

Mission Statement

European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

(EU-CONEXUS)

I. General Vision

In 2025 the European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (EU-CONEXUS) will be **the unique European transnational higher education and research institution** that is able to cover the smart urban sustainable coastal development from a global point of view, by **cross disciplinary based approaches, vocational training, innovative and professionalizing educational and research methods and extensive service provision** in the field of blue growth.

It will provide for the tools and instruments to promote the **comprehensiveness and quality** of education, research and innovation in this area at a European and international level.

Its **competitive advantage** will be based on the **decade-long expertise** of the partner universities as well as the **dominant position of European industries in the area of “Blue Economy”**.

EU-CONEXUS has chosen a focus on urban and semi-urban coastlines because they are increasingly densely populated areas and very important for inter alia trade, aquaculture and fisheries, energy, tourism. At the same time these coastlines are most vulnerable areas with regard to the consequences of climate change. These characteristics ask for an integrated management, risk assessment and planning by working across sectors and disciplines. Universities and research institutions have a central role to play in promoting the “Blue Economy” and “Blue Growth”. But **a new approach is needed with regard to the organization of studies and research in order to reflect the complexity of the problems and opportunities facing urban coastal environments**.

A significant number of EU initiatives make clear that problem-solving in the area of urban coastal sustainability is considered to be a European issue¹. The knowledge and skills needed are available in Europe but need to be interconnected and set into dialogue. The European University on Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability will provide the **tools and instruments to**

¹ The subject area of the proposed European University is reflected in topics included in the “Societal Challenges” pillar of “Horizon 2020”. Furthermore, under the current framework programme “sustainable development” is one of the transversal objects of research on societal challenges. Also: “Sustainable Development” in the higher education sector is one of the six principal objectives of the Erasmus+ programme. Finally, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund provides funding for marine research and innovation projects and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive asks for the assessment of pressures and impacts of human activities on the marine environment.

promote the comprehensiveness and quality of education, research and innovation in this area at a European and international level.

Reflecting the most important current social, economic, technical and environmental challenges impacting coastlines, the study programme will be focused on **four interdisciplinary study dimensions**:

(1) The focus “**Environment and biodiversity**” investigates risks and opportunities for the ecosystem: e.g. biodiversity, properties of the coastline, migration flows, life quality on coastlines, biotechnology/health, landscape planning, legal issues, and maritime engineering.

(2) The dimension “**Energy and sustainable construction**” is studied in laboratories working on construction/urban microclimate, the eco-efficiency of energy, resilience (durability) of materials and construction works.

(3) The “**Digital transformation**”, as one of the major transitions impacting our societies, entails studies on the legal, administrative, cultural implications of dematerialisation and of the valorisation of material (cultural heritage) or digital resources (data protection, data security, democratisation of the “internet of objects”, digital humanities’ resources).

(4) The focus “**Culture, society, organisation, education**” takes on a social sciences and humanities’ perspective and tries to define what “living on an urban coastline” means, by, in particular, taking into account sustainability issues and thereby relating to the other three dimensions: environment, sustainable construction and the digital transformation.

Based on the complementary strengths of its partner institutions, it will offer a **multi-disciplinary** course programme designed on a **multilingual and multicultural basis** and utilizing **innovative learning technologies**. EU-CONEXUS will strategically attract **outstanding students and researchers from all over the world** and become a **reference point for innovative research**.

It will establish an exemplary **cross-border system for vocational training** and educate a future generation of **high level professionals** with profiles that match the constantly evolving needs of the industries relevant for smart sustainable urban coastlines (“blue economy”), harbour industries, blue biotechnologies, tourism heritage, fisheries and aquaculture, health industry etc.. As a core element of its structure, EU-CONEXUS will be at the centre of an institutional system for creating innovative solutions and products for urban coastal sustainability by accompanying start-ups and industrial cooperation between industries close to the partner institutions (port industry).

The final goal is to become the global leader in higher education and research in the area of smart urban coastal sustainability, with a perspective of expansion beyond the size of its founding consortium.

II. Long-Term Strategy

1. The partner institutions of the European University will provide for the **best available knowledge across Europe** and the world on Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability following a **long-term joint strategy**.
2. Their teaching, research and innovation programmes include the totality of social, economic and environmental problems and opportunities that coastline areas are facing today.
 - The partner universities share a common vision with regard to a new form of transnational university which issues **common European degrees and common European diplomas**.
 - They agree on a set of **shared values** concerning open and responsible science, inclusive pedagogies, innovative teaching and learning methods, multilingualism, cross-and multidisciplinary research and education and cross-sectorial study programmes.
 - Students, staff and teaching personnel participate in tailor-made **mobility programmes** adapted to their studies and/or their professional development path.
3. The partners commit themselves to creating a **European higher education inter-university 'campus'** based on an **ever-closer academic and administrative integration** of their teaching, research and innovation activities in the aforementioned subject area with the objective to create an **international body with a legal personality** relying on a common governing structure and a common budget.
 - Integrated bachelor-, master and PhD programmes will **combine the strengths in education, research and innovation** of the partners. They will represent a **unique point of entry in Europe and the world** for studies in the subject area of smart urban coastal sustainability studies. Students will be able to customize their personal study programme across disciplines and following their personal time schedule by using digital means of education.

- **Embedded mobility** in every study programme will enhance the **language skills and intercultural competences** of the students and also reinforce their **sense of European identity and citizenship**.
 - The partner institutions of the European University will create a **cross-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and cross-sectorial teaching and research programme** in close relationship with their socio-economic environment in order to respond to **actual needs of relative industries**, support the **regional innovation and development** and **foster an entrepreneurial mindset** of their students. The new and transnationally integrated curricula combine state-of-the-art pedagogical methods and project-based research and innovation in cooperation with public, social and economic actors.
 - The European University commits to its leading role in interaction with its regional social environment. It will contribute to the promotion of the sciences in schools and within their local communities by e.g. organising laboratory visits for school children and for the local society (open days) and public events.
 - The European University understands itself as a service-oriented institution that aims at the inclusion of a diversity of students through personalization and individualization of its study programme. **“Smart” and innovative pedagogies** (e-learning, flexible course programme (major/minor approach), virtual/physical mobility, project-based learning, work-based experiences...) will create a **new form of university open for students from different backgrounds** and with divergent interests and needs for education and training.
4. European knowledge-creating teams will work on **innovative solutions** in joint research and innovation laboratories. Public organizations and private social or economic actors will be associated to the research and innovation programmes. in order to take profit of the educational and scientific programme of the university, and so that public policies could be led with more discernment.
- Pan-European and cross border impacts are represented in two dimensions, qualitative and quantitative:
- in the first place, the availability of innovative tools for blue growth will result in a considerable **increase of the number of students and researchers being involved in the field** and also contribute to scaling-up of the European technological and industrial impact as a key stakeholder in the future development of blue economy.
 - Secondly, the establishment of **joint strategies** for innovative research and jointly operating facilities -eventually resulting to a network of Living

Laboratories - will create yet unforeseen opportunities for technologies benchmarking, R&D and training/dissemination.

5. The project will be acting as a model of good practice in:
 - On **thematic grounds** the project will show off new ways of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) working across sectoral, disciplinary and institutional boundaries and contribute to the **development of a European Coastal Policy** by increasing coordination between different policy areas.
 - On **procedural grounds** the governance, cooperation and communication structure of the project will prove its effectiveness and durability in functioning in a multilingual environment by including students, teaching and administrative staff on equal grounds and involving external stakeholders on a regular basis. In the long term, EU-CONEXUS may develop its **own legal personality**. Depending of the size of each partner institution this means that a certain percentage of its total activities is transferred legally to the international body EU-CONEXUS. As an international organization EU-CONEXUS acts as an employer for its staff and faculty.
 - Pedagogical innovative teaching methods and educational strategies (University as a service,) will serve as examples for a new kind of University that follows a challenge and **learning outcomes-based** approach when designing its educational offer that includes vocational training. It also takes into account the individual accomplishments and needs of its students by allowing flexibility and variability of a degree curriculum.
 - EU-CONEXUS will establish a **targeted reorientation and study support** service by taking into account individual achievements for best accomplishing individual education and training needs of disadvantaged social groups or students with special needs.

6. The partner institutions fully commit to the key policy objectives of the EU higher education area as well as the Bologna key commitments such as multilingualism, the automatic recognition of qualifications, application of the European student card, quality assurance and the issuing of the three-cycle-degree. They actively promote the development of these goals through a dedicated **EEA Working Group** that participates in the governance of the European University.

Name of Legal Representative

Jean-Marc OGIER

Function

President

Institution

La Rochelle University

Signature

Le Président
de l'Université de La Rochelle

Jean-Marc OGIER

Date

21/02/2019

Name of Legal Representative

SPYRIDON E KINTZIOS

Function

RECTOR

Institution

AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

Signature



Date 22 February 2019

Name of Legal Representative: Radu Sorin VĂCĂREANU

Function: RECTOR


Institution: TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF CIVIL ENGINEERING BUCHAREST

Signature



The image shows a handwritten signature in blue ink to the left of a circular official stamp. The stamp is blue and contains the text "ROMANIA" at the top, "MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI NAȚIONALE" on the left, "ILUSTRAREA" on the right, and "TEHNICĂ DE CONSTRUCȚII" at the bottom. In the center of the stamp is the coat of arms of Romania.

Date: 22/02/2019

Name of Legal Representative	Artūras Razbadauskas
Function	Acting rector
Institution	Klaipėda University
Signature	
Date	25 February 2019

Name of Legal Representative

JOSÉ MANUEL PAGÁN AGULLÓ

Function

RECTOR

Institution

FUNDACIÓN UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE VALENCIA SAN VICENTE MÁRTIR

Signature



Universidad Católica de Valencia
San Vicente Mártir

Date

22 February 2019

Name of Legal Representative

Professor DIJANA VICAN, PhD

Function

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UNIVERSITY OF ZADAR



ZADAR, 21 February 2019