lunch
14:00	Pitching session - final pitches to the jury, followed by the Gate C venture verdict
16:00	Awards & closing - recognition, reflections, and next steps

Judging Criteria

The Venturethon rewards proof, not promises. Teams are judged on the strength of their evidence and the honesty of their reasoning - not on how polished the idea sounds. One strong disconfirming signal that a team faced honestly is worth more than a dozen weak positives.

1. Problem validation — 25 points

Is there a severe, repeated problem in a clearly defined, reachable customer segment? Judges look for evidence from real customer interviews conducted with "Mom Test" discipline (past behaviour, no pitching) — not assumptions or opinions.

2. Demand evidence — 25 points

Is there real, costly evidence that people want this and will pay? Judges weigh proof on the evidence-strength ladder: signed pre-orders and paid pilots rank far above verbal interest or "sounds useful." Stronger, harder-to-fake commitments score higher.

3. Solution & business model — 20 points

Does the MVP demonstrate genuine value at the smallest possible scale? Are pricing, channels, and market clearly reasoned, with a credible source of defensibility (data, network, switching costs, or brand) that grows with the venture?

4. Evidence discipline — 15 points

How honestly did the team handle its own evidence? Judges reward rigorous weighing of proof, a genuine response to disconfirming signals, and honest Persevere / Pivot / Kill decisions at each gate — including the courage to change direction when the evidence demanded it.

5. Pitch & clarity — 15 points

A clear three-minute pitch covering problem, evidence, solution, and ask. Judged on clarity, conciseness, and honesty — evidence presented straight, without overstatement.

Total: 100 points

Scoring guide per criterion: 0–40% = little or no evidence / assertion only · 40–70% = some real evidence, gaps remain · 70–100% = strong, costly, honestly weighed evidence.

What you will walk away with

- **A validated venture concept** — an idea you have tested against real evidence, not just refined in your head.
- **A three-minute pitch** delivered in front of a jury, and the feedback to make it stronger.
- **A reusable method** — the Venturethon's evidence-gated approach works for any future idea, project, or research question.
- **An international network** — teammates, mentors, and founders from across ERUA and the Vilnius startup community.
- **A certificate of participation** from ERUA.

Who should join

You do not need a finished idea, a business background, or technical skills. You need curiosity, three days of focus, and the willingness to let evidence change your mind. We welcome students and early-career researchers from all eight ERUA universities and every discipline - the strongest teams are the mixed ones, where a philosopher, an engineer, a designer and an economist argue their way to something better.

Practical details

- **Dates:** 5 May - 7 May 2027, preceded by an online intro session on 6 April, 19:00 CET
- **Format:** Live online intensive (all ERUA universities) + in-person hub at Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius
- **Language:** English
- **Cost:** Free. Selected in-person participants may be eligible for travel support - details on application.
- **Commitment:** Full attendance across all three days is expected, plus the short online intro session on 6 April 2027.

Apply

Places are limited and teams are kept small on purpose. Tell us briefly who you are, what you study, and either the idea you want to test or the kind of challenge you would like to work on.

Interested students are invited to submit their application online [HERE](#).
Detailed application instructions are available [HERE](#).

MRU students apply via: a.jurgelevicius@mruni.eu

Application deadline: 26th of March 2027

Questions: a.jurgelevicius@mruni.eu