EU CONEXUS
European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

Co-funded by the European Union

Student Board Reports

D12.2

WP 12: Supporting Student Engagement

Contractual due date (from GA): M48 -31 October 2026 Final delivery date: M48 – 16 October 2026
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Dissemination level: public

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Executive summary/abstract:

Work Package 12 (WP12) focuses on strengthening student engagement within EU-CONEXUS by increasing student participation in governance structures, responding to student needs, promoting inclusiveness and European values, and encouraging multidisciplinary approaches to Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (SmUCS) topics. It plays an important role in ensuring that students are not only beneficiaries of the Alliance, but also active contributors to its development and activities.

Within this Work Package, the Student Board serves as the representative body of students from all partner institutions. It contributes to strategic decision-making at all levels of the alliance while supporting initiatives specifically aimed at students. Student Board members also represent the alliance at institutional and external events. Their activities, together with those related to the calls for student projects, are documented in the Annual Student Board Reports.

Description:

This deliverable compiles the Annual Student Board Reports produced within the EU-CONEXUS Plus for the 2022–2026 implementation period. The reports document the activities, developments, and governance of the Student Board, including changes in its composition and operations, as well as the implementation of the calls for student projects. They provide information on each call, the selected projects, their implementation status, and student feedback on the initiative.

The Student SmUCS Projects initiative was initially allocated a total budget of €120,000 for the four-year implementation period. Following a budget revision, at the beginning of the project, according to the Grant Agreement Amendments, the final allocation to Student Projects initiative was adjusted to €100,600. During the 4-year period (2022–2026), the alliance successfully implemented four calls for student projects, ensuring continued support for student-led initiatives and maintaining the objectives of the programme.

As the EU-CONEXUS Plus project began in November 2022, the initial implementation period focused on establishing the structures and processes necessary for the Student Board's effective operation. This included the establishment of the Student Board Secretary Office, responsible for coordinating administrative activities, supporting the organisation of the Student Project calls, and preparing the annual reports. During the first few months, representatives from partner universities were selected for the Student Board, and Call Framework for Student Projects was developed as the first deliverable of WP12, serving as the foundation for launching the first call in June 2023. Consequently, no Annual Student Board Report was produced for the 2022/2023 academic year.

The first Annual Student Board Report therefore covers the 2023/2024 academic year, followed by reports for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026. Together, these reports provide a comprehensive overview of the Student Board's activities and achievements, as well as the implementation and outcomes of the four Student Project calls conducted during the EU-CONEXUS Plus.

Annual Student Board Report 2023/2024

Student Board Functioning

Governance Bodies of EU-CONEXUS Plus include the Governing Board, Student Board, Executive Council, Research Council, and Academic Council. The Student Board has their representatives in each council. The President of the Student Board participates in Governing Board and Executive Council meetings, while a PhD student representative is part of the Research Council. Two (2) SB members represent students in the Academic Council.

The Student Board, established during the Pilot phase, includes two representatives per university. They coordinate activities among student organisations at partner universities. In order to support the Student Board in fulfilling its tasks, a Student Board Secretary has been appointed. The Secretary assists Board members with administrative tasks related to meetings, documentation, internal and external communication, and the implementation of Student Board activities and projects. Additionally, the Secretary serves as a liaison between the Student Board and other EU-CONEXUS bodies and structures.

The Student Board launches a Call for Student Projects, which is published on the website and other relevant communication platforms. The Board oversees the implementation of these projects to ensure compliance with established rules. At the end of each year, the Student Board submits an annual report detailing the execution and outcomes of the Call for Student Projects.

Review of the SB Statute

Throughout the year, the SB held workshops to update its statute. By the end of the year, the statute was finalised to make it clearer and easier to follow.

Position of Joint Masters Programme

The position of JM representative is established to better acknowledgement of communication and needs of the EU-CONEXUS Joint Master's Programme. The JM Representative is responsible for representing the interests of students enrolled in Joint Masters and for proposing further action for improvement. He/she shall have full voting rights-election and mandate.

JMPMB Representative is elected among all joint Master Students throughout electronic Voting that guarantee the anonymity of vote. The mandate of the JM Representative is set for one year, renewable once. The mandate of the JMPMB representative will end if the Member resigns voluntarily after informing the Student Board and the Erasmus Student Network (ESN).

Adjustments to the VP voting process

From now on the Vice president will be elected among SB Members not from SB President's decision. The VP will be elected through absolute majority (50%+1), eleven votes. In cases of insufficient number of votes, the President proposes another candidate and the procedure is the same again and may continue until the election is successful due to enough votes. The mandate is set for one year, renewable once.

Election of new members

In the event that a member of the Student Board (SB) must step down—whether due to the completion of their studies, an increased workload, or their inability to attend meetings and remain actively engaged—it is essential that the member is replaced as promptly as possible to maintain the board's functionality and continuity.

The latest update within the SB pertains to the position of president. An UROS student, has assumed the role of President of Student Board. Previously, he served as vice president, a position now held a UCV student following this transition.

The Student Board (SB) maintains representation across various Governance Councils. Currently, another student from UROS serves as the SB representative in the Academic Council. In the Research Council, the representative is PhD student from AUA. Meanwhile, the president of the SB represents the board in both the Executive Council and the Governing Board.

Contributions to other WPs and Projects

Given that the work of the EU-CONEXUS alliance directly impacts students from multiple perspectives, their opinions are frequently sought when developing new content. The Student Board plays a key role in this process. To facilitate this, special meetings are organized, featuring tailored packages where package representatives present their work and seek feedback from the SB members. This input helps refine and adapt offerings to better meet students' needs.

This year, we held joint meetings with WP3, WP13, WP17, and representatives of the IamStudent project.

Conferences

Last year SB members attended the European Student Union conference and the European Student Assembly. SB members have registered for these conferences (Reports in the Annexes).

Each attendance of Student Board members opens new perspectives and enables students to connect with students of other alliances. Their return is always accompanied by good experience and new proposals for improving our alliance.

Student Projects

Over the past year, WP12 saw the successful completion of the first-ever student projects Call within our alliance. This initiative represents a significant step in fostering student collaboration and innovation across the community.

The total budget for student projects over the four-year period is €120,000. For the initial Call, a budget of €30,000 was allocated. However, only €15,467.59 was used, reflecting a prudent use of resources.

Of the 10 applications received involving seven Universities of EU-CONEXUS alliance, 6 projects were selected and funded following the approval of the Executive Council 15th January 2024.

The evaluation process was conducted by members of the Student Board (SB) who were not involved in student projects, ensuring impartiality. Any SB member associated with a project application abstained from the evaluation process and secured a replacement to maintain fairness. The evaluation was completed on schedule, with no complications or complaints reported.

The evaluation process was divided into two distinct parts, each with its own set of criteria. The first part focused on Innovativeness, Sustainability, Partners, Gender Equality, Feasibility, Impact, and Coherence. The second part assessed Stakeholder Involvement, Improvement of the EU-CONEXUS Community, Length of Effectiveness, and the Number of People Affected/Involved.

The Framework for Student Projects is a document that establishes a solid foundation for future student project initiatives within WP12, setting rules for efficiency and transparency.

Completed projects of the first Call

The initiative for student projects was launched as part of the new phase of our EU-CONEXUS alliance, within a package for Supporting student engagement. The initiative involves launching four calls over four years (approximately one per year), where students are required to form partnerships comprising at least three students from partner universities. For the first call, no specific topics were provided; instead, the coordinators of the work package allowed students to propose topics of their own choosing. This approach proved successful, resulting in 10 diverse applications. With a budget of EUR 30,000.00 allocated for the first call, it was decided to fund 6 projects with EUR 5,000.00 each. Out of the 6 selected projects, 4 were successfully completed, while the remaining 2 cancelled their project plans.

1. European Augmented Reality Mural Project

Duration: January – March 2024 (3 months)

Leader: LRUNIV (1)

Participants: LRUNIV (2), UNIZD (1), UTCB (1)

Location: Marie Curie Building, Scientific University Campus, La Rochelle Université

Objective: The aim of this project was to create an augmented reality mural, merging traditional art with modern technology to foster creativity and innovation on campus.

Implementation: The project was implemented in two phases over the course of three months. The mural itself was created in just 3 working days and now serves as an interactive feature of the university.

Cost: €4,241.83

Outcome: The project successfully completed its goals and the mural now engages students and visitors, enhancing the aesthetic of the campus.

2. Coastal Conexus Project

Duration: 3 days (25-27 March 2024.)

Leader: UNIZD (1)

Participants: UNIZD (4), AUA (3), UTCB (2), LRUNIV (1), UCV (1)

Other Beneficiaries: UNIZD (7)

Location: Zadar

Objective: To enhance understanding and stimulate discourse on the environmental, cultural, and economic challenges posed by unsustainable tourism practices in coastal regions, with a specific focus on Zadar County. This initiative involved a series of expert-led lectures addressing critical tourism topics, including: ‘Population decline and housing expansion in Zadar County-What’s tourism got to do with it ‘, ‘Sustainable development of tourism in the city of Zadar – can it be greener?’, ‘Transforming brownfields into functional spaces for higher education’, ‘Tourism development on Zadar islands and its spatial impact’, ‘Path to sustainable tourism: Case of the city of Zadar’.

As well as a workshop aimed at engaging students in identifying pathways toward sustainable tourism practices. To raise awareness about the environmental, cultural, and economic challenges in coastal regions due to unsustainable tourism practices. Lectures were held in the premises of the University of Zadar about popular tourism topics: ‘Population decline and housing expansion in Zadar County-What’s tourism got to do with it ‘, ‘Sustainable development of tourism in the city of Zadar – can it be

greener?', 'Transforming brownfields into functional spaces for higher education', 'Tourism development on Zadar islands and its spatial impact', 'Path to sustainable tourism: Case of the city of Zadar'. Also, one Workshop for students were held.

Implementation: The project was conducted in Zadar during a SB visit and Meeting, with professors and experts engaging with participants. A platform I live was provided for discussions and workshops focused on sustainable tourism.

Cost: €4,317.32

Outcome: The project successfully raised awareness among participants and fostered discussions on how to tackle the issues identified in coastal tourism with 30 participants.

3. Football Championship Project

Duration: February-April 2024

Leader: UTCB (1)

Participants: UNIZD (3), UTCB (1), KU (1)

Location: Bucharest, Zadar

Objective: To inspire EU-CONEXUS students to participate in sports and promote healthy living through an international football championship.

Implementation: The championship was organized simultaneously with a partner university, providing a competitive and collaborative environment for students.

Cost: €2,131.92 (plus participation fees)

Outcome: The project helped identify key areas for improvement in future events. It successfully engaged students in sport, building community and enhancing university experience.

4. Taste EU-CONEXUS Project

Duration: March 2024

Leader: UROS (1)

Participants : KU (1), UTCB (1), LRUNIV (1), UROS (1), UNIZD (1)

Location: Cyprus

Objective: To foster intercultural understanding through the sharing of European and Nigerian cooking cultures.

Implementation: Cooking tutorials were conducted, culminating in a gathering of participants at the end of March.

Cost: €4,771.27

Outcome: This project successfully achieved its goal of fostering intercultural exchange through food. It enhanced participants' understanding of diverse cultures and traditions.

Declined projects

1. ***Food as a Vessel of Culture, Tradition, and Sustainability***

Leader: AUA (1)

Participants: AUA (2), LRUNIV (2), UNIZD (1), UCV (1) + 2 associated members

Status: Declined

This project was declined because of limited support from universities. Also, the unexpected closure of AUA for two months last year significantly disrupted our workflow and planning process. The limited size of our local team also posed challenges in effectively distributing tasks. They did not reach out to partners.

Objective: To explore how food serves as a cultural vessel and contributes to sustainable practices.

2. ***Application of Machine Learning for Sustainable Algae Pollution Management in the Baltic Sea***

Leader: KU (1)

Participants: UCV (2), AUA (1)

Status: Declined

This project work primarily focused on gathering and summarizing relevant bibliographic sources. Participants were unable to proceed to the stage of applying machine learning methods to analyse existing data and achieve the intended results, as outlined in project objectives.

This limitation arose largely due to unforeseen challenges with team coordination. Team leader initially played an active role but subsequently became unresponsive in group communications. In spring, he briefly informed us of a personal issue that required time away from the project. After this brief communication, he ceased all further contact.

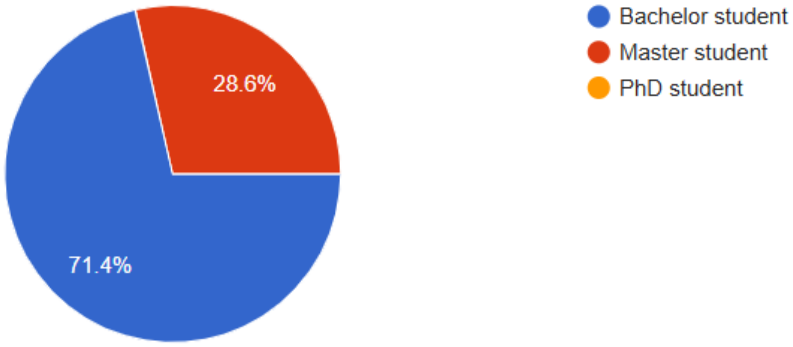
Objective: To apply machine learning approaches to manage algae pollution in the Baltic Sea sustainably.

Feedback of the first Call of Student Projects

Survey analysis

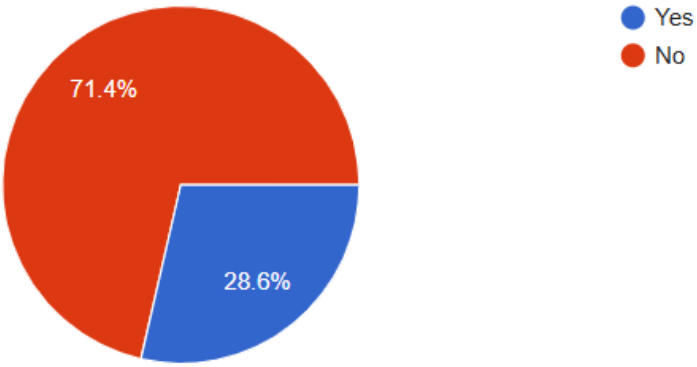
At the end of the project, a survey was distributed to the participants of student projects. The feedback collected provided valuable insights into their experiences, which will inform and guide improvements for future calls. The survey was conducted with 7 respondents.

A) Academic level/Student Profile



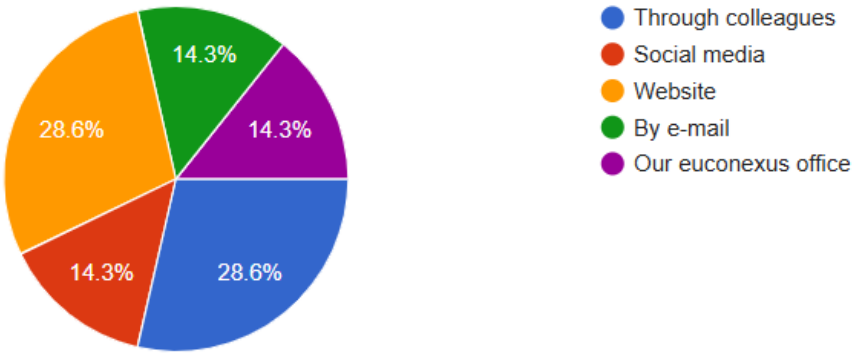
In terms of student participation, a higher response rate was observed among Bachelor's students compared to Master's students, while PhD students did not respond to the call, despite being eligible to participate.

B) Previous involvement in the projects



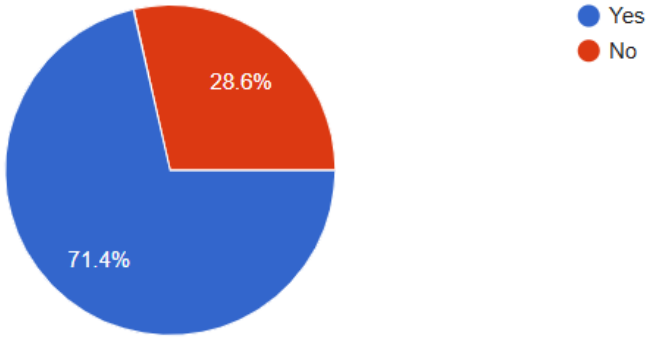
When asked about their prior involvement in some projects, it was evident that the initiative had significant value, as most of the students reported having no previous experience. This highlights the importance of the initiative, as it aims to encourage students to participate, gain new knowledge, and acquire valuable experience through these opportunities.

C) Finding out about projects



The displayed graph did not provide concrete information regarding the specific channels through which participants learned about the call. However, it can be observed that all channels played a role in serving the community and were equally effective in disseminating information about the call.

D) Assistance with writing projects



When asked if they received assistance in writing the project application, the students reported that most had help from their institutional staff members and coordinators of the WP12 which significantly influenced the preparation and implementation of the project.

E) Finding partners

Since according to the Call Framework for student projects the project team should consist of students from at least three partner universities, it was challenging for some participants to find partners at other institutions. Students reported that they found partners through connections established in EU-CONEXUS courses, as well as during conferences such as ESA and ESU or other mobility programmes facilitated by the partnership. Additionally, collaborations were formed between former and current Student Board members, often through mutual friends or colleagues.

F) Issues in the preparing the project

When asked what problems they encountered during the preparatory phase of the project, the students answered that the difficulties were caused by changing requirements in budget rules (daily allowance, buying ingredients, accommodation) and the lost time in the beginning (without that it could be cheaper), and changing procurement instructions. They also had problems with communication and finding partners. Creating a programme that should have been followed by everyone and not being able to help project partners do their part of the work on the project was also reported among difficulties.

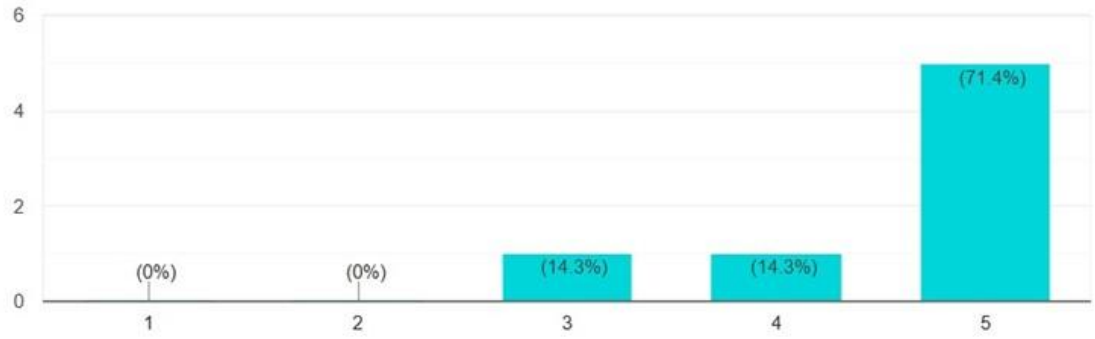
Suggestions for Future Improvement

Students offered several recommendations to enhance future calls.

- They emphasised the need for faster publication of project results by streamlining the evaluation and approval process.
- Transparency in rules and easy accessibility throughout the project were also highlighted as critical improvements.
- Additionally, students suggested simplifying the process of finding partners and organising more workshops focused on project writing.
- They recommended reducing bureaucracy in student projects and proposed creating a "red line" system — designated daily intervals and platforms (e.g., a Q&A section on the website and social media) where students could ask questions and receive prompt responses.
- Students also suggested that institutional coordinators provide guidance to participants on project writing and formalities.
- Monthly online meetings dedicated to student projects, featuring testimonials from previous teams, were seen as a motivational tool to encourage wider participation.
- Engaging EU-CONEXUS representatives from each country to support students was another valuable recommendation.
- Timely Reporting: It is recommended that project leaders provide regular updates on the status of their projects to ensure better communication and oversight.
- Documentation and Feedback: Upon project completion, leaders should submit detailed reports on outcomes and lessons learned, which can be used to improve future calls for projects.

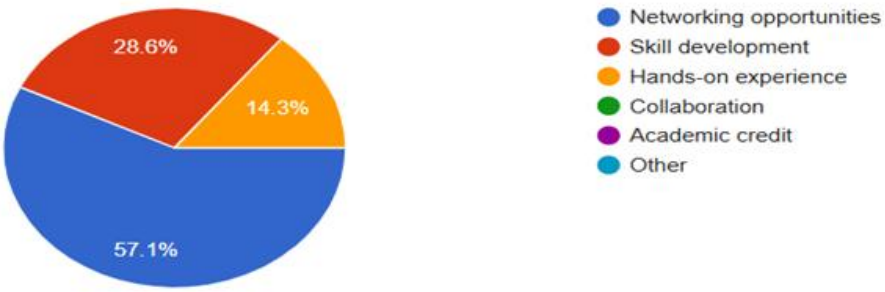
- Finally, an optional element could be the creation of a PowerPoint summary showcasing the key outcomes of the project, along with photos of participants during their stay in the project's host country.

Satisfaction of the initiative EU-CONEXUS student projects



The graph illustrates respondents' satisfaction with the initiative. A significant majority, 71.4%, gave the initiative the highest rating, while a small percentage rated it with scores of 3 and 4.

Valuable aspects



When asked about the most valuable aspects of student projects, students highlighted networking opportunities, skill development, and hands-on experience as the top benefits.

Analysis of Impact

To evaluate the impact of this initiative on students, it was essential to analyse the extent of both direct and indirect student involvement in the projects. This required gathering data on the number of students who were actively engaged in the projects (direct involvement) as well as those who were influenced by the projects through secondary means, such as attending related events, utilizing resources, or participating in discussions sparked by the initiatives (indirect involvement).

The analysis is presented in two tables. The first table provides data, categorized by university, on the number of students who had direct participation in the projects, reflecting their active contribution and engagement. The second table illustrates the number of students who were indirectly affected by the projects, offering insights into the broader reach and influence of the initiatives across the student community. These figures provide a comprehensive cross-section of the initiative's overall impact on the academic population.

1st Call involved students directly in the projects	
LRUNIV	12
AUA	6
UCV	3
KU	4
UNIZD	16
UTCB	8
SETU	1
UROS	4
FREDU	2
TOTAL	48

The table presents the number of students who directly participated as team members in one of the funded projects.

1st Call indirectly impacted students	
Coastal Conexus	15
Taste Conexus	0
Football Championship	2160
European Augmented Mural	15
TOTAL	2190

The table displays the number of students outside the project team who were indirectly involved in the project's implementation.

Qualitative Insights

The projects had a significant impact on the participating students by fostering their skills, increasing their engagement, and opening up new opportunities for personal and professional growth. Students were actively involved in various aspects of the projects, which included:

- Workshops: Students attended workshops that provided hands-on learning experiences, enhancing their technical and creative skills.

- Championship: Participation in competitions offered students experience to be involved in big event with other students and participants.

- Collaborative Creation of a Mural: Students had the opportunity to be directly involved with peers who were actively designing and creating a mural. This proximity enabled them to gain insights into the creative process, develop teamwork skills, and engage with artistic endeavours.

New Collaborations and Networks Formed

These projects also served as a catalyst for building new collaborations and networks. Workshops and championship brought together students from diverse backgrounds, encouraging fostering connections that could lead to future partnerships. The mural project, in particular, involved collaboration among students, mentors, strengthening the sense of community and teamwork.

Conclusion

Many students expressed high satisfaction with the initiative, emphasizing its usefulness in fostering student connections. The suggestions for improvements aim to enhance the overall experience and encourage broader student engagement in future projects.

Publishing Results and Transparency:

Accelerate the evaluation and approval process to ensure project results are published more promptly.

Make the rules governing the projects more transparent and accessible throughout the project cycle.

Improved Partner Matching and Workshops:

Simplify the process of finding project partners.

Organize more structured workshops focused on project writing.

Bureaucratic Simplification:

Reduce bureaucracy associated with student projects.

Communication and Support:

Establish a clear communication channel, such as a daily scheduled interval or dedicated Q&A platform, where students can ask questions and receive prompt answers. Alternatively, a Q&A section could be added to the website and promoted on social media.

Engage institutional coordinators to guide students in the project-writing process and help them navigate formalities.

Motivational Activities and Information Sharing:

Hold monthly online meetings dedicated to student projects, featuring presentations from previously participating teams to inspire and motivate future participants.

Encourage collaboration with EU-CONEXUS representatives from each country to provide tailored support to students.

Optional Project Summary PPT:

Consider the optional creation of a PowerPoint presentation summarizing key project outcomes and including photos of participants during their stay in the host country.

Annual Student Board Report 2024/2025

Student Board Highlights 2024/2025

During the 2024/2025 academic year, the Student Board experienced a number of key changes and activities that shaped its work and engagement.

Change of Student Board Secretary

In January 2025, a new Student Board secretary stepped in. Despite the change, regular online monthly meetings remained the same and were continued to be held online every first Monday of the month at 8PM CET on Whaller platform. Agenda and minutes for each meeting were prepared by the Student Board secretary and can be found on Whaller in the Student Board sphere.

Update of Student Board Statute

In January 2025, the Student Board Statute was updated to better reflect how the Board works today. The changes broadened its scope to explicitly include JMPMB students and clarified how the Board reports about its activities, by setting a clear requirement for one annual report per academic year to the Governing Board. The rules for selecting the Vice-President were also adjusted to improve collaboration and balance, including election from among Board members, a veto right for the President in case of major concerns, and a requirement that the President and Vice-President come from different partner universities.

New Student Board Representatives

As graduating students completed their terms throughout this new year, the Student Board continuously evolved with new representatives stepping up to contribute with their new perspectives.

Participation in Student Congress

Student Board members participated in the EU-CONEXUS Student Congress held in May 2025 in Limassol, Cyprus, which brought together 86 students from all partner universities. Organised alongside the EU-CONEXUS Arts and Culture Festival, the event strengthened collaboration across the alliance and highlighted the active role of

students in shaping EU-CONEXUS through discussions, workshops, and idea-sharing for future initiatives. In parallel, the Student Board also held its annual physical meeting.

Meeting with the Governing Board

During the EU-CONEXUS Student Congress in Limassol, the Student Board held its first-ever meeting with the Governing Board. This meeting led to fruitful discussions and valuable suggestions on how to strengthen the role of students within EU-CONEXUS. One of the key outcomes of this meeting was the approval for the Student Board to hold a second physical meeting.

Student Board Elections

During the annual physical meeting in Cyprus, the Student Board also held elections resulting in change of SB president (UCV) and vice-president (UNIZD). Also, new representatives for Research Council (SETU) and Academic Council (UROS, UNIZD) were chosen. Student Board is also represented in Governing Board and Executive Council by the SB president.

Collaboration with JCU (Joint Communication Unit)

Student Board members expressed their interest in becoming more visible and spreading the word about them and EU-CONEXUS within the student community. Therefore, some JCU members were invited to join the physical SB meeting in Limassol to discuss the issues and work together on better student visibility. As a result, the Student Board President began attending JCU meetings on the last Wednesday of each month to engage in discussions and represent the Student Board. When unable to attend, the President is replaced by another Student Board member.

Contributions to Other WPs and Projects

Since EU-CONEXUS initiatives directly influence students, their views are frequently consulted in the development of new contents. Therefore, on several occasions, the Student Board Secretary reached out to students to gather their feedback in order to better adapt offerings to their needs. One example of this collaboration was the contribution of Student Board members to the creation of the IamStudent project's Campus Life subpage.

Conferences Attended

In May, 2025 five EU-CONEXUS students were selected to attend European Student Assembly (ESA) in Strasbourg and present EU-CONEXUS alliance. Among them were also two SB representatives from UTCB and UROS. The students actively participated

in the assigned panels and contributed to the discussions on important European topics.

Student Projects

The initiative for student projects was launched as part of the new phase of EU-CONEXUS alliance within a Work Package 12 that focuses on supporting student engagement. The initiative involves launching four calls over four years, where students are required to form partnerships comprising at least three students from partner universities and implement the project according to the criteria suggested in that specific call. Over the academic year 2024/2025, the Second and Third Call for student projects took place.

Changes in Calls

After the successful completion of the first-ever student projects call in the previous academic year, the following two Calls were launched accordingly in 2024/2025, incorporating slight improvements based on student surveys, prior experience, and proposals from the Student Board and WP12.

1. **Project Topic**

After the First Call, it was proposed to specify the topic of each call as a guideline to the students. The topics were chosen by the Student Board and approved by the WP12 members. Therefore, the topic for the Second Call was ‘Sports’, and for the Third Call was ‘Language, Health and History’.

2. **Project Budget Change**

Students highlighted that the budget of €5,000 was not enough for covering all the expenses, especially when it comes to travelling and including as many EU-CONEXUS students as possible. Therefore, it was suggested to reduce the number of projects and increase the amount of funding (€10,000 per project) which will enable more students to join and cover the mobility expenses.

3. **Call Budget Change**

Since the allocated budget for the First Call was not fully utilized (only €15,467.59 out of the initial €30,000 were spent due to some projects not being completed) part of the budget remained available. As a result, the budget for the Third Call was set at €40,000, allowing four projects to be funded this time.

Evaluation of Project Proposals

The evaluation processes were held according to the rules stated in EU-CONEXUS Call framework for student projects – the main document that establishes a solid foundation for future student project initiatives within WP12, setting rules for efficiency and transparency. Both evaluations were conducted by nine members of the Student Board, one from each university, none of whom were involved in student projects, ensuring impartiality. Any Student Board member associated with a project application abstained from the evaluation process and was replaced by another student from their university to maintain fairness.

Both evaluation processes were divided into two distinct parts, each with its own set of criteria. The first part focused on Innovativeness, Sustainability, Partners, Gender Equality, Feasibility, Impact, and Coherence. The second part assessed Stakeholder Involvement, Improvement of the EU-CONEXUS Community, Length of Effectiveness, and the Number of People Affected/Involved. The evaluators also had to explain their evaluations by comments. After the evaluation process, Student Board secretary collected the grades and held a meeting with the Evaluation Committee to present the final results. The selected project proposals were then approved for funding by the Executive Council and later presented to the Management Board.

Second Call for Student Projects

The budget for the Second Call remained the same as in the First one, which is **€30,000**, but only **three projects** were approved for funding with **€10,000 each**. The topic of the Second Call was ‘Sports’ and the application period was open from March until 30 June, 2024.

A total of **six project applications** were received, with **41 students from 8 partner universities** participating as project team members - 10 from UNIZD, 9 from UCV, 6 from UROS, 5 from UTCB, 4 from KU, 3 from AUA, 3 from LRUNIV, 1 from SETU. There were no project coordinators or members from FREDU. The projects that achieved the highest evaluation scores and were each awarded €10,000 are:

- *EU-CONEXUS Mini-Football Cup 2nd Edition*
- *Big Blue*
- *Sail Conexus*

The remaining proposals (*Adrenaline Academy*, *Splash into Science*, and *University Rugby Tournament*) were not selected for funding.

Completed Projects from the Second Call

1. EU-CONEXUS Mini-Football Cup 2nd Edition

Duration: March – July 2025 (5 months)

Leader: UTCB (1)

Participants: UTCB (1), AUA (1), UNIZD (1)

Location: Bucharest (Romania)

Members in the application: 6 (**UTCB**, UROS, AUA, UCV, UNIZD)

Members in implementation: 4 (**UTCB** (2), AUA (1), UNIZD (1))

Total engagement: **456** (including four members in implementation plus two from application that withdrew; 50 volunteers, 300 students engaged as football players, 100 supporters)

Objective: To inspire EU-CONEXUS students to engage in sports activities by launching a collaborative challenge involving additional universities to jointly organize a mini-football championship in Romania, with the goals of strengthening connections among EU-CONEXUS students, promoting a healthy lifestyle, and increasing the visibility of the alliance within the student community.

Implementation: The project was implemented over a three-day championship that created a dynamic, competitive, and collaborative environment for students. Throughout the event, the focus remained on strengthening the EU-CONEXUS community by fostering teamwork, intercultural exchange, active participation in sports, and meaningful engagement among students from partner universities across Europe.

Cost: €9,935.32

Outcome: The project successfully promoted intercultural dialogue, social cohesion, and collaboration among member universities, strengthening the EU-CONEXUS network and reinforcing shared values of inclusivity, teamwork, and active citizenship.

2. Big Blue

Duration: June - September 2025

Leader: UNIZD (1)

Participants: UNIZD (7), AUA (3), KU (1), UCV (1), LRUNIV (1)

Location: Zadar (Croatia)

Members in the application: 15 (**UNIZD**, UCV, AUA, UTCB, KU, LRUNIV)

Members in implementation: 14 (**UNIZD** (8), AUA (3), LRUNIV (1), KU (1), UCV (1))

Total engagement: **21** (including members in implementation plus seven from application that withdrew)

Objective: The project focused on providing diving courses to develop practical underwater skills while promoting ecological awareness, exploration, and future professional opportunities in underwater sciences. It also aimed to strengthen the EU-CONEXUS student community by fostering collaboration, shared experiences, and a deeper understanding of the alliance's benefits.

Implementation: During this two-week onsite project, students completed daily scuba diving sessions supported by theoretical lessons, followed by scientific dives focused on locating Pinna nobilis and a WWI shipwreck. Due to safety limits, the plan was adapted to shallower sites, combined with eco-actions, museum visits, and a student-led trip to Krka National Park.

Cost: €9,979.38

Outcome: Most participants obtained their diving certificates, and the team successfully located and documented a WWI shipwreck while conducting ecological searches and underwater clean-ups. The project strengthened international student bonds, increased interest in future EU-CONEXUS activities, and inspired several students to join a similar project in the next call.

3. Sail Conexus

Duration: June - October 2025

Leader: UROS (1)

Participants: UROS (7), KU (6), UNIZD (1)

Location: Rostock (Germany), Klaipeda (Lithuania), Baltic Sea

Members in the application: 4 (**UROS**, KU, UCV)

Members in implementation: 15 (**UROS** (8), KU (6), UNIZD (1))

Total engagement: **36** (including members in implementation plus one from application that withdrew; 20 students that attended events)

Objective: To combine the sporting spirit of sailing with exploring the marine environment by engaging students in an educational voyage from Rostock to Klaipėda, encouraging teamwork, environmental awareness, and ocean understanding through hands-on activities, learning sessions, and public outreach events.

Implementation: The project was implemented in September 2025, when a group of ten students set out on an educational sailing journey from Rostock to Klaipėda aboard the racing ship *Universitas*, carrying out marine-environment activities, joining

workshops and outreach events, and encouraging environmental awareness and cooperation throughout the voyage.

Cost: €9,743.42

Outcome: The project successfully involved students in practical maritime activities and sustainable ocean practices, strengthened teamwork and cultural exchange throughout the multi-stage sailing voyage between Rostock and Klaipėda, and led to meaningful observations, deeper intercultural connections, and memorable learning experiences for all participants.

Non-Selected Projects from the Second Call

1. Adrenaline Academy

Leader: UNIZD (1)

Participants: -

Objective: The Adrenaline Academy aims to enhance participants' physical fitness, mental resilience, and professional skills through intensive training and certification. It fosters personal growth, teamwork, and leadership abilities, while promoting environmental stewardship and cultural understanding. Participants will return with a stronger sense of community, a deeper appreciation for nature, and valuable skills that will benefit their academic and professional futures.

2. Splash into Science

Leader: UROS (1)

Participants: KU (2), UROS (2), LRUNIV (2), UTCB (1)

Objective: The project aims to strengthen the community of EU-CONEXUS students through an inclusive research dive and a joint volleyball tournament with local students. This is done by combining scientific research with sports activities in coastal areas. Intercultural exchange is promoted and sustainable awareness is created.

3. University Rugby Tournament

Leader: UCV (1)

Participants: UCV (4), SETU (1)

Objective: To create a student community around sports across the EU-CONEXUS alliance. A three-day event in Valencia focused on participating in a rugby tournament

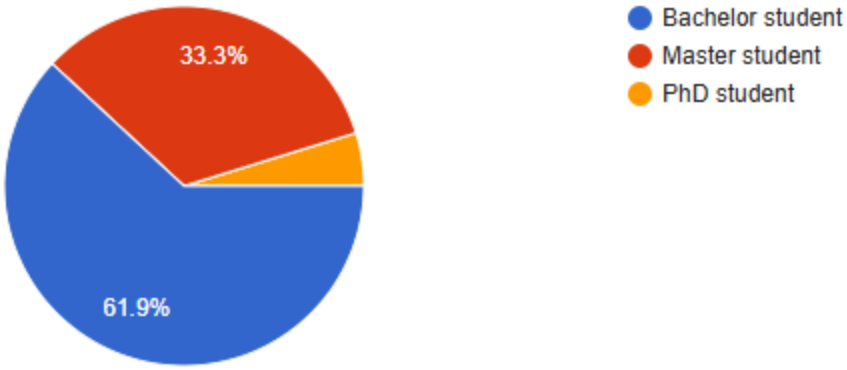
and learning Gaelic football. The aim is to promote gender equality by bringing boys and girls together in training sessions and through the practice of tag rugby, which provides a safe and level playing field for everyone to develop and showcase their skills.

Feedback on the Second Call for Student Projects

Survey analysis

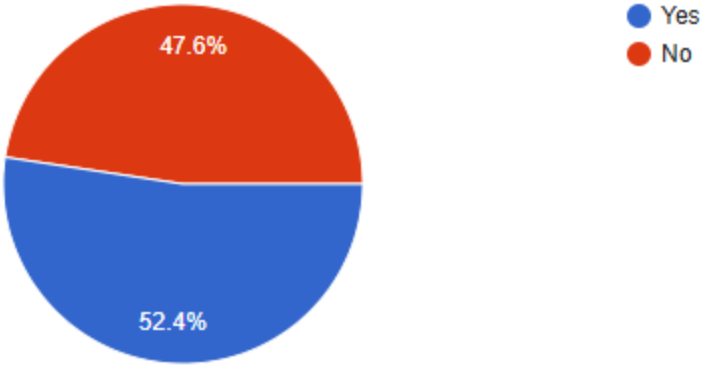
At the end of the project, a survey was distributed to participants in the student projects. The feedback collected provided valuable insights into their experiences and will help inform and guide improvements for future calls. A total of 21 students completed the survey, which represents two-thirds of those directly involved in implementing the selected projects.

a) Academic level



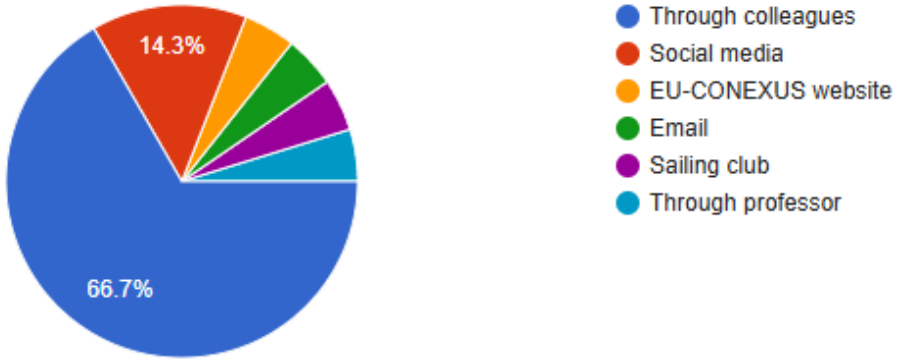
Regarding student participation, the response rate among Bachelor's students was approximately twice as high as that of Master's students. Additionally, this call also received participation from PhD students.

b) Previous involvement in the projects



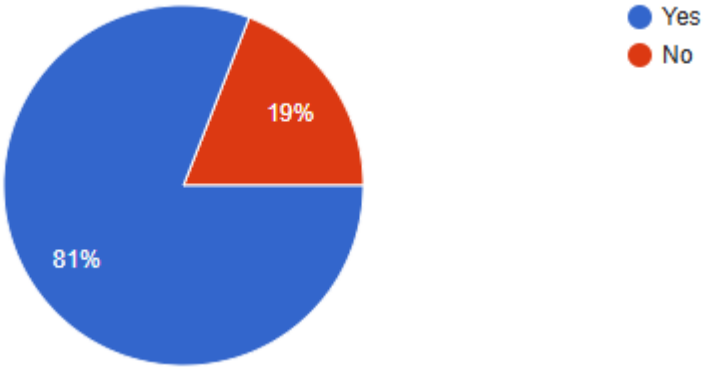
When asked about their previous involvement in projects, slightly more than half of the students reported having participated before. This highlights the importance of the initiative, reflects high levels of student satisfaction, and shows that students consider it a valuable opportunity.

c) Finding out about projects



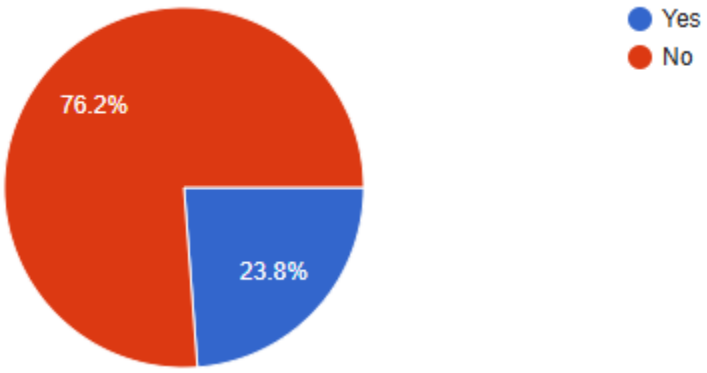
Regarding how students learned about the projects, the vast majority, around two thirds, found out through colleagues. Social media also played a role, while the website and email were less common sources of information. A few students learned about the projects through professors or through the sailing club, as in the case of the Sail Conexus project.

d) Clear instructions on preparing student projects



The majority of respondents indicated that the instructions for writing the project were clear.

e) Assistance with writing projects



Regarding support during project writing, around 24% of respondents reported seeking assistance, while the remaining majority did not, probably based on the previous experience.

f) Finding project partners

According to the Call Framework for student projects, each project team should include students from at least three partner universities, a requirement that, based on past experience, might be challenging. However, responses indicate that project members did not find this difficult, as they received the support they needed.

Most students reported that they were able to form diverse teams with the help of the Student Board, particularly when one of the project leaders was its member. The Whaller platform, particularly its Student Projects section, which primarily focuses on project proposals and connecting project members also helped greatly. Many students also emphasized that support from colleagues and friends was also instrumental in forming their teams. Some students mentioned support from student ambassadors and professors within the EU-CONEXUS network, while others mentioned relationships established during previous mobility programs or earlier projects as well as social media.

g) Issues encountered

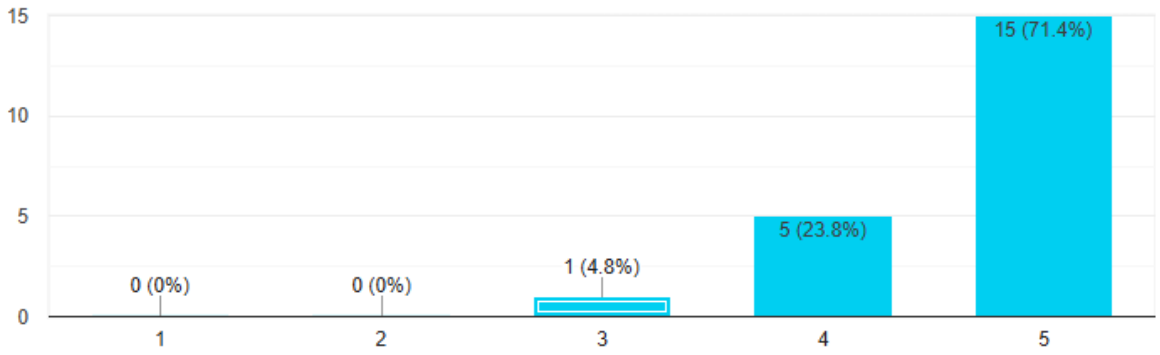
Students reported a range of challenges during project preparation, with communication being the most frequently mentioned issue, including coordinating schedules, keeping everyone on the same page, and dealing with partners who dropped out or became unresponsive. Some students noted difficulties managing key expenses, particularly when the responsible staff were on summer break. Implementation challenges also arose, such as adapting plans when unforeseen circumstances occurred, distributing work among team members, and keeping track of the budget. Despite these obstacles, many students emphasized that the workload was manageable thanks to strong collaboration within the student team and support from EU-CONEXUS staff, who provided guidance on organization and logistics.

Several students even reported that no significant issues occurred, highlighting the initiative, responsibility, and problem-solving skills of the project teams.

h) Recommended Improvements

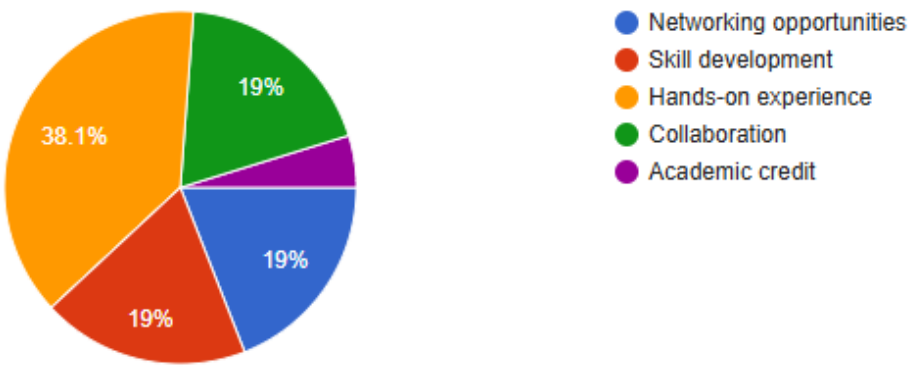
Students provided several suggestions for improving future projects, although many reported that everything worked well and required no changes. The most frequently mentioned areas for improvement were partner search and communication. Some proposed creating a dedicated partner-finding platform or portal on the EU-CONEXUS website, where students could post profiles and connect with peers with similar interests. Others suggested clearer planning at the start of the project, dividing tasks into smaller parts, and ensuring responsibilities are well defined, but this is related to project leaders. Several students recommended better access to information, shared calendars, or assigning one or two staff members to be consistently available to support students during project implementation (this is due to summer break). Overall, the feedback emphasizes that while the projects ran smoothly, enhancements in partner matching and structured guidance could further strengthen the experience.

i) Students' satisfaction



When asked about their satisfaction with the support received for EU-CONEXUS student projects, slightly over 70% of students gave the highest rating of 5. A few students rated their experience as 4, and only one student gave a 3. These results indicate that students are generally very satisfied, although some aspects could still be improved.

j) Valuable aspects



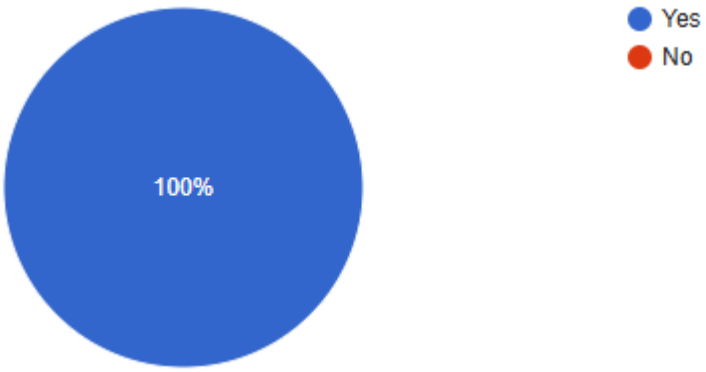
When asked about the most valuable aspects of the student projects, students highlighted the hands-on experience, while networking opportunities, skill development, and collaboration were also rated highly.

k) Suggestions for improvement

Students were also asked to share their suggestions for improving support and resources for students participating in projects. Their suggestions are the following:

- Share stories or examples of earlier student projects to inspire and guide participants.
- Consider having multiple smaller projects instead of a single large one to allow more students to participate and connect.
- Improve advertisement and promotion of projects across universities and the EU-CONEXUS alliance.
- Provide more communication about available projects and clear guidelines on how to participate.
- Assign a dedicated contact person or support email so students can receive support year-round, even when summer holidays coincide with project activities.
- Offer guidance on planning projects, including simple instructions, suggested starting points, and questions to address.
- Make funding and acquisition of resources easier, such as providing direct funding or giving local EU-CONEXUS representatives the ability to purchase items for students.
- Highlight best practices and share successful project examples to guide new participants.
- Post student project opportunities on university and EU-CONEXUS websites or social media pages.
- Maintain the current system where it works well and continue the positive practices already in place.

l) Recommendation of Student Projects



When asked whether they would recommend participating in student projects to their colleagues, all survey respondents answered positively. This unanimous response highlights the success of the projects and underscores their importance and positive influence within the EU-CONEXUS student community.

m) Additional comments

Students expressed gratitude and appreciation for the opportunities provided by EU-CONEXUS, highlighting the positive experiences they gained through participation. Many noted the supportive environment, both from project staff and fellow team members, which allowed them to overcome challenges and enjoy their projects fully. One student, for example, shared their experience with the Big Blue Project, emphasizing how careful guidance and teamwork made a challenging activity like learning to scuba dive enjoyable and safe. Overall, the comments reflect high levels of satisfaction and the memorable impact these projects have on students.

Analysis of Impact of the Second Call

To evaluate the impact of this initiative on students, it was essential to analyse both direct and indirect forms of student involvement in the projects. This included collecting data on students who were actively engaged in project preparation and implementation (direct involvement), as well as those who were reached through secondary means, such as attending related events or participating in project activities (indirect involvement). The data were collected from six submitted project applications and three final reports submitted by project leaders following the implementation of student projects from the Second Call.

The project impact is presented in two tables. The first table focuses on the direct involvement of students in both project applications and project implementation under the Second Call. It includes data from all six project applications, with a particular focus

on the three projects that were selected for funding. The table distinguishes between students involved at the application stage and those who ultimately participated in the implementation of the three selected projects. This distinction is made due to the fact that some students were unable to continue their project participation due to academic obligations or graduation. Additionally, Table 1 illustrates the number of participating students from each university. On the other side, Table 2 presents the overall impact of the three implemented projects, including both directly involved students and indirectly involved participants.

Table 1

Students **directly** involved in all 6 project applications		Students **directly** involved in 3 selected project applications	Students **directly** involved in implementation of 3 selected projects
LRUNIV	4	2	1
AUA	5	5	4
UCV	10	5	1
KU	9	8	7
UNIZD	11	10	10
UTCB	5	4	2
SETU	1	-	-
UROS	12	9	8
FREDU	-	-	-
TOTAL	**57**	**43**	**33**

As shown in the first column, a total of **57 students** were directly involved in the six project applications submitted under the Second Call for student projects. Some participated during the application phase, while others joined at a later stage. The second column focuses on the three projects selected under the Second Call and shows that 43 students were involved in these selected projects, again including both those involved during submission and those who joined later. The third column presents the final number of 33 students who ultimately participated in the

implementation of the three selected projects, based on the final reports submitted by the project leaders.

Table 2

	Directly involved (through application writing and/or implementation)	Indirectly involved	Total impact of 3 implemented projects
EU-CONEXUS Mini-Football Cup 2nd Edition	6	450	456
Big Blue	21	-	21
Sail Conexus	16	20	36
TOTAL	43	470	**513**

Table 2 presents the impact of the three projects implemented under the Second Call. The first column shows the number of students directly involved in projects, either through writing application or participating in project implementation, while the second column reflects the number of indirectly involved participants, based on data provided in the final reports. When combined, the total impact of the three implemented projects reaches **513** individuals.

When the 14 project members from the three project applications that were not selected for funding are included, the **total impact** rises to **527 participants**.

However, even with these figures, the impact of the call for student projects cannot always be measured precisely. While project applications, participation numbers, and final reports provide valuable indicators, they do not fully capture the broader reach of the activities. It remains unknown how many students were informed about the call, encountered the projects indirectly, passed by related events, or were influenced in more subtle ways. Such forms of engagement and awareness are difficult to quantify, yet they represent an important part of the overall impact. Consequently, the actual influence is likely higher than what can be reflected through measurable data alone.

Qualitative insights

As evidenced by the project descriptions and survey results, the supported projects had a significant qualitative impact on participating students. They contributed to the

development of key skills, increased student engagement, facilitated new learning experiences, and opened up opportunities for both personal and professional growth.

Due to the requirement that at least three partner universities be involved in each project, students had the opportunity to collaborate with peers from diverse academic, cultural, and geographical backgrounds. This international cooperation fostered intercultural learning, mutual understanding, and the development of new networks that may lead to future collaborations beyond the project duration. In this context, sports-based activities such as the mini-football championship, diving, and sailing proved particularly effective, as they provided an inclusive and informal environment for interaction. Through these activities, students were able to meet new peers, develop new skills, and strengthen social connections, while at the same time increasing their awareness of sustainability-related topics and the EU-CONEXUS mission in a practical and accessible manner.

In addition, the projects played an important role in increasing the visibility and awareness of EU-CONEXUS among the student community. Through project activities, events, and informal dissemination, students became more familiar with the EU-CONEXUS alliance, its values, and its focus on smart urban coastal sustainability. This increased awareness extended not only to direct participants but also to students who encountered the projects through events, communication channels, or peer interactions.

Survey results: Comparison of the First and Second Call

The survey results from the first and second calls for student projects indicate a clear evolution in both the profile of applicants and their level of experience and expectations. In the Second Call, a higher share of respondents were Master's students, and one PhD student also participated, compared to the First Call, which was dominated by Bachelor-level students. This shift suggests growing recognition of the value of the initiative among students at more advanced stages of their studies.

In addition, survey data show that almost half of the respondents in the Second Call had previously been involved in EU-CONEXUS student projects. This represents a significant increase compared to the First Call and demonstrates the positive impact of earlier projects, as well as their ability to retain and re-engage students. Prior participation appears to have strengthened students' confidence and familiarity with the project framework, which is also reflected in the reduced need for support during the application and writing process in the Second Call.

The survey results further reveal a change in how students learned about the Call. While the EU-CONEXUS website, together with the colleagues' influence, played a

more prominent role in the First Call, nearly two-thirds of respondents in the Second Call reported finding out about the opportunity through colleagues. This highlights the growing importance of peer-to-peer communication and suggests increased visibility, trust, and informal dissemination within the student community.

Finally, when asked to identify the most valuable aspects of participation, respondents in the Second Call placed greater emphasis on hands-on experience, networking opportunities, skill development, and collaboration. Compared to the First Call, these responses indicate a more outcome-oriented perception of the projects and a clearer understanding of their practical and professional benefits.

Third Call for Student Projects

The budget for the Third Call was increased to **€40,000**, due to the remaining funds from the First Call, which had not been used because some projects were not implemented. Since the budget was higher, it was decided that **four projects** would be funded with **€10,000 each**. The topic was "Language, Health and History" and the application period was open from 1st March to 31st May 2025.

A total of **six project applications** were received, with **48 students from 8 partner universities** participating as project team members - 19 from UNIZD, 11 from KU, 5 from UCV, 4 from SETU, 4 from AUA, 2 from UTCB, 2 from LRUNIV, 1 from UROS. As it was already the case in the Second Call, there were again no project coordinators or members from FREDU. Regarding the project leader universities, UCV and KU each submitted two projects, while UNIZD and LRUNIV each submitted one.

The projects that achieved the highest evaluation scores and were each awarded €10,000 are:

- *Coastal Tongues – Saving Lives through Languages*
- *AlgaeQuest: Seaweed Identification and Application Contest*
- *SmUCS Healthy Habits*
- *El Camino de EU-CONEXUS*

The remaining proposals (*Storytelling for Sustainability: How Local Narratives Influence Coastal Protection* and *UNITED OCEAN – Connecting MPAs Through Stories & Images*) were not selected for funding.

The evaluation took place in June, and in July, after the approval of the Executive Council, the project leaders were officially informed and were able to begin project implementation. Since the project leaders have one year to implement their projects, they are currently ongoing and are expected to be finalized by 11 July 2026.

Ongoing Projects from the Third Call

1. Coastal Tongues – Saving Lives through Languages

Duration: 7 months

Leader: LRUNIV (1)

Participants: SETU (2), AUA (1), KU (1), UTCB (1), UCV (1), LRUNIV (1)

Description: The project uses coastal languages and oral histories to improve climate adaptation and public health across EU-CONEXUS regions. It will document local terms, create a survival dictionary, produce a podcast, and engage students through challenges and training. All outputs will be shared on an interactive website to support risk communication and early-warning efforts.

Members in the application: 8 (SETU, AUA, KU, UTCB, LRUNIV, UCV)

Budget predicted: €9,970

2. AlgaeQuest: Seaweed Identification and Application Contest

Duration: 6 months

Leader: UCV (1)

Participants: UCV (1), UTCB (1), UROS (1)

Description: International student contest focused on seaweed identification and sustainable applications, addressing EU-CONEXUS challenges like ocean protection, climate adaptation, and healthy food systems. Through virtual and in-person activities, students from various disciplines and countries collaborate, explore algae's ecological importance, and engage in scientific and cultural exchange. The project fosters interdisciplinary learning, teamwork, and a stronger sense of community among EU-CONEXUS students while promoting awareness of marine biodiversity and sustainability.

Members in the application: 4 (UCV, UTCB, UROS)

Budget predicted: €8,200

3. SmUCS Healthy Habits

Duration: 6 months

Leader: KU (1)

Participants: AUA (2), SETU (1)

Description: This project promotes preventive healthcare by encouraging students to adopt healthy, sustainable habits such as meditation, exercise, and sea therapy to reduce stress and chronic disease risk. Through regular meetings and guided group activities, students will track their experiences and contribute to research on the physical and mental benefits of these practices. The project also highlights how coastal cities can use free, natural resources like sea air and beach environments to support well-being and inspire a shift toward healthier, more balanced lifestyles.

Members in the application: 4 (KU, SETU, AUA)

Budget predicted: €10,000

4. El Camino de EU-CONEXUS

Duration: 9 months

Leader: UCV (1)

Participants: SETU (1), AUA (1)

Description: The project will bring together 20 students from EU-CONEXUS universities for a 100km pilgrimage along the Camino Portugués, combining physical journey with cultural and environmental research. Participants explore how nationality influences perceptions of the sea and how such a journey affects personal development, while addressing ocean protection and climate change in coastal regions through interviews, podcasts, and local engagement. It explores Galicia's history and how the ocean shapes human culture, highlighting the need to protect seas from overuse.

Members in the application: 3 (UCV, SETU, AUA)

Budget predicted: €10,000

Non-Selected Projects from the Third Call

1. Storytelling for Sustainability: How Local Narratives Influence Coastal Protection

Leader: UNIZD (1)

Participants: UNIZD (17), KU (6), UCV (1)

Objective: This project aims to collaboratively create an illustrated English-language storybook for children that blends storytelling with cultural, environmental, and linguistic education. Bringing together students from three universities and multiple disciplines, the project promotes creative collaboration while supporting early English

learning and introducing young readers to Croatian cultural heritage, historical sites, and natural landscapes. Through narratives inspired by local folk tales and sustainability themes, the storybook highlights community identity, environmental preservation, and coastal heritage. Designed as a versatile educational and touristic resource, it will be suitable for use in schools, libraries, tourist centers, and community settings.

2. UNITED OCEAN – Connecting MPAs Through Stories & Images

Leader: KU (1)

Participants: KU (2), UNIZD (1), SETU (1)

Objective: The UNITED OCEAN project aims to raise awareness and engagement in marine conservation by connecting students from the Baltic, North, and Mediterranean Seas through a shared, borderless ocean narrative. By involving students—especially those with little prior connection to the sea—the project builds understanding of marine ecosystems, Marine Protected Areas, and shared environmental challenges. Through student-led storytelling and multimedia content, it promotes transnational cooperation, public awareness, and a deeper sense of responsibility for ocean protection across European communities.

Conclusion

During the Academic Year 2024/2025, the Student Board experienced several changes in its functioning and membership. Despite these transitions, Board members remained highly engaged, actively contributing to other governance bodies and representing the Student Board and the EU-CONEXUS Alliance at conferences and external events.

The year was marked by the successful launch and implementation of student project calls. Two calls were carried out successfully, each attracting an increasing number of student applications, demonstrating growing interest and engagement. The Second Call was fully implemented, and survey results confirmed clear improvements compared to the previous one while still giving suggestions to make the next calls even better. A Third Call was also launched and completed, with selected projects currently in the implementation phase and expected to be concluded by July 2026.

It can be concluded that students increasingly recognize the value and benefits of student projects, as reflected in higher application numbers and proactive outreach. This initiative continues to strengthen the visibility of the EU-CONEXUS Alliance not only among students and staff, but also within the wider community. The strong impact

achieved throughout the year highlights the importance of an active and engaged Student Board, as well as the key role of the WP12 initiative in supporting and advancing student-led projects.

Annual Student Board Report 2025/2026

Student Board Highlights 2025/2026

The Student Board remained active throughout the 2025/2026 academic year, contributing to the academic community in various ways while also experiencing several new activities, developments, and changes that shaped its work and engagement.

Physical Student Board Meetings and Monthly Online Meetings

As a result of the first joint Student Board and Governing Board meeting, held in Cyprus in May 2025, the Student Board was granted an additional in-person meeting for the 2025/2026 academic year. The first physical meeting took place on 2-3 March 2026 in Bucharest (UTCB), while the second was held on 6–7 July 2026 in Waterford (SETU).

In addition to the physical meetings, the Student Board continued to hold its regular monthly online meetings on the first Monday of each month, ensuring continuous communication, coordination and follow-up throughout the academic year.

Joint Student Board & Governing Board Meeting

Following the positive experience from the previous academic year, a joint SB&GB meeting was held in July 2026 at SETU. The meeting has proven to be a successful and necessary practice, providing an opportunity to strengthen cooperation, exchange views, and address key topics related to the alliance. From a student perspective, it offers a valuable opportunity to share experiences and perspectives directly with the GB and to better understand governance-level discussions. Based on its positive outcomes, it was agreed that the joint meeting will be held once per year.

Update of Student Board Statute

During the second physical Student Board meeting, the Student Board Statute was updated to better reflect the Board’s current practices and to clarify and specify certain rules. In particular, the election procedures and rules, including the use of online voting, were further clarified and adapted to better meet the Board’s current needs.

New Student Board Representatives

A notable number of Student Board representatives changed throughout the academic year, primarily due to graduations, resulting in new students joining.

Student Board Elections

During the physical meeting in Bucharest in March 2026, the Student Board also held its annual elections, resulting in the election of UNIZD student as a SB president, while LRUNIV student was elected SB vice-president. Research Council representative remained the same, an SETU student, while new Academic Council representatives are one student from UROS and one from AUA. Student Board remained being represented by the SB president in Governing Board and Executive Council.

Considering that the previous elections were held in May 2025, the newly elected members, although elected in March 2026, officially began their roles in May 2026.

Collaboration with JCU (Joint Communication Unit)

The Student Board continued its newly established collaboration with the JCU throughout the academic year. Initially, the SB president attended the JCU meeting last Wednesday of each month, contributing to discussions and representing the Student Board. Due to personal commitments, she was unable to continue attending, and another SB member stepped in as a representative, most often a student from SETU. During the physical SB meeting in Bucharest in March, three SB members expressed their interest in contributing to the preparation and organisation of content to be shared with the JCU, as well as in having one of them attend the JCU meetings. The three SB members serving as mediators between the students and the JCU are from UROS, AUA and JMPMB (Joint Master Programme in Marine Biotechnology).

Conferences Attended

SB members and other EU-CONEXUS students actively participated in several annual European conferences throughout the academic year. In April 2026, four EU-CONEXUS students, together with SB representative from UROS, were selected to attend the European Student Assembly (ESA) in Strasbourg. In May 2026, one AUA student was selected by the Student Board to attend the European Students' Union (ESU) Conference in Malta, while in July 2026, LRUNIV student was selected to attend the European Universities Student Ambassadors' Forum (EUSAF) in Warsaw. Also, in July 2026, SB president from UNIZD attended the EUI (European Universities Initiative) Forum in Maynooth together with other members of the alliance.

The students actively contributed to discussions on important European topics and represented and promoted the EU-CONEXUS Alliance throughout the conferences.

Application for ESU Membership and FOREU4ALL

The Student Board decided to apply to become an official member of the European Students' Union (ESU) Conference. In addition, three Student Board members expressed their interest in joining the student FOREU4ALL community – two from UCV and one from UROS. FOREU4ALL is an initiative of the European Universities Alliances that provides a platform for sharing good practices, exchanging experiences, and strengthening cooperation, both among staff and students.

Creation of Student Board Handbook

Following UROS student's proposal, the Student Board agreed to create a handbook for new Student Board representatives. The aim of the handbook is to provide concise and accessible information in one place, covering everything new representatives need to know about the alliance, as well as their roles and responsibilities within the Student Board.

A team of three Student Board members was formed to develop and finalize the handbook were from UROS, JMPMB and SETU.

Student Voice in Concept Note Preparation

During the preparation of the concept note and strategic plan for the next phase of EU-CONEXUS, the Student Board also participated in a meeting to share their views, experiences and recommendations. A few months later, Student Board member from UCV further contributed to the process by participating in the physical meeting held in Brussels in January 2026. His participation helped ensure that students' perspectives, needs and experiences were taken into consideration in the planning process, contributing to the improvement and further development of the next phase of EU-CONEXUS.

Contributions to Other WPs and Projects

As in previous academic years, student views were regularly consulted during the development of new content. On several occasions, the Student Board Secretary reached out to students to gather their feedback and perspectives, ensuring that new offerings could be better aligned with their needs and expectations.

Student Projects

The Student Projects initiative was launched as part of the new phase of the EU-CONEXUS alliance (2022–2026), under Work Package 12 (WP12), which focuses on supporting and strengthening student engagement. The initiative consists of four calls launched over the four-year period, with dedicated funding available for selected projects. Students are required to form teams of at least three students from different partner universities and implement their projects in line with the criteria, objectives and specific topic defined in each call.

During the 2025/2026 academic year, the projects selected under the Third Call (launched in March 2025) were implemented, while the Fourth Call was launched at the beginning of the academic year. The project selected under the Fourth Call was subsequently implemented and completed by the end of the academic year.

Changes in Calls

From one call to the next, the initiative was continuously adapted and improved based on student feedback, lessons learned from previous calls, and proposals put forward by the Student Board and WP12 team.

1. **Project Topic**

Following the First Call, it was proposed to introduce a specific topic for each subsequent call to provide students with clearer guidance when developing their projects. The topics were proposed by the Student Board and approved by the WP12 team. Accordingly, the topic for the Second Call was “Sports,” the Third Call focused on “Language, Health and History,” and the Fourth Call addressed “Student Coastal Identity.”

2. **Project Budget Change**

Following the first call, during which two projects were ultimately cancelled, students highlighted that the €5,000 funding available per project was insufficient to cover all expenses, particularly travel and mobility costs, and it limited the possibility of involving a larger number of EU-CONEXUS students. Based on this feedback, it was proposed to reduce the number of funded projects while increasing the available funding to €10,000 per project. This approach was adopted for the second and third calls, allowing projects to involve more students and better cover mobility-related expenses.

For the fourth call, the remaining budget was €15,000. Taking into account the experience from the previous calls, the Student Board decided that it would be more beneficial to allocate the available funding to one larger project rather than divide it

among several smaller projects. Consequently, one project was funded under the fourth call.

3. **Call Budget Change**

As the budget allocated to the First Call was not fully utilised, with only €15,467.59 of the initial €30,000 spent due to some projects not being completed, the remaining funds were carried forward. For the Second Call, the available budget was €30,000, while the budget for the Third Call was increased to €40,000, allowing four projects to be funded. Following the implementation of the first three calls, approximately €15,000 remained available for the Fourth Call.

Evaluation of Project Proposals

The evaluation processes were held according to the rules stated in EU-CONEXUS Call framework for student projects – the main document that establishes a solid foundation for future student project initiatives within WP12, setting rules for efficiency and transparency. Both evaluations were conducted by nine members of the Student Board, one from each university, none of whom were involved in student projects, ensuring impartiality. Any Student Board member associated with a project application abstained from the evaluation process and was replaced by another student from their university to maintain fairness.

Both evaluation processes were divided into two distinct parts, each with its own set of criteria. The first part focused on Innovativeness, Sustainability, Partners, Gender Equality, Feasibility, Impact, and Coherence. The second part assessed Stakeholder Involvement, Improvement of the EU-CONEXUS Community, Length of Effectiveness, and the Number of People Affected/Involved. The evaluators also had to explain their evaluations by comments. After the evaluation process, Student Board secretary collected the grades and held a meeting with the Evaluation Committee to present the final results. The selected project proposals were then approved for funding by the Executive Council and later presented to the Management Board.

Third Call for Student Projects

The Third Call was open from **1 March to 31 May 2025** and had **a total budget of €40,000**, with **four student projects** selected for funding with **€10,000 each**. The topic of the call was “**Language, Health and History**”.

A total of **six project applications** were received, involving **48 students** from **eight partner universities**. The participating students were distributed as follows: 19 from

UNIZD, 11 from KU, 5 from UCV, 4 from SETU, 4 from AUA, 2 from UTCB, 2 from LRUNIV, and 1 from UROS. No students from FREDU participated in the submitted proposals. The project coordinators represented four partner universities: two from UCV, two from KU, one from UNIZD, and one from LRUNIV. The proposed project teams ranged in size from 3 to 25 students.

Following the evaluation process, the Evaluation Committee proposed four projects for funding, which were subsequently approved by the Executive Council. The four highest-scoring projects were each awarded €10,000:

- *AlgaeQuest: Seaweed Identification and Application Contest*
- *SmUCS Healthy Habits*
- *El Camino de EU-CONEXUS*
- *Coastal Tongues – Saving Lives through Languages*

The remaining two proposals, *Storytelling for Sustainability* and *United Ocean*, were not selected for funding.

Building on lessons learned from previous calls, project leaders were required to sign a Letter of Funding Attribution, confirming their responsibility for project planning, coordination, financial management, and timely implementation. Each project had one year to be completed, with a final deadline of 11 July 2026.

The following sections provide an overview of the four selected projects, including their objectives, implementation activities, and key outcomes.

Completed Projects from the Third Call

1. AlgaeQuest: Seaweed Identification and Application Contest

Duration: December 2025 – May 2026

Leader: UCV (1)

Participants: UCV (1), UTCB (1), UROS (1)

Location: online + Valencia

Members in the application: 4 **(UCV**, UTCB, UROS)

Members in implementation: 4 (**UCV**, UTCB, UROS)[1]

Total engagement: **77** (including 4 project members, 60 students, 5 guest speakers, 8 volunteers)

Objective: The project aimed to connect EU-CONEXUS students through an international competition exploring the ecological, cultural, and health-related importance of European coastal seaweeds. It tried to strengthen interdisciplinary learning, intercultural collaboration, and ecological awareness while promoting the sustainable use and protection of coastal ecosystems.

Implementation: The project combined a five-week virtual competition for EU-CONEXUS students with a five-day mobility in Valencia for the top participants. Activities included expert sessions, challenges, laboratory work, fieldwork, and networking.

Cost: €10,000

Outcome: The project generated educational and cultural materials on seaweed and coastal sustainability, as well as innovative blue-economy business ideas. Participants gained practical skills in marine biotechnology and oceanographic fieldwork, while the international collaboration strengthened intercultural connections and the EU-CONEXUS student community.

2. SmUCS Healthy Habits

Duration: October 2025 – June 2026

Leader: KU (1)

Participants: AUA (1), SETU (1)

Location: online + Klaipeda, Athens, Rostock, Valencia, Zadar, Limassol

Members in the application: 4 (**KU**, SETU, AUA)

Members in implementation: 3 (**KU**, SETU, AUA)[2]

Total engagement: **111** (4 project members from application form, 81 that participated in onsite workshops, 26 that participated in virtual component)

Objective: The project aimed to promote accessible healthy habits that support students' physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, particularly during periods of

[1][1] Members remained the same in the application form as in the implementation part, according to the submitted final report.

[2][2] One student finished her studies before the start of project implementation, so she wasn't able to participate.

academic pressure. It also sought to strengthen connections among EU-CONEXUS students through shared activities, peer support, and intercultural exchange.

Implementation: The project combined three virtual meetings, regular online peer-support sessions, voluntary habit tracking, and dissemination through EU-CONEXUS communication channels. It also included six in-person activities across partner universities, combining international mobility with local workshops and activities.

Cost: €7,167.40

Outcome: The project increased students' awareness and engagement with accessible healthy habits, with physical activity and outdoor activities proving particularly popular. It also demonstrated the value of peer support and face-to-face activities in strengthening motivation, wellbeing, intercultural exchange, and a sense of community among EU-CONEXUS students.

3. El Camino de EU-CONEXUS

Duration: November 2025 – June 2026

Leader: UCV (1)

Participants: SETU (3), AUA (2), LRUNIV (2), KU (2), UNIZD (1), UTCB (1)

Location: Galicia (Spain) + online

Members in the application: 3 (**UCV**, SETU, AUA)

Members in implementation: 12 (**UCV**, AUA, SETU, UNIZD, KU, LRUNIV, UTCB)

Total engagement: 200 (3 project members, 60+ applications (out of which 9 students were selected), 3 experts, pilgrims and locals that were in touch with the project team)

Objective: The project aimed to connect EU-CONEXUS students through a 100 km Camino de Santiago journey, exploring coastal culture, fisheries, sustainability, and young people's perspectives on the sea. It promoted intercultural exchange, student wellbeing, and community building while developing teamwork and transversal skills through shared experiences.

Implementation: The project combined an eight-month preparation phase, including student selection, expert podcasts, and coordination activities, with an intensive physical journey along the Camino de Santiago. The walk included daily trekking, intercultural dialogue, shared responsibilities, and peer learning, strengthening teamwork, resilience, and understanding of coastal sustainability.

Cost: €8,965.14

Outcome: The project successfully brought together an inclusive international student group for a 100 km Camino de Santiago journey, with all participants completing the route and gaining an official pilgrimage certificate. The experience strengthened intercultural communication, resilience, student connections, and EU-CONEXUS visibility, while the accompanying podcasts and social media content created lasting educational and dissemination resources.

4. **Coastal Tongues – Saving Lives through Languages**

Duration: September 2025 – July 2026

Leader: LRUNIV (1)

Participants: UROS (2), AUA (1), UCV (1), UTCB (1), KU (1)

Location: Valencia (Alboraya and Albufera), Klaipeda, Athens, Mykonos, Paphos, Dubrovnik

Members in the application: 8 (LRUNIV, SETU, AUA, KU, UTCB, UCV)

Members in implementation: 7 (LRUNIV, AUA, UCV, UTCB, KU, UROS)[3]

Total engagement: 4548 (12 team members - application and implementation combined, 20+ volunteers, 16 student contestants, 4500+ viewers from IG and YT pages)

Objective: The objective was to use coastal languages and oral histories to improve disaster preparedness, public health communication, and climate adaptation, while sharing local knowledge through podcasts and digital tools across EU-CONEXUS communities.

Implementation: The project was implemented through field interviews, a multilingual student competition, student travel to partner universities to prepare educational podcast episodes, digital communication, and work towards developing a multilingual Coastal Survival Dictionary.

Cost: €3,121.67

Outcome: The project strengthened communication, intercultural exchange, and student cooperation across EU-CONEXUS by producing multilingual posters, educational podcasts, digital content, and a coastal terminology collection. These

[3][3] Only three team members remained from the initial application form. Four new students joined as team members in project implementation making it a total of 12 students considered as a project team (both application and implementation).

outputs created accessible and sustainable resources that can support future education and climate resilience initiatives.

Non-Selected Projects from the Third Call

1. Storytelling for Sustainability: How Local Narratives Influence Coastal Protection

Leader: UNIZD (1)

Participants: UNIZD (17), KU (6), UCV (1)

Objective: The project aims to collaboratively create an illustrated English-language storybook for children that combines storytelling with cultural, environmental, and linguistic education. Through collaboration between students from three universities and multiple disciplines, the storybook introduces children to Croatian cultural heritage, historical sites, natural landscapes, and sustainability, while supporting early English learning. It is designed as an educational and touristic resource for use in schools, libraries, tourist centres, and community settings.

2. UNITED OCEAN – Connecting MPAs Through Stories & Images

Leader: KU (1)

Participants: KU (2), UNIZD (1), SETU (1)[4]

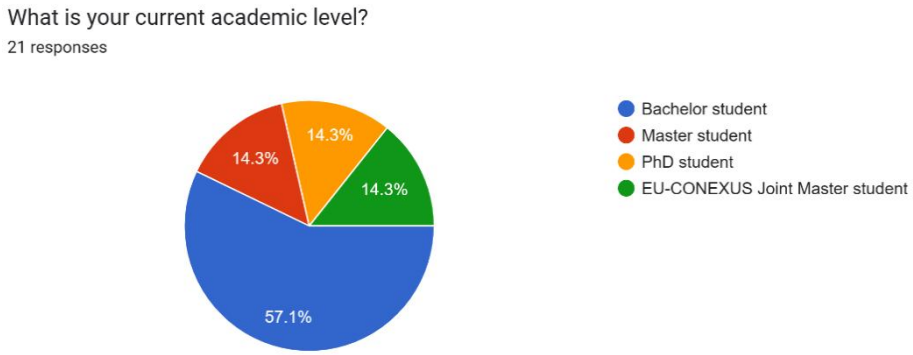
Objective: The UNITED OCEAN project aims to raise awareness of marine conservation by connecting students from the Baltic, North, and Mediterranean Seas. Through student-led storytelling and multimedia content, it promotes knowledge of marine ecosystems, shared environmental challenges, and responsibility for ocean protection.

Survey Results: Feedback on the Third Call for Student Projects

At the end of the project implementation period, a survey was distributed to students who participated in four projects. The feedback collected provided valuable insights into their experiences and will help inform and guide improvements for future calls. A total of 21 students completed the survey, representing a strong response rate given that 26 students were directly involved in the project implementation as members of the project teams. The survey results are presented below:

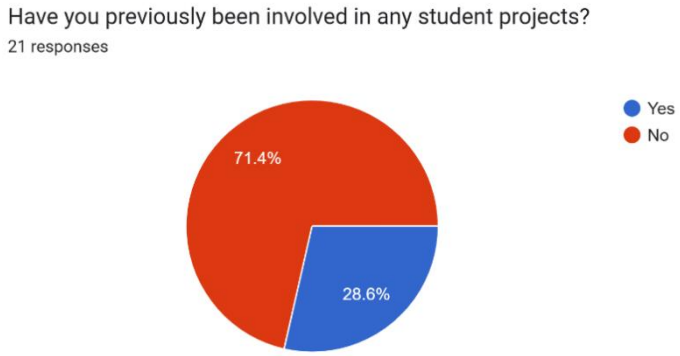
[4][4] This student was also involved in Coastal Tongues project.

a. Academic level



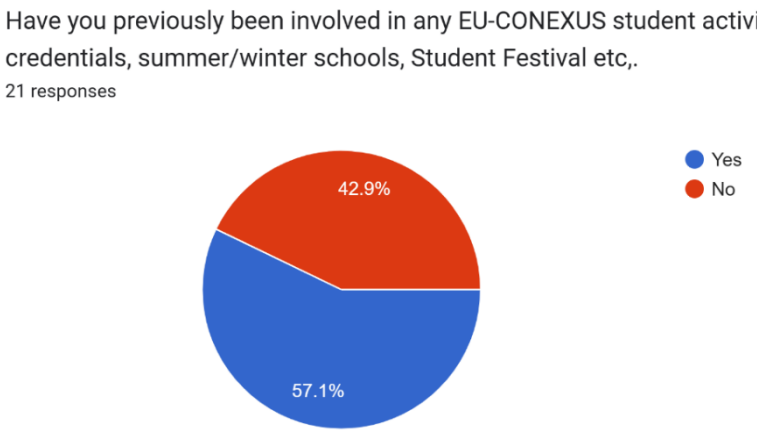
Regarding academic level, slightly more than half of the participating students were Bachelor's students, while the remaining participants were Master's, Joint Master's, and PhD students.

b. Previous involvement in the projects



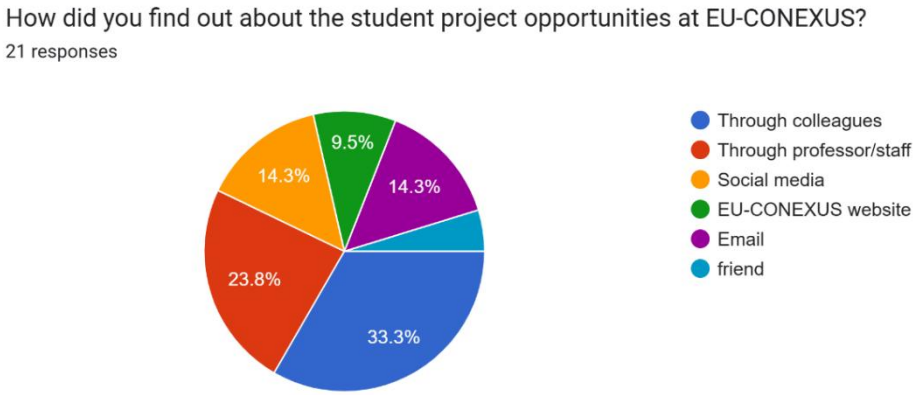
When asked about their previous involvement in student projects, less than 30% of respondents indicated that they had participated in such projects before, while more than two-thirds were taking part for the first time.

c. Previous involvement in EU-CONEXUS student activities



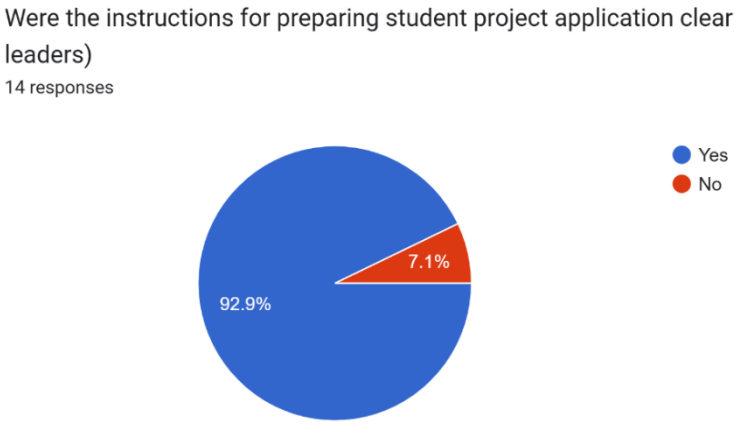
However, slightly more than half of the students had previously participated in EU-CONEXUS student activities.

d. Finding out about projects



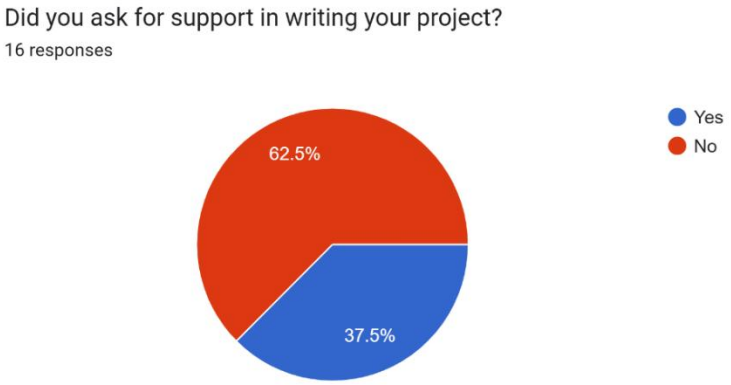
Regarding how students learned about the student project opportunities, the responses varied. Most students found out about the opportunities through colleagues or professors and staff. Other sources included social media, email, and the EU-CONEXUS website.

e. Clear instructions on preparing student projects



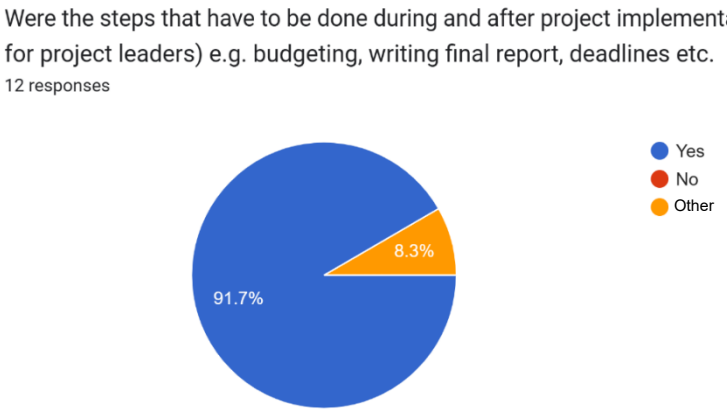
The great majority of respondents indicated that the instructions for writing the project were clear.

f. Assistance with writing projects



Regarding support during the project writing, slightly more than one-third of students indicated that they sought assistance, while the majority did not require additional support.

g. Understandable instructions



When asked whether the instructions and steps to be followed during and after project implementation were clear, more than 90% of respondents indicated that they were. The remaining respondent (one student) selected “Other” without providing any additional explanation or specifying what their answer referred to.

h. Finding project partners

Students found their project partners through a variety of EU-CONEXUS-related activities and existing connections. Many met their partners through Student Festival held in Limassol in May 2026, while others also met through mobilities, courses, conferences and previous projects. Some students were already friends or colleagues, while some mention the help of institutional coordinators and Whaller.

i. Issues encountered

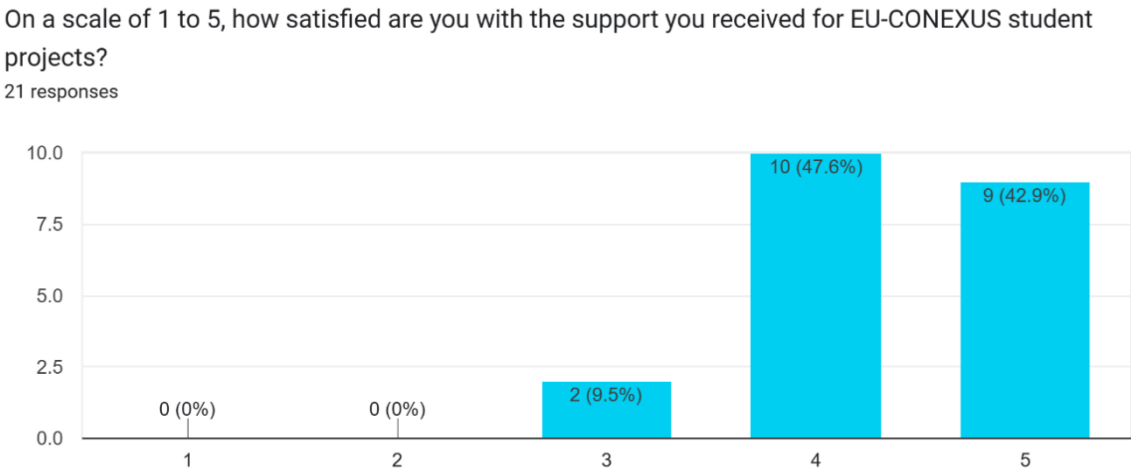
The main challenges students faced during project preparation related to **financial arrangements, communication, coordination, and logistical planning**. Some participants found it difficult to understand how to manage and spend the allocated funds before the project, while others experienced challenges with the reimbursement process and personal budgeting, although these issues were generally resolved quickly. Accommodation booking and travel planning were also described as more complicated and time-consuming than expected, and the financial arrangements were not always clear from the beginning. Communication and coordination presented additional challenges for teams, but some student mention communication with EU-CONEXUS team only via email. Some students didn’t clearly understand expectations from the beginning. Coordinating schedules and maintaining **active involvement among all partners** was sometimes difficult, especially due to increased responsibilities, geographical distance, different institutional procedures, and the

involvement of new team members who had not previously worked together. This required additional time to establish effective communication, trust, and shared expectations. Some participants also experienced personal challenges, such as video editing for the podcast, which affected deadlines but provided valuable learning opportunities. Nevertheless, many students reported that the preparation process went smoothly, with no major issues, and that good teamwork, regular communication, collaborative planning, and the commitment of the participants helped overcome the challenges encountered.

j. Recommended Improvements

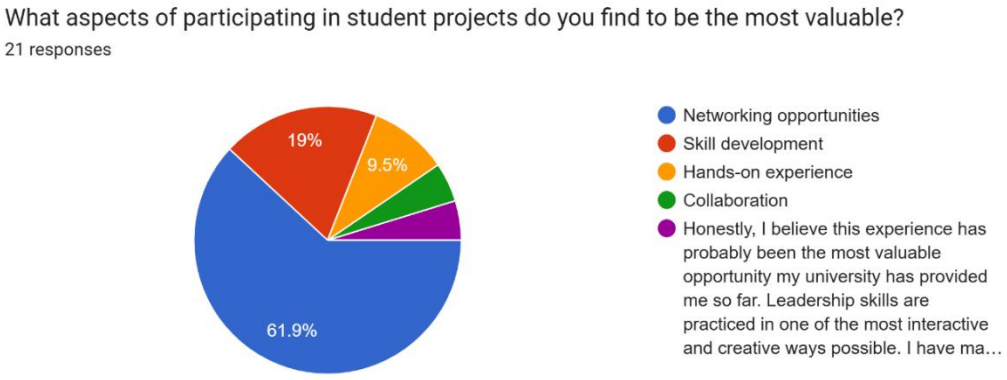
Participants mainly recommended **clearer financial procedures** and **better communication and stronger collaboration within a team**. Suggestions included providing clearer guidance on spending and reimbursement (e.g. creating a step-by-step preparation guide). It would be good to improve partner-search opportunities through some platform. When it comes to project teams, participants recommended holding monthly meetings and allocating more time for preparation. Apart from these recommendations, many participants expressed satisfaction with the overall organization. Nevertheless, they noted that greater structure, clearer information, and enhanced opportunities for collaboration could further improve future projects.

k. Students' satisfaction



When asked about their overall satisfaction, 47.6% of students rated the experience with a grade of 4, while 43% gave the highest rating of 5. Just under 10% (two students) rated their satisfaction with a 3. Overall, the results indicate a high level of student satisfaction, while also suggesting some room for further improvement.

l. Valuable aspects



When asked about the most valuable aspects of the student projects, almost two-thirds of the students highlighted **networking opportunities**, making this the most frequently mentioned benefit. Skill development and hands-on experience were also considered highly valuable, followed by collaboration. One student additionally described the project as “the most valuable opportunity the university has provided so far,” particularly highlighting the development of leadership skills, as well as the opportunity to build new friendships and expand their professional network.

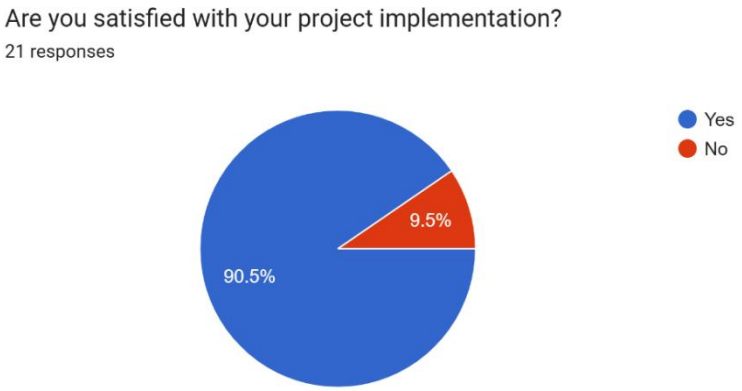
m. Suggestions for improvement

Students were asked to share their suggestions for improving support and resources for students participating in projects. Their suggestions are the following:

- Provide clearer information on financial procedures and improve the budget spending system so students can plan and manage funds more easily.
- Connect current project leaders with leaders of previous projects so they can share experiences and advice.
- Better communication within project teams and regular check-ins (for project leaders).
- Improve communication between administrative staff and the whole project team, rather than only the project leader, to reduce misunderstandings.

- Promote project opportunities more widely through additional announcements and information channels.
- More support from institutional coordinators - to be more open to student initiatives, including during project implementation and visits to partner universities.
- Increase the number and diversity of projects and give students more freedom and flexibility to develop their own ideas.

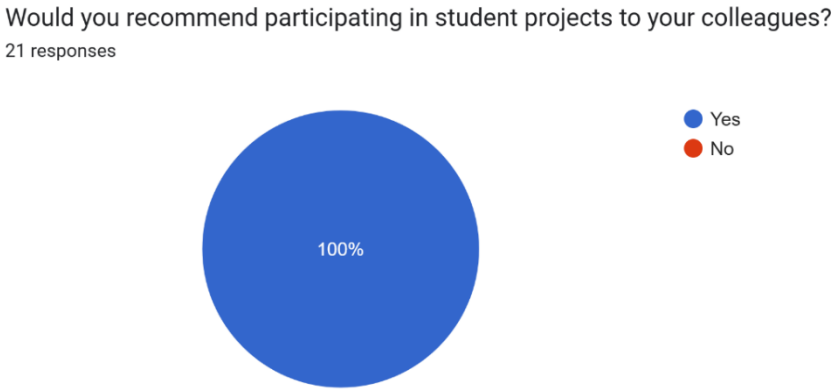
n. Student Satisfaction with Project Implementation



When asked about their satisfaction with the implementation of their project, the majority of students (90%) reported being satisfied, while a small number expressed some dissatisfaction.

The following question asked dissatisfied students to explain the reasons for their responses. One student felt that more time was needed to achieve all project goals. Another noted that, while the implementation was generally satisfactory, not all planned locations were included in the video production. Better coordination and earlier planning could have ensured more balanced participation from all team members. Despite these challenges, the project achieved meaningful results and provided useful lessons for future projects.

o. Recommendation of Student Projects



When asked if they would recommend participating in student projects to their colleagues, all respondents answered yes. This positive feedback shows that students found the projects valuable and would encourage others to take part.

p. Additional Comments

Some students expressed a particularly strong appreciation for the opportunities provided through the EU-CONEXUS student projects. In addition to developing project management and leadership skills, one student described the experience as highly meaningful and impactful, expressing sincere gratitude for the opportunity to turn their ideas into reality. The student highlighted the lasting personal impact of the project and the unique experience it provided.

Fourth Call for Student Projects

The fourth and final call for student projects had a total budget of **€15,000** and was open from **15 September to 15 November 2025**. The Student Board decided to fund only one project with the available budget, with the aim of involving as many students as possible from different EU-CONEXUS partner universities. The call focused on the topic **"Student Coastal Identity"** and a total of **12 project applications** were received, which is the highest number so far.

The applications involved **68 students from all nine partner universities** as project team members. The participating students were distributed as follows: 16 from UCV,

11 from SETU, 10 from UTCB, 9 from AUA, 7 from UNIZD, 5 from KU, 5 from LRUNIV, 4 from UROS, and 1 from FREDU. The project coordinators represented six EU-CONEXUS universities: UCV (5), UNIZD (2), KU (2), UTCB (1), and SETU (1). One project was jointly coordinated by KU and AUA.

Following the submission deadline, six applications were considered invalid because the required documentation and complete application materials had not been submitted in accordance with the project rules, even after additional time had been provided. These applications therefore did not proceed to the evaluation stage.

The remaining six valid applications were evaluated by the Evaluation Committee. Following the evaluation process, student project **Clean Coast Connection** received the highest score and was selected for funding, receiving the full amount of €15,000.

The five other valid proposals - *Echoes of the Sea, Where the Sea Meets the Mountains, Sea the Future, EU-CONEXUS University Cup Minifootball 2026, and Posidonia Horizon: Athens' Blue Mission* - were not selected for funding. When it comes to project proposals considered ineligible, those are the following: *EU-COLLEXUS, International University Collaboration, Coastal Atlas, From Sea to Biotech, Our Coastal Story,* and *Tides of Time: Connecting Coasts and Cohorts.*

Once again, project leader was required to sign a Letter of Funding Attribution, confirming her responsibility for project planning, coordination, financial management, and timely implementation. As EU-CONEXUS+ was coming to an end in October 2026, the final deadline was set for **31 August 2026**.

The following section provides an overview of the selected project, including its objectives, implementation activities, and key outcomes.

Completed Project from the Fourth Call

1. **Clean Coast Connection**

Duration: January 2026 – August 2026

Leader: UNIZD (1)

Participants: UCV (1), AUA (1), KU (1), UROS (1), FREDU (1), SETU (1), LRUNIV (1), UNIZD (1)

Location: Zadar and Dubrovnik (Croatia), Athens (Greece)

Members in the application: 3 (**UNIZD**, UCV, AUA)

Members in implementation: 9 (**UNIZD**, UCV, AUA, KU, UROS, FREDU, SETU, LRUNIV)

Total engagement: **412** (including 3 team members, 98 students that applied, 4 experts, 7 volunteers plus 300+ indirectly impacted)

Objective: To empower EU-CONEXUS students to become leaders in sustainable coastal management through hands-on learning, an on-site transnational field trip, and cross-border collaboration, creating lasting impact through shared tools, knowledge, and student-led initiatives.

Implementation: The project was implemented through student recruitment, expert-led training, toolkit co-creation, an eight-day transnational field trip across Zadar, Dubrovnik, and Athens, and dissemination activities. Students gained practical experience through coastal and underwater clean-ups, biodiversity workshops, and collaboration with local students and stakeholders, while testing tools and practices designed for replication across EU-CONEXUS universities.

Cost: €14,831.43

Outcome: The project attracted a high number of applicants and brought together a diverse group of student ambassadors from across the EU-CONEXUS partner universities. Through expert seminars and practical field activities, students strengthened their knowledge and skills in coastal conservation and co-created a Coastal Cleanup Toolkit to support safe, sustainable, and replicable student-led clean-up activities across the alliance.

Non-Selected Projects from the Fourth Call

1. **ECHOES OF THE SEA: Coastal Identity Through Sound, View and Story**

Leader: KU (1)

Participants: AUA (1), UTCB (1), LRUNIV (1)

Objective: To raise awareness of European coastal sustainability by creatively exploring the relationship between people, communities, and the sea through sound, photography, and storytelling. The project aims to strengthen EU-CONEXUS coastal identity by bringing students from different regions together to share and express their local coastal experiences.

2. **Where the Sea Meets the Mountains**

Leader: UNIZD (1)

Participants: UNIZD (2), AUA (3), UROS (1), UTCB (1), FREDU (1)

Objective: To enhance students' knowledge of coastal karst, marine biodiversity, and sustainability through interdisciplinary fieldwork, workshops, and cultural exchange. It aims to raise awareness of coastal waste, environmental change, and coastal identity while strengthening collaboration and community within EU-CONEXUS.

3. **Sea the Future: Coastal Hackathon**

Leader: KU (1)

Participants: KU (1), UTCB (1), FREDU (1), LRUNIV (1), UNIZD (1), SETU (1)

Objective: To bring EU-CONEXUS students together through an international hackathon to develop innovative, STEAM-based solutions for marine and freshwater protection. It aims to foster scientific inquiry, creativity, cultural exchange, and environmental awareness, with the Baltic Sea as a central case study.

4. **EU-CONEXUS University Cup Minifootball 2026**

Leader: UTCB (1)

Participants: UTCB (1), KU (1), AUA (1), LRUNIV (1), UNIZD (1)

Objective: To bring students from partner universities together through inclusive and sustainable sport, promoting health, teamwork, intercultural exchange, and European coastal identity. The project also aims to raise awareness of sustainable sports practices and develop a replicable model for future EU-CONEXUS university championships and an international final.

5. **Posidonia Horizon: Athens' Blue Mission**

Leader: AUA (1), KU (1)

Participants: UROS (1), FREDU (1), UTCB (1), UCV (1), SETU (1), UNIZD (1), LRUNIV (2)

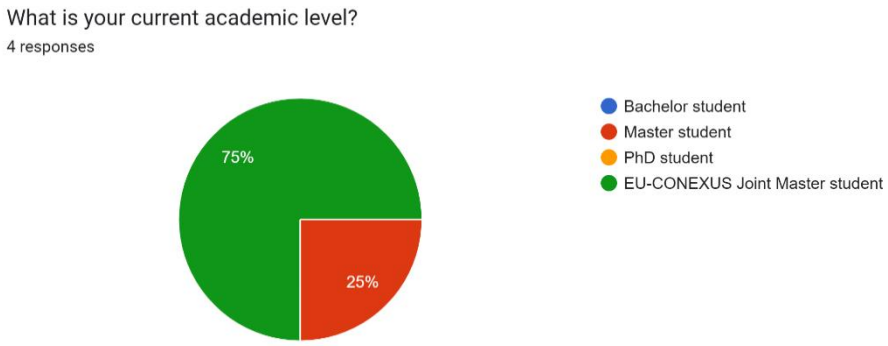
Objective: To strengthen students' connection to and understanding of coastal ecosystems by combining environmental protection, hands-on marine activities, cultural exchange, and creative expression. The project aims to build a shared EU-

CONEXUS Student Coastal Identity while promoting long-term commitment to marine conservation and intercultural collaboration.

Survey Results: Feedback on the Fourth Call for Student Projects

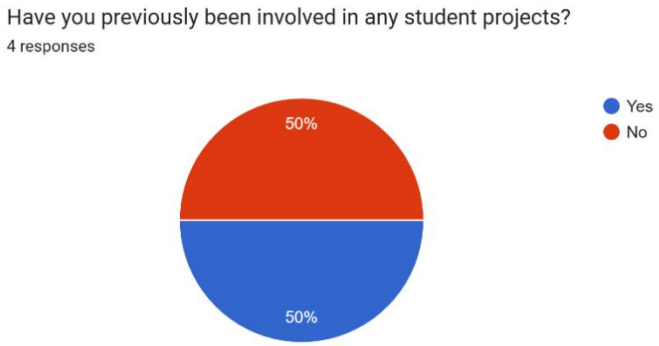
As with each project call, a survey was distributed at the end of the implementation period to students who participated in the selected project. As only one project was funded under this call, with a core team of three students and an additional six students involved during implementation, the number of survey responses was expectedly lower than in previous calls. All three core project members and one additional participant completed the survey, and the results are presented below.

a. Academic level



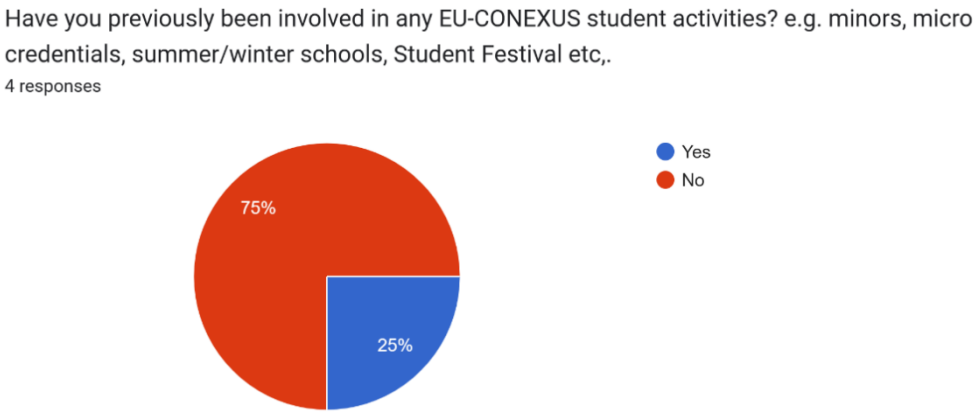
Regarding academic level, three out of the four respondents are EU-CONEXUS Joint Master students, while the fourth is a Master's student. The chart shows that the initiative reached different types of students, including EU-CONEXUS Joint Master Programme in Marine Biotechnology.

b. Previous involvement in the projects



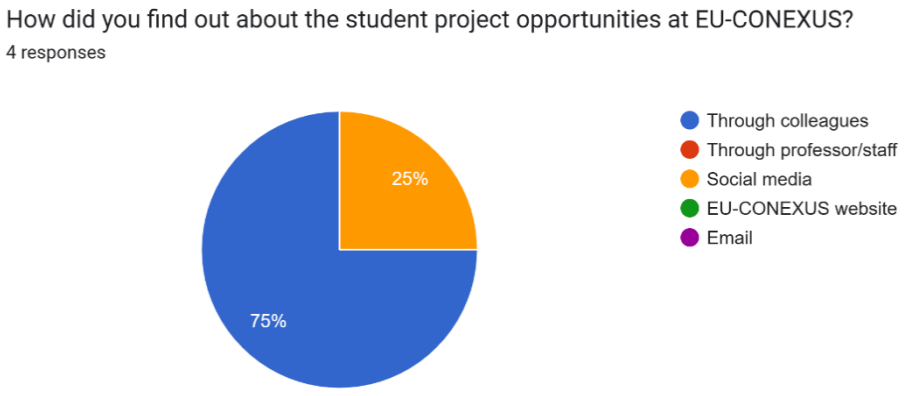
When asked about their previous involvement in student projects, the responses were split 50-50. This shows that the initiative is attracting not only students who have already taken part in student projects, but also those who are new to this type of experience.

c. Previous involvement in EU-CONEXUS student activities



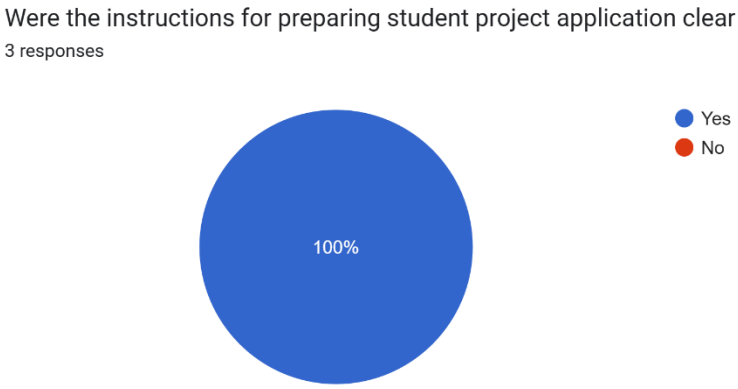
Only one student had previously taken part in EU-CONEXUS student activities, while the other three had not.

d. Finding out about projects



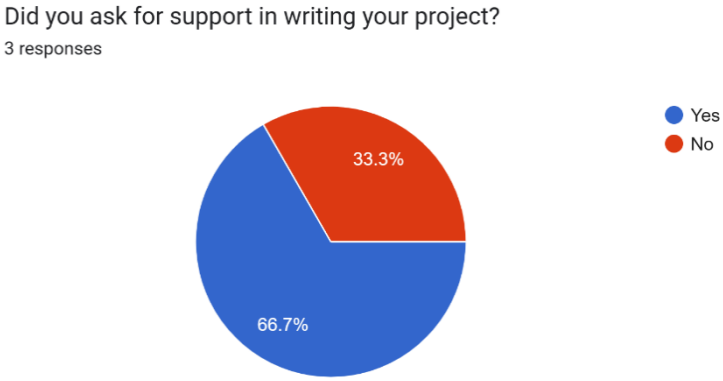
Regarding how students learned about student project opportunities, most said they heard about them through colleagues, while one student mentioned social media.

e. Clear instructions on preparing student projects



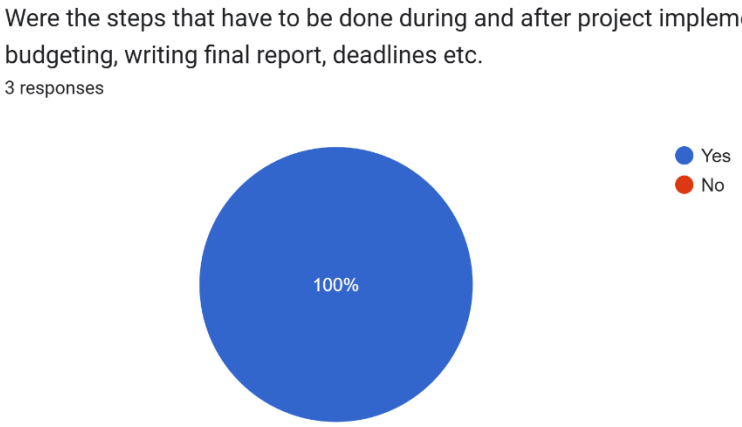
Everyone replied that the instructions for writing the project were clear.

f. Assistance with writing projects



Regarding support during the project writing process, two students asked for support, while one did not.

g. Understandable instructions



Everyone replied that the instructions were clear.

h. Finding project partners

When asked how they found project partners, students said they met them through their classes while one student mentioned that travelling and studying at different EU-CONEXUS universities gave them the opportunity to meet local students and find potential project partners.

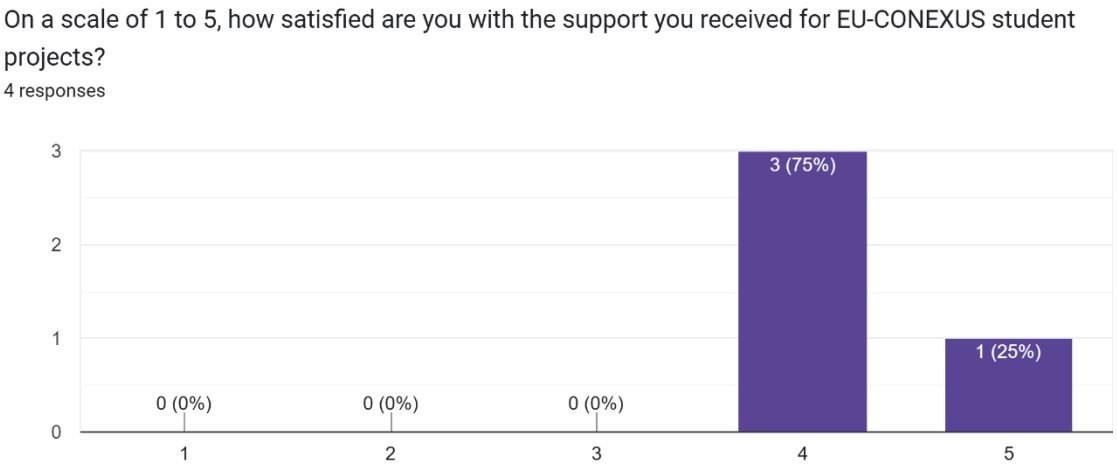
i. Issues encountered

The main issues students encountered were related to coordinating and implementing project activities, especially as the project was large and required changes in order to be according to the call rules. They also mentioned difficulties with coordinating from another country, reaching out to partner universities, and navigating the approval process and EU-CONEXUS policies.

j. Recommended Improvements

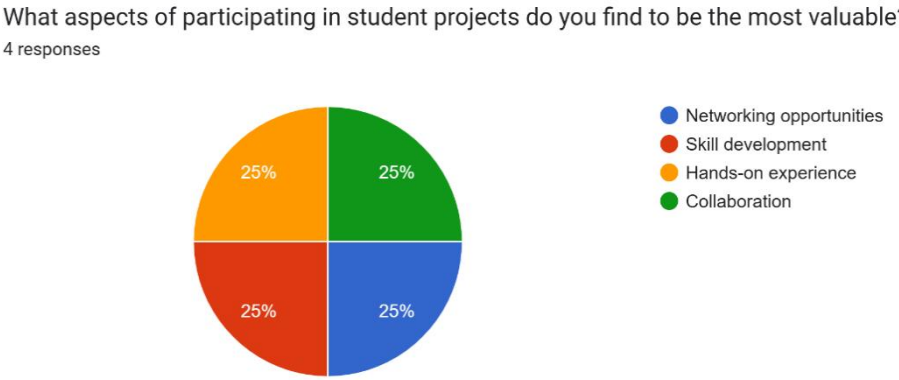
Students mainly recommended improving communication and providing more support with the administrative side of projects as it can be difficult to navigate when doing it for the first time (before applying). They also suggested being more active on social media to better showcase project progress, making it easier to find partners and communicate with other universities, and giving students more autonomy when implementing their approved project plans.

k. Students' satisfaction



When asked about their overall satisfaction, three of them rated the experience with a grade of 4, while one student gave the highest rating of 5.

l. Valuable aspects



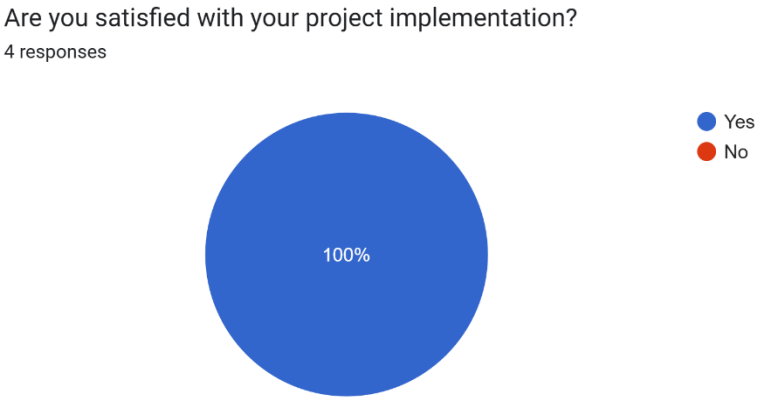
When asked about the most valuable aspects of the student projects, everyone replied differently so the replies vary from networking opportunities, skill development, hands-on experience and collaboration.

m. Suggestions for improvement

Students suggested making information easier to access and improving communication between committee members, project coordinators, and students. They also highlighted the need for clearer guidelines, more support with administration,

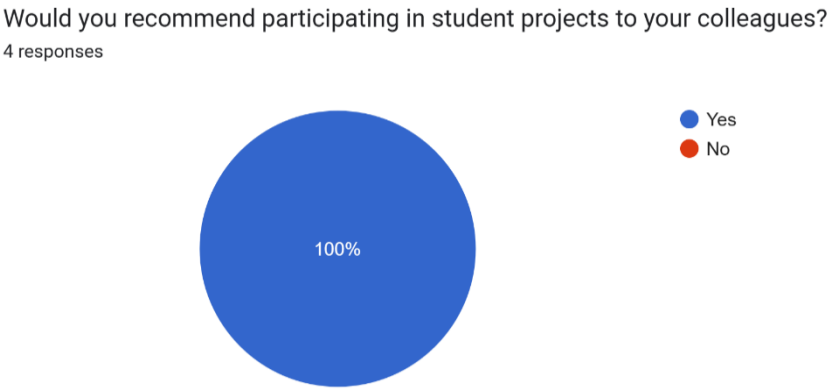
greater freedom in decision-making, and better communication channels with students from partner universities.

n. Student Satisfaction with Project Implementation



All students are satisfied with project implementation.

o. Recommendation of Student Projects



When asked whether they would recommend student projects to their colleagues, all respondents answered yes. This shows that the students had a positive experience and would encourage others to participate.

Analysis of Impact of the Third and Fourth Calls

This section provides an overview of the impact of the Third and Fourth Calls for Student Projects, focusing on their reach and contribution to student engagement. The

analysis considers both direct participation in project development and implementation and the wider, indirect reach generated through project activities, events, and dissemination. Together, these indicators provide an overview of the extent to which the calls engaged students, created opportunities for collaboration and learning, and reached the wider student community.

The analysis draws on project applications and final reports submitted by the project leaders of the implemented projects.

Impact of the Third Call

For the Third Call for Student Projects, the available data are presented in two tables, providing an overview of student involvement at different stages of the projects and the overall reach of the implemented activities.

Table 1 focuses on direct student involvement at the application and implementation stages. It includes all six applications, with particular focus on the four funded projects, and distinguishes between students involved in the application process and those who participated in implementation. The table also shows participation by partner university.

Table 2 presents the overall impact of the four implemented projects, combining direct and indirect involvement and the total reach reported by project leaders, including participants in activities, events, competitions, workshops, and other dissemination activities.

Table 1

Students **directly** involved in all 6 projects		Students **directly** involved in 4 selected project applications	Students **directly** involved in implementation of 4 selected projects
LRUNIV	2 + 2	2	3
AUA	4 + 1	4	4
UCV	5 + 1	4	4
KU	11 + 3	2	4
UNIZD	19 + 1	-	1

UTCB	2 + 1	2	3
SETU	4 + 2	4	4
UROS	1 + 2	1	3
FREDU	-	-	-
TOTAL	**61**	**19**	**26**

As shown in the first column, **a total of 61 students were directly involved in six project applications**. This includes students who participated during the application phase (48), as well as those who joined later and took part in project implementation of the selected ones (13).

The second column focuses on the four selected projects and shows that 19 students were involved when the applications were submitted. By the end of the implementation period**, the number had increased to 26 students**, as shown in the third column, based on the information provided in the final reports. The difference is due to changes in project teams, with some students leaving and others joining during the implementation phase.

The changes in each project were as follows:

- *SmUCS Healthy Habits:* the same 3 students involved both in application and implementation, while 1 student from application left before implementation due to completing their studies.
- *El Camino de EU-CONEXUS*: the same team of 3 students both in application and implementation, while 9 additional students joined in implementation to implement the project according to the plan.
- Coastal Tongues: the team changed the most – from 8 students in application only 3 students remained in implementation meaning that 5 students from application gave up and were replaced by 4 new students.

**AlgaeQuest* (without changes) - all 4 students from application also participated in the implementation.

Table 2

	Directly involved students in projects (application + implementation)	Total impact (directly + indirectly)
AlgaeQuest	4	77
SmUCS Healthy Habits	4	111
El Camino de EU-CONEXUS	12	200
Coastal Tongues	12	4548
TOTAL	**32**	**4936**

Table 2 presents the combined direct and indirect impact of the four implemented projects. A total of **32 students** were directly involved as project team members during the application and/or implementation phases.

When the direct and indirect impact reported by each project in its final report is combined, the **total reach** amounts to **4936** individuals. This includes students who applied to project competitions, participated in workshops and other virtual activities, as well as experts, guest speakers, volunteers, observers, and other students and community members reached through social media. When added to this number other 29 students from the remaining two projects that weren't selected for funding, the **total impact of the Third Call is 4965.**

Impact of the Fourth Call

For the Fourth Call for Student Projects, the available data are presented in a table providing an overview of student involvement across all twelve project applications, as well as participation in the implemented project.

Table 1

Students **directly** involved in all 12 project applications (and selected project implementation)		Students **directly** involved in the selected project (application)	Students **directly** involved in the selected project (application + implementation)
LRUNIV	5 (+1)	-	1
AUA	9	1	1
UCV	16	1	1
KU	5 (+1)	-	1
UNIZD	7 (+1)	1	2
UTCB	10	-	-
SETU	11 (+1)	-	1
UROS	4 (+1)	-	1
FREDU	1 (+1)	-	1
TOTAL	**74**	**3**	**9**

The first column shows the total number of students involved across the twelve applications (68), including six additional students who joined during project implementation, bringing the total to **74**. The second column presents the number of students listed as project members in the selected project, while the third shows the final number of students who ultimately participated in its implementation.

Regarding the direct and indirect impact of the implemented project, nine students participated directly in project implementation. When combined with students who applied to participate, experts who delivered lessons, volunteers, and students and community members reached indirectly through project activities and social media, the **total impact of this project** rises to **412 individuals**.

When the 65 students involved in the remaining eleven project applications are added, the **overall reach of the Fourth Call for Student Projects amounts to 477 individuals**.

Impact Conclusion

The available data indicate that the Third and Fourth Calls for Student Projects reached students through both direct participation and wider engagement with project activities. In terms of direct participation, 61 students were involved in the Third Call and 74 in the Fourth Call. When other forms of engagement are included, such as students reached through activities, volunteers, experts, other project applicants and wider community outreach, the total reported impact amounts to 4965 individuals for the Third Call and 477 for the Fourth Call.

However, the full impact of the calls is difficult to quantify. While application data, participation figures, and final reports provide useful indicators, they cannot capture all forms of indirect exposure and engagement. Students may have encountered the calls or project activities through events, social media, or peer interactions without formally participating. The actual reach and impact may therefore extend beyond the figures presented in this analysis.

Focusing on participating students, the qualitative findings further highlight the value of the initiative. As reflected in the survey results, the projects supported the development of management and leadership skills, increased student engagement and networking opportunities, and attracted students who had not previously participated in EU-CONEXUS activities, contributing to their personal and professional growth. Collaboration with peers from different partner universities also exposed students to diverse academic and cultural perspectives, fostering intercultural learning, mutual understanding, and opportunities for future collaboration.

The projects also increased the visibility and awareness of EU-CONEXUS within the student community. Through project activities, events, and informal dissemination, students became more familiar with the alliance, its values, and its focus on smart urban coastal sustainability. Overall, the findings indicate that the calls contributed to student learning, collaboration, engagement, and greater awareness of EU-CONEXUS beyond direct project participation.

Conclusion

During the 2025/2026 academic year, the Student Board made several important improvements to its work and activities. Two physical SB meetings were held, along with a joint meeting with the Governing Board. SB members also participated in more conferences, strengthened collaboration with JCU, applied for ESU membership, and prepared a handbook for new students.

The academic year also marked the successful launch and implementation of the third and fourth calls for student projects. Both calls attracted a growing number of applications, including students who had already participated in previous projects as well as many new students. EU-CONEXUS Joint Master students were also involved, one even as a project leader. Together, the two calls received 18 applications and directly impacted 135 students, while the wider community reached indirectly included 5,442 people. Surveys conducted after both calls showed that students valued the initiative and the opportunities it provided, while also highlighting areas for improvement, particularly in financial management, communication, and collaboration within project teams.

To sum up, the increasing number of applications and the participation of many students who had not previously been involved in EU-CONEXUS activities show that the student project initiative is gaining visibility and attracting a wider range of students. The results also point to growing awareness of EU-CONEXUS among students, staff, and the wider community. The impact achieved throughout the year highlights the importance of an active and engaged Student Board, as well as the role of the WP12 initiative in supporting and encouraging student-led projects.

Conclusion:

This deliverable compiles three Annual Student Board Reports, providing a comprehensive overview of the Student Board's activities throughout the EU-CONEXUS Plus period (2022–2026) as well as the detailed account of the implementation and outcomes of the four Calls for Student Projects conducted during this period.

That is to say, the reports cover the full range of Student Board activities, including its composition, governance, developments, key activities, and highlights. They also provide detailed information on each Call for Student Projects, including the number of applications and participating students, selected and non-selected projects, project implementation and outcomes, overall impact, and feedback from participating students. Particular attention is given to the impact of the Calls for Student Projects, demonstrating their contribution to reaching an increasing number of students and raising awareness of the opportunities available to students within EU-CONEXUS, as well as of the Alliance and its activities more broadly.

The compilation therefore represents an important record of the development of student engagement throughout the EU-CONEXUS Plus period. It illustrates the continued development of student-focused activities within the Alliance and highlights the role of the Student Board in representing student perspectives and supporting opportunities for active student participation. At the same time, the documentation of the Calls for Student Projects demonstrates how student-led initiatives have contributed to creating opportunities for participation, collaboration, and engagement across the Alliance.