

**Letter of motivation
for Cumulus
Executive Board
2025_2028
candidacy**

Aveiro, 25 February 2025

It is with great enthusiasm that I submit my candidacy for a second term on the Cumulus Executive Board. Over the past years, I have had the privilege of contributing to the strategic direction of the association, fostering meaningful collaborations, and supporting the growth of our global network. My commitment to Cumulus remains unwavering, and I am eager to continue working towards strengthening its impact within the international design education and research community.

I am a designer and a tenured Associate Professor at the University of Aveiro (UA) in Portugal, where I have been actively engaged in internationalization strategies, pedagogical innovation, and interdisciplinary collaborations. My academic journey has been shaped by international experiences, including a postgraduate degree in Industrial Design from the Glasgow School of Art and a PhD from Politecnico di Milano under the guidance of Ezio Manzini. The years I spent in Italy profoundly influenced my academic path, reinforcing my belief in the power of global networks and cross-institutional cooperation. Over the course of my career, I have held diverse leadership roles at UA, including the direction of design programs, coordination of international partnerships, and integration of the university into key global networks such as Cumulus and MEDes (Master of European Design). I was responsible for enrolling the University of Aveiro in the Cumulus Association during the Genk Conference in 2010 and later played an active role in its international engagement. Additionally, I coordinated and participated in various European research projects focused on social innovation, circular economy, and sustainability, strengthening my expertise in collaborative methodologies and impact-driven design research. My deep commitment to international academic collaboration is also reflected in my experience as a former International Coordinator of the DESIS Network (Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability). The DESIS Network connects design schools across five continents, and my leadership in this global community has given me valuable insights into the dynamics of academic networks and their potential to drive meaningful change. During my first term on the Cumulus Executive Board, I worked to bridge connections between Cumulus and other networks, reinforcing synergies and expanding opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation. If re-elected, I aim to continue fostering these connections, increasing the visibility of Cumulus members and supporting initiatives that amplify the role of design in addressing societal challenges.

Beyond network-building, I have always been committed to strengthening Cumulus as a platform for inclusive participation. Coming from a young university in a small country, I understand the importance of ensuring that institutions of all sizes and backgrounds have a voice within our association. In my next term, I would continue working towards increasing the engagement of smaller and emerging design schools, supporting mechanisms that enable a more diverse and representative global design community.

Throughout my academic career, I have also sought to enrich my perspective through international experiences. I had the opportunity to spend sabbatical periods at Aalto School of Arts and Design (2013) and Elisava School of Design in Barcelona (2021), engaging with different approaches to design education and research. In 2025, I will undertake a new sabbatical at Politecnico di Milano, further deepening my connections with the international design community and reinforcing my engagement with collaborative research and pedagogical strategies.

Cumulus stands at a pivotal moment, with the opportunity to consolidate its role as a leading force in design education and research. I am eager to contribute to this mission by leveraging my experience, international perspective, and dedication to collective growth. It would be a privilege to continue serving on the Executive Board, working alongside fellow members to strengthen our network and amplify the impact of design education worldwide.

Yours sincerely,



Teresa Franqueira. Associate Professor. Universidade de Aveiro