EU CONEXUS
European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

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Assessment report on EU-CONEXUS cultural activities (outside Festivals): impact, evaluation, best practices and recommendations.

D17.2

WP17 "Community Engagement through Arts and Culture"

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Introduction

This report assesses the internal and external impact of EU-CONEXUS cultural and artistic activities (individual and collective) which were run over EU-CONEXUS Plus period 2022-2026. The report shares also best practices and recommendations.

Outside the two EU-CONEXUS Festival editions, nine cultural and artistic projects were implemented addressing EU-CONEXUS community, students and staff (academic and non academic).

These activities were run in relation to EU-CONEXUS Plus Task 17.2 "*In between festivals, cultural and artistic activities will be organized, disseminated and enhanced, some of them to be selected and performed during the next Festival"* and in accordance with WP17 objectives:

- **Reinforcing the sharing of European common values** in relation with European cultural diversity but also EU-CONEXUS identity and **sense of belonging to EU-CONEXUS through arts and culture**;
- **Increasing EU-CONEXUS visibility** by strengthening the connection to the **local ecosystem**, actors (public authorities, stakeholders…) as well as existing infrastructures (music or performance halls, libraries) and the general public;
- **Supporting the creation of student projects** and their performances or exhibitions **promoting the diversity of intercultural artistic expressions;**
- **Facilitating exchanges** between EU-CONEXUS partners through the **co-production** of collective artistic and cultural projects;
- **Mobilizing teams of teachers/researchers/students/staff** through collective artistic and cultural projects.

In an attempt to try various formats of activities, some projects were individual, some were collective, some were supervised or involved the participation of professional artists.

All projects served the objective of strengthening the Alliance identity around its smart urban coastal sustainability theme of expertise or around values that the EU-CONEXUS Alliance aims at promoting.

The following **five individual projects** were run:

- **A short story contest on the future of coastline** inviting **students** to imagine coastal regions that have undergone profound transformation following a significant event in the 2070s;

- Four visual arts exhibitions further to a call for **visual arts projects** addressing EU-CONEXUS **student community** and promoting the Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability theme of the Alliance;

- A **poetry contest** on a Sense of place open to **students and staff**;

- A **comic strip in science project** on the sustainability of coastal zones involving EU-CONEXUS **researchers and PhD students** with professional comic artists from EU-CONEXUS countries;

- A **photo contest** on memories, history and heritage of coastal cities addressing EU-CONEXUS **students and staff**.

The **four collective projects** have been:

- Three **sound creations** realized by the sound artist Julia Suero and students from La Rochelle Université further to a call for sounds to EU-CONEXUS community (**students and staff**);

- The creation of **EU-CONEXUS song** *Conex-US* by a group of EU-CONEXUS **students** during a music workshop held in the frame of the 3rd edition of EU-CONEXUS Festival 2023, with singer and songwriter Wilfried Hildebrandt;

- A **coast molding project** open to EU-CONEXUS community (**students and staff**) featuring EU-CONEXUS coastlines elements with designer Chloé Petitjean;

- A **collective dance project *Conexus dance*** addressing EU-CONEXUS community (**students and staff**) supervised by the dance artist Jennifer Macavinta in collaboration with three local dancers and choreographers, Roxana Alexandra Costea (Romania), Ester Garijo (Spain) and Matea Bilosnić (Croatia).

EU-CONEXUS Student Board members were not consulted for the very first projects which may have been a mistake. They were consulted for the implementation of the poetry and photo contests as well as for the comic strip in science project.

For this report, quantitative data was limited to participation counts (students and staff) and there is no qualitative data.

The project review is proposed in a chronological order over the 2022-2026 period.

Project review - Individual projects

Short Story Contest on the Future of the Coastline

Project background

This project was initiated by Olivier de Viron, Director of the Collegium (Bachelors Studies) at La Rochelle Université, France and researcher at the laboratory LIENSs (*LIttoral ENvironnement et Sociétés*) in particular on the impact of climate dynamics on geodesy data.

In the academic year 2022/2023, Olivier de Viron invited his BSc students to think about the challenges, including climate change, rising sea levels, and coastal erosion the world's coastlines are facing as well as their impact on coastal communities, ecosystems, and economies.

Timeline

During the 3rd edition of EU-CONEXUS Festival organized by La Rochelle Université in March 2023, a dedicated workshop to dystopian fiction writing on the future of the coastline (page 24 of the Festival programme) was held on 30th March 2023 in order to launch the project. This workshop was open to all students and staff from La Rochelle Université and from EU-CONEXUS who attended the Festival.

In autumn 2023, in order to broaden the spectrum of this project to European coastlines, it was decided to launch a short story contest on the Future of Coastline to EU-CONEXUS student community.

Students were invited to imagine coastal regions that had undergone profound transformation following a significant event in the 2070s, as documented in a newspaper article published 50 years later.

They were encouraged to craft a short story based on the scenario of their choice on which to sit their narrative's foundation and to show how society had adeptly adapted to these shifts, giving rise to a novel societal structure.

The deadline for the novel submission was 31st December 2023.

A jury based at La Rochelle Université, involving Olivier de Viron and the French freelance journalist and author Philippe Guerry/ was planned to evaluate the novels.

Target audience and community participation

EU-CONEXUS student community participation for this contest was poor. Only two novels (one individual and one collective writing) were submitted involving four students:

- One BSc student at Technical University of civil engineering of Bucharest (Romania) with her novel **Shattered Shores**;
- Three BSc students from La Rochelle Université (France) with their novel **Le journal d'Angèle**.

Resources and dissemination

There was no budget allocated for this project.

As announced, winners were awarded EU-CONEXUS goodies provided by La Rochelle Université and their story published on the culture page of EU-CONEXUS website.

Participation to the contest relied only on the students' interest for novel writing.

The student from UTCB had already shown her interest in that discipline during EU-CONEXUS 2023 Festival as one of her poem was presented and it was not a surprise to see her participation again in this contest.

Visual arts exhibition on Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

Project background

This project aimed mainly at enhancing the smart urban coastal sustainability theme of the Alliance within EU-CONEXUS student community and through visual arts.

A call dedicated to **visual arts projects** such as painting, drawing, sculpture, design, photography, video, sewing and fiber arts, digital art, mixed media, etc... was launched in autumn 2023 among EU-CONEXUS students. Any other forms of arts that could be translated into a visual representation (photo, video) were also accepted.

EU-CONEXUS students could submit their project individually or in groups as they were strongly encouraged to implement their visual arts projects with other students of partner universities of the Alliance.

Timeline

The call was launched in autumn 2023 and the deadline for projects submission was Monday 19th February 2024.

Selection procedures were held at EU-CONEXUS level on 6th March 2024 focusing on projects creativity (3 points), originality (2 points), quality (2 points), the Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability inspiration (2 points), the inter institutional aspect with other EU-CONEXUS partners (1 point).

Target audience and community participation

This project resonated with EU-CONEXUS student community and in response to the call for visual arts projects, 19 projects were submitted involving 31 students.

	number of projects presented per university	number of students applying per university	number of students selected per university	number of projects selected
LRUniv	collective project SETU/LRUniv	2	2	
AUA	2	2	2	2
UCV				
KU	2	7	7	2
UNIZD	3	10	10	3
UTCB	4	4	2	2
SETU	8	6	6	7
UROS				
FredU				
	19	**31**	**29**	**16**

Artistic disciplines	Number of projects presented	Number of projects selected
Photography	3	1
Painting	5	4
Drawing	1	1
Mixed Media	2	2
Digital arts	2	2
Installation/sculpture	3	3
Video/documentary	3	3
	19	**16**

Out of the 16 projects selected according to the criteria mentioned above and involving 29 students, most of them were individuals (13) and three (documentaries) were collective, created by students from Klaipeda University (Lithuania) and the University of Zadar (Croatia).

Only one project (a documentary) was an inter institutional project involving one student from South East Technological University (Ireland) and two from La Rochelle Université (France). The Irish student who had made the documentary spoke a bit of French and wanted to collaborate only with French students for the creation of his documentary soundtrack. Two French students, musicians, were easily identified by staff members of the Student House/Cultural Space at La Rochelle Université and students were therefore paired up for this project.

Resources and dissemination

Again, no prize as such was established to reward the 29 students which projects were selected. Their main motivation relied only on the prospect of seeing one's artwork presented in a collective exhibition which was the case as four exhibitions/ at EU-CONEXUS partner universities were held according to their capacities and facilities.

- A first exhibition at La Rochelle Université Library and Student House/Cultural Space (France) for the "*Joli mois de l'Europe*" from April 22nd to June 24th 2024.

The number of visitors who saw this exhibition is difficult to quantify but according to the general University Library statistics (the University Library being open to the general public from 08.30 am to 8 pm), the library usual attendance per day is of 1 500 people (students and local public from La Rochelle city) with an estimation of 10% for those who visit an exhibition.







- A second exhibition at Technical University of Civil Engineering, Bucharest (Romania) from October 28th to November 1st 2024 for **EU-CONEXUS EENVIRO conference** gathering 300 participants and 20 international keynote speakers and invited lecturers.

- A third exhibition in Zadar at the new city library from January 22nd to February 2nd, 2025 well covered by the local newspapers and national and local radio television:
  - Slobodna Dalmacija (regional newspaper);
  - Zadarski list (local newspaper);
  - Zadar branch (radiotelevision);
  - *Croatian Radiotelevision 1,* the national television channel during the 9.00 am show *Good morning Croatia;*
  - Local TV station Diadora.



- A fourth exhibition at South-East Technological University from 7th to 10th April 2025 for the Sustainability in the Arts Festival and then extended to June 13th, 2025 for the IAIE (Irish Association for International Education) Conference.





Poetry Contest on a Sense of Place

Project background

This poetry contest on a sense of place[1] was open to the whole EU-CONEXUS community (students, academic and non-academic staff) and had two goals: promote the diversity of languages and cultures within EU-CONEXUS Alliance and question the participants on the emotional connection or bond they had to a specific place, area or location, or to a particular community or activity.

In order to promote EU-CONEXUS multilingualism, participants could write their poems in one of the nine native languages of EU-CONEXUS (English, Croatian, French, German, Greek, Irish, Lithuanian, Romanian, Spanish) and provide in parallel a translation into English.

Timeline

The contest was open from 28th October to Tuesday 31st December 2024. To ensure fairness and give everyone an equal opportunity, each participant was allowed to submit one poem only.

Local selection by EU-CONEXUS national juries was held over the first two weeks of January 2025.

Every poem was rated according to the following criteria:

- **1. Originality**: novelty of ideas, exploration of the theme from an original perspective, creativity.
- **2. Overall impact, depth of content and relevance to the theme:** general impression and impact of the poem, poem alignment with the contest theme, depth of thought, use of imagery and symbolism, general harmony of the poem (content, style, form, rhythm, etc.).
- **3. Stylistic mastery and musicality, rhythm**: richness of language, use of metaphors and symbols, form of the poem, rhythm, musicality of sound.
- **4. Emotional impact:** conveying emotions or mood, general emotional power of the poem encouraging the reader to feel or empathize with the emotions being expressed.
- **5. Technical precision**: grammar and punctuation, structural consistency.

Each university selected its winner apart from the University of Rostock (Germany) who had two *ex aequo* winners and Frederick University (Cyprus) who had no participation to the contest. Nine local winners were therefore counted with top three winners who were designated on 22nd January 2025 based on the number of points each poem had gained at the national selection.

[1] *Sense of Place refers to the emotional attachment and meaning people associate with a particular location, shaped by personal experiences and cultural significance.*

Target audience and community participation

The contest was open to the entire EU-CONEXUS community (students and staff) and the number of participants was of 90 with 84 from the EU-CONEXUS community and six from outside.

The split between EU-CONEXUS students and staff was as follows:

	Staff	Students	Total applications
LRUniv	0	6	6
AUA	2	16	18
UCV	1	9	10
KU	0	3	3
UNIZD	1	7	8
UTCB	0	3	3
SETU	1	12	13
UROS	The split could not be provided		23
FredU	0	0	0

TOTAL 84

The other six participants were outsiders from the Alliance coming from the Universities of Malta, Zaragoza, Magdeburg, European University of Cyprus, St Xavier's college & Varpas Gymnasium.

Resources and dissemination

For the first time, it was decided to award a significant money prize to the top three winners (250 EUR each) which can explain the success of participation.

The poems of the nine local winners were promoted on EU-CONEXUS website and social media with a video of their author (if they accepted it) reading or declaming their poem in their national language on the January-February 2025 period.

The videos were seen 432 video views.

Comic Strip in Science

Project background

Open to EU-CONEXUS researchers and PhD students, the comic strip in science project was to promote, in a comic book format, 9 research projects (one research project per EU-CONEXUS partner country) on the sustainability of coastal areas, through a wide range of scientific disciplines from social sciences to fundamental research.

The main objective of the project was to inform a non-expert audience on how EU-CONEXUS addresses coastal sustainability, raise the awareness of the general public (mainly young people and adults) on scientific research and increase their interest in science. The project also encouraged a dialogue and collaboration between scientists and artists.

The project addressed EU-CONEXUS researchers and PhD students who were particularly interested in science communication and in a dialogue between art and science. It gave them the opportunity to collaborate with a professional illustrator, comic artist from their country and have their research project transposed into a three-page comic strip with a cover illustration.

The project was coordinated in collaboration with Pier Gajewski, comic author from La Rochelle, who had been working with La Rochelle Université (France) for many years.

Timeline

A call for expressions of interest to EU-CONEXUS researchers and PhD students was launched from 29 January to March 21st 2025 with a deadline extension to April 2nd, 2025.

The project was run over two phases:

1st phase (June to November 2025) with the creation of four comic strips with artists and researchers from France, Greece, Lithuania and Spain.

2nd phase (November 2025 to April 2026) with the creation of five comic strips with artists and researchers from Croatia, Romania, Ireland, Germany and Cyprus

Researchers and artists were paired up and given total freedom to find their own working rhythm. Suggested approach was that researchers shared key ideas, goals and context of the project and the artist led on visual storytelling.

Collaboration and mutual inspiration across paires were also being encouraged.

Target audience and community participation

The project was mainly based on a strong interest in scientific communication from the EU-CONEXUS researchers and PhD students and in a dialogue between art and science.

The opportunity to work with a professional artist and have their research project transposed into a comic strip was the only incentive for the project which required time and motivation to make the duo researcher and artist work.

Only twenty participants (nine PhD students & eleven researchers) answered the call for expressions of interest.

Project per University		**PhD**	**Researcher**
La Rochelle Université	2	1	1
Agricultural University of Athens	4	3	1
Catholic University of Valencia	2	1	1
Klaipeda University	2		2
University of Zadar	2		2
University of Zadar / South East Technological University (EU-CONEXUS)	1	1	
Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest	1	1	
South East Technological University	2	1	1
University of Rostock	3	1	2
Frederick University	1		1
	20	**9**	**11**

Per scientific discipline	
Life Sciences & Biomedicine	9
Arts & Humanities	5
Social Sciences	2
Technology	2
Physical sciences	0
Other: Ecology & Social Science	1
Other: Green Economics - Welfare Economics - Environmental Economics	1
	20

Out of the 20 applications, only nine projects were selected (one per country), based on the applicant motivation for scientific communication, their interest in a dialogue with an artist, the link between the research project and coastal sustainability, the diversity of disciplines that was aimed to be presented in the final comic deliverable. Two PhD students and seven researchers were therefore selected.

Project per University		**PhD**	**Researcher**
La Rochelle Université	1		1
Agricultural University of Athens	1		1
Catholic University of Valencia	1		1
Klaipeda University	1		1
University of Zadar	1		1
Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest	1	1	
South East Technological University	1	1	
University of Rostock	1		1
Frederick University	1		1
	9	2	7

Per scientific discipline	
Life Sciences & Biomedicine	3
Arts & Humanities	3
Social Sciences	2
Technology	1
Physical sciences	0
	9

The following research projects were selected for this project:

Phase 1

- **La Rochelle Université**, France, *"The new robinsonnes: adventurers of the postmodern world'*
- **Agricultural University of Athens**, Greece, *The Impact of Environmental Certifications on Consumer Behavior for Certified Hotels. Analysis Through the Theory of Planned Behavior*
- **Catholic University of Valencia,** Spain, *Walkable cities: promoción de la salud y mejora del bienestar a través de senderos urbanos en tres barrios de la ciudad de Valencia*
- **Klaipėda University**, Lithuania, *From Sea to Sickbed: The Unseen Story of Vibrio spp*

Phase 2

- **University of Zadar**, Croatia, *The Shipwreck at Gnalić - Mirror of Renaissance World*
- **Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest,** Romania, *Integrated Multisource Geospatial Data Management for the Digital Twin*
- **South East Technological University**, Ireland, *Unveiling the Wound Crisis: Examining Aetiology, Prevalence, Resource Drain, and Antibiotic Misuse in a Community Healthcare Setting*
- **University of Rostock**, Germany, *A deeper look into the pinniped brain: functional MRI in harbor seals*
- **Frederick University**, Cyprus, *Resilient Coastal Neighbourhoods (RECONE)*

Artists selection

For each phase, a call for artists was launched in EU-CONEXUS countries via PieR Gajewski's channels.

A total of 34 artist applications were received: 10 for phase 1 featuring artist applications from France, Greece, Lithuania and Spain and 24 for phase 2 featuring artist applications from Croatia, Romania, Ireland, Germany and Cyprus.

Artists were selected based on their motivation to engage with the public, the quality and originality of their artistic work, their storytelling abilities, and their interest in bridging art, science and society.

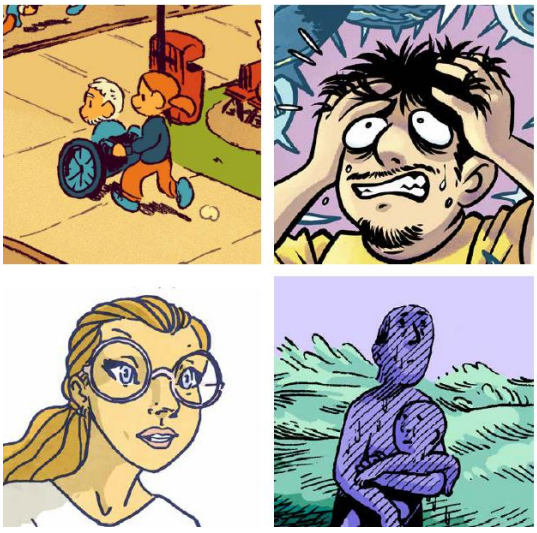
The project was to be a creative challenge for the selected artists in order to create something attractive, engaging, slightly different and interesting to read for the non-scientific readers.

Each team researcher/artist worked together to transform the researcher's project into a three-page comic and one cover page capturing the essence of the project.

Phase 1	
France	1
Greece	1
Spain	6
Lithuania	2
	10
Phase 2	
Croatia	1
Romania	8
Ireland	3
Germany	6
Cyprus	6
	24
TOTAL applications	**34**

Resources and dissemination

The final deliverable of the project was a digital magazine



Dissemination of the comic magazine has been as follows:

- EU-CONEXUS website : https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/comic-strip-in-science-project/

- Future Earth Coasts (a global research network), EU-CONEXUS is a member of

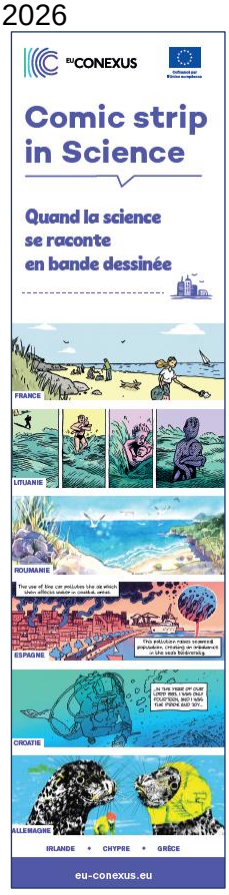
- EU-CONEXUS events (dissemination under a poster format) : mail aux partenaires avec les différents évènements pour leur dire d'imprimer les posters et de les mettre en avant pdt les différents évènements

- Research conference in Athens, June 2026



Welcome kit for the EU-CONEXUS Scientific Conference in Athens, June 2026

- Bookmark to promote the project submitted to the university library and distributed during the micro-certification program held in La Rochelle, June 2026





- GB/SB/EAB visit in SETU, July 2026
- PhD Summer School, July 2026, in Cyprus

-Other events/dissemination channels

- Exhibition on the Common'lab (a university-owned facility that bridges the gap between science and society) in La Rochelle, July-August 2026
- Exhibition on the university library in La Rochelle, September 2026



- EU-CONEXUS Governing Board, External Advisory Board & Student Board Meetings 7-9th July SETU and *Irish Humanities Alliance conference* in SETU's College Street campus, 3rd and 4th of September 2026. Images below



- 

  - Distribution of leaflets featuring the comic strip during the *European Researchers' Night* which will be held in Zadar (University Campus) on Friday, 25 September
  - *Fête de la Science* in La Rochelle, October 2026 : Organizing a workshop that combines research and drawing with the illustrator and researcher who participated in the Comic strip project

Photo Contest on memories, history and heritage of coastal cities

Project background

This photo contest invited EU-CONEXUS Community (students and staff) to capture in the most creative way places or objects linked with maritime history (lighthouses, bunkers, shipyards, old ports, …) in the nine countries of EU-CONEXUS Alliance and raise awareness on the history and heritage of coastal cities.

Timeline

The photo contest was launched on 7th October 2025 with a deadline for the photo submission on 19th November 2025.

From 20th November to 2nd December 2025 inclusive, the photographs submitted were evaluated by a local jury at each of the nine universities based on three evaluation criteria: creativity, quality and relevance to the contest topic. This evaluation process determined each country top three pictures.

Afterwards, from 3rd to 16th December 2025 inclusive, the preselected photos were submitted anonymously to an open-to-all voting on EU-CONEXUS website and this process designated the top three winners.

Target audience and community participation

Keeping in mind the success of the poetry contest, it was decided again to reward the top three winners with a 250 euros prize each.

Community participation was very good with 184 photos submitted (182 from EU-CONEXUS community and 2 from outsiders) and this contest showed again that without a strong incentive, participation remains low.

				Top 3 winners at each of the 9 universities	
Universities	**Statistics**	**Students**	**Staff**	**Students**	**Staff**
LRUniv	22	18	4	2	1
AUA	19	16	3	2	1
UCV	30	25	5	1	2
KU	28	24	4	1	2
UNIZD	24	18	6	2	1
UTCB	31	29	2	3	0
SETU	10	8	2	1	2
UROS	16	11	5	2	1
FredU	2	1	1	1	1
Others Antwerp Royal Academy of Fine Arts Friedrich-Schiller Universität Jena.	2				
TOTAL	**184**	150	32	15	11
	Statistics After review	**Students**	**Staff**	**Students**	**Staff**
				Top 3 winners at each of the 9 universities	

Resources and dissemination

La Rochelle Université (France) organized an exhibition of the 26 pictures from 27th January to 27th February 2026 at the University Library and promoted them in the frame of an IamSTUDENT event organized on 5th February 2026.
https://bu.univ-larochelle.fr/actualites/exposition-regards-sur-leurope/
https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/projects/iamstudent/voices-visions-an-eu-conexus-evening-at-la-rochelle-universite/



Frederick University also exhibited them in the frame of the Blue Limassol Forum 2026.

At SETU, the Photo Contest on memories, history and heritage of coastal cities was showcased at the Sustainability in the Arts Festival 20-24th April, Cork Road and College St Campuses, SETU sustainability strategy launch Wednesday 22nd April, Foundation Day at SETU's Cork Road Campus, Friday 1st May, QQI Validation Panel for Joint Masters at SETU

11-12th May, Post Graduate Research Conference Wednesday 27th May and the U-CONEXUS Governing Board, External Advisory Board & Student Board Meetings 6-8th July SETU.



Sustainability in the Arts Festival Launch 2026. Exhibition shown on screens at launch.

https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/2026/05/13/eu-conexus-represented-at-setu-foundation-day/

Project review – Collective projects

Sound Creation

Project background

During academic year 2022/2023, students from La Rochelle Université (France) attending a podcast workshop every Thursday afternoon supervised by Julia Suero, sound artist and Héloïse Martin, author, stage director and actress, decided to make three sound creations including sounds coming from partner universities of EU-CONEXUS Alliance.

The common red thread of the students' work was: strangeness, the other one, the journey and the search for oneself.

Timeline

A call for sounds was launched to EU-CONEXUS community (students and staff) in December 2022.

27 sounds were gathered and mixed up in order to make three sound creations (two experimental sound creations and one collective sound fiction) presented by the students during La Rochelle Université yearly FLEAA Festival "*Les Etudiants à l'Affiche*" (from 23rd March to 04th April 2023) combined with the 3rd edition of EU-CONEXUS Festival (from 28th to 30th March 2023).

Target audience and community participation

This project was one of the first ones held over the 2022 – 2026 period and there was no incentive planned.

Nine people from EU-CONEXUS community (students and staff) answered this call and 27 beautiful and inspiring sounds were however received.

Sound creation 2022 with Julia Suero				
	Students/Staff	**Number of participants**	**Number of sounds**	**Description**
LRUNIV	Staff	1	3	Birds during COVID The rain outside
AUA	no participation			
UCV	Staff (Grupo Musical Joben UCV)	1	4	Sonido 1 Piensa en mi Fantasma de la ópera Sonido 2 Ride the Chariot Sonido 3 We wish you a merry christmas Sonido 4 Nadala del Desert
UCV	Staff	1	1	audios del Grupo Musical Joven de la Universidad Católica de Valencia San Vicente Mártir
KU	Staff	1	9	audio recordings from the life of the Klaipeda university mixed choir "Pajūrio aidos"
KU	Student	1	1	Nostalgic sound from student of University of Klaipeda
UNIZD	Student	1	5	Kolo uz citare, KUD "Branimir Benkovac, Hrvatska Stupačko kolo - KUD "Branimir" Benkovac, Hrvatska Svirač na diplama, Siplar Tamburica Samica i tradicijski napjev Dva tradicijska napjeva Sv
UNIZD	Student	1	2	
UTCB	Student	1	1	
SETU	no participation			
UROS	no participation			
FREDU	Staff	1	1	
		9	**27**	

Resources and dissemination

The two experimental sound creations were called EU-CONEXUS radio and Etrange été.

The collective sound fiction was called "L'autre (é)moi" and features a French student who travels abroad for a study trip. Time goes by and stronger bonds are created by the student with the people she meets in this new country until she finds out that she is a stranger to herself. The journey starts to be an initiation and the story a metaphor for the search for identity.

All three sound creations were presented during La Rochelle Université les Etudiants à l'Affiche Festival (page 13) during a collective listening session at the Student House auditorium (27th

March 2023) and during an audio tour on La Rochelle Université campus (30th March 2023) in the frame of EU-CONEXUS Festival 2023.

The sound creations can still be heard on EU-CONEXUS culture webpage.

Conex-US song

Project background

In the academic year 2022/2023, EU-CONEXUS Student Board members and Jean-Marc Ogier La Rochelle Université Rector and former chair of EU-CONEXUS Governing Board (2019-2024) shared the same ambition to create an EU-CONEXUS song which would be the Alliance symbol.

Timeline and community participation

The 3rd edition of EU-CONEXUS Festival being organized by La Rochelle Université in March 2023 gave a great opportunity to run a music workshop which would set the bases for a song writing.

The task was given to singer and songwriter Wilfried Hildebrandt who had, in the past, led student choirs and supervised music workshops at La Rochelle Université.

A group of 12 EU-CONEXUS students attended the three-day workshop. On its last day, 30th March 2023, the song was recorded by the students in one of La Sirène music studios, La Rochelle music hall partner of EU-CONEXUS Festival, and the song was performed by all Festival participants during the closing evening.

Arrangement and mixing were done later on by musician and arranger Norbert Labrousse and the song was called by the students *Conex-US*.

EU-CONEXUS Joint Communication Unit added on the song a video recalling images of EU-CONEXUS first Festival in Klaipeda, Lithuania, in August 2021 and in La Rochelle, France, in March 2023.

Dissemination

The song as the Alliance symbol is now played on various EU-CONEXUS gatherings such as the opening of the 4th edition of EU-CONEXUS Festival in Limassol, Cyprus (May 2025) or the Joint Master in Marine Biotechnology diploma ceremonies.

Coast Molding

Project background

In 2023, La Rochelle Université celebrated its 30th anniversary and on this occasion hosted the 3rd edition of EU-CONEXUS Festival.

Motivation to create a special artwork symbolizing the belonging of La Rochelle Université to EU-CONEXUS Alliance, the strong bonds uniting all partners Alliance and how they address the challenges faced by urban and semi-urbanised coastal regions was strong and the idea came to create one artwork gathering coastal elements (plants, rocks, shells, etc.) from all EU-CONEXUS coasts (Baltic sea, Aegean sea, Mediterranean sea, Adriatic sea, Black sea and Atlantic ocean).

Timeline

The project was mainly based on the molding of different coastal elements following a simple recipe of silicone and cornstarch maizena. The molds were to be sent or brought to EU-CONEXUS Festival in La Rochelle from 28th to 30th March 2023.

The recipe via a coast molding tutorial was shared ahead of the Festival to EU-CONEXUS community by the designer, visual artist Chloé Petitjean who collaborated on the project.

During EU-CONEXUS Festival 2023, a dedicated workshop ran by Chloé Petitjean herself was hold in order to allow the creation of more molds and plasters out of the original molds for the artwork.

However, motivation for this project and participation showed to be very poor. Only one student from the University of Rostock (Germany) brought a mold and three students from Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest (Romania) attended the Festival workshop. More plasters were created but originated from La Rochelle coast.

It was however decided to carry on the project and more molds were received afterwards in summer and autumn 2023.

Target audience and community participation

In total, 31 people mixing staff and students participated to the creation of the molds.

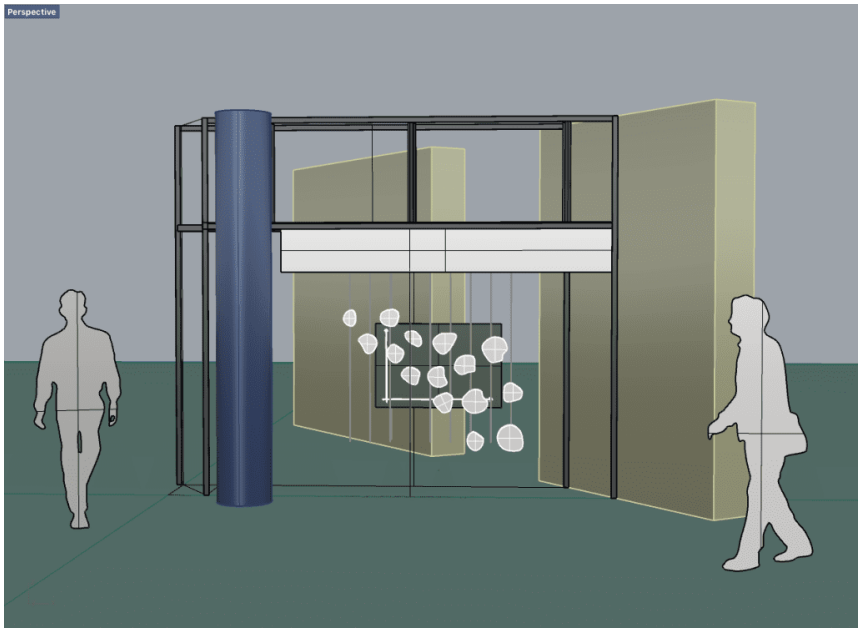
Coast molding project with designer Chloé Petitjean		Dates
LRUNIV	2 staff members made molds on the coast in La Rochelle	Preparing EU-CONEXUS Festival 2023
AUA	no participation to the project	
UCV	20 students from the Joint Master in Marine Biotechnology made molds at the beach in Valencia	September 2023
KU	3 staff members sent molds from the coast in Klaipeda	June/July 2023
UNIZD	1 student sent molds from Croatian coast in Zadar	September 2023
UTCB	No molds from Romanian coast were provided but 3 UTCB students participated to 2023 EU-CONEXUS Festival workshop	2023 EU-CONEXUS Festival workshop
SETU	no participation to the project	
UROS	1 student (SB member) brougth two molds from the coast in Rostock	2023 EU-CONEXUS Festival
FREDU	1 staff sent 3 molds from the shores of Famagusta area in Cyprus	July 2023
	Total participation : 31	

Dissemination

The final artwork called « *la surface libre de l'eau* » assembles 29 coastal prints coming from six EU-CONEXUS coastal zones (France, Spain, Lithuania, Croatia, Germany, Cyprus).

The prints are arranged to recall the evolution of the oxygen level in ocean water as a function of the rise in water temperature.

The artwork has not been exhibited yet. Finding a venue at La Rochelle Université showed to be very difficult. Different venues (University Library, School of economics, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, Comm'on lab …) agreed to exhibit it but only a temporary base which, with regards to the weight and the complexity of the hanging system, was not possible.


Perspective





Conexus Dance

Project background

Conexus Dance was a collective and multilayered dance project born in early 2023 at La Rochelle Université as the university was preparing for the 3rd edition of EU-CONEXUS Festival.

The project had to meet different goals:

- create synergy between EU-CONEXUS staff and students and interconnect the nine campuses of the Alliance,
- promote the Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (SmUCS) identity of the Alliance,
- encourage an encounter with one or more artists.

Dance or the art of movement appeared to be the right discipline to meet all these goals as it could address the whole EU-CONEXUS community even if its members were not experts in the field.

The choreography of the project was based on the « Cadavre exquis » game in which one starts writing or drawing something on a paper, then passes it to another person who completes it without knowing what has been written and so on…

Timeline

The project started at La Rochelle Université with a masterclass supervised by dance artist Jennifer Macavinta.

Four initial words « Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability » were transposed into a short movement phrase which was then passed to Technical University of Civil Engineering in Bucharest.

Under the supervision of dance artist Roxana Alexandra Costea from the Artist nest Bucharest, and during a similar masterclass, the group tried to guess what the words were, completed the movement phrase and passed it to Frederick University in Cyprus and then Agricultural University of Athens in Greece who tried to guess again the words and complete the movement phrase. And so on until the tour of the nine universities of the Alliance was completed…

Therefore, over a period of nine months, from September 2023 to May 2024, nine masterclasses were held at the nine EU-CONEXUS universities. They were supervised by the dance artist Jennifer Macavinta, in collaboration with three local dancers and choreographers, Roxana Alexandra Costea (Romania), Ester Garijo (Spain) and Matea Bilosnić (Croatia).

At the end of this nine-month tour, a long movement phrase was created, born from Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability, and gathering 36 words in nine languages (Croatian, English, French, German, Greek, Irish, Lithuanian, Romanian, Spanish) which added a new multilingualism component to the project.

Target audience and community participation

For this project, the main incentive was an interest in dance/the art of movement and the encounter with a professional artist in the frame of a one-day masterclass.

The project gathered a group of 140 people (mixing students and staff) who attended the nine masterclasses given at each of the partner university.

	Participation by Universities
LRUniv	12
AUA	25
UCV	13
KU	13
UNIZD	8
UTCB	42
SETU	10
UROS	6
FredU	11
TOTAL	**140**

The participation per university and the split between students and staff is as follows:

	Students	**Staff**	**Total**
LRUniv	8	4	12
AUA	23	2	25
UCV	10	3	13
KU	10	3	13
UNIZD	7	1	8
UTCB	39	3	42
SETU	5	5	10
UROS	6	0	6
FREDU	7	4	11
	115	**25**	**140**

Resources and dissemination

In order to keep a record of the project but also to feature the richness of EU-CONEXUS diversity of cultures and its multilingual identity, a video based on images taken outdoor in the nine countries of the Alliance was created in autumn 2024 with videographer Lucie Gagneux.

The soundtrack that accompanies the video dance is an original one created by the sound artist Julia Suero who had worked on the three sound creations in 2023. It is based on the recordings by native speakers and in different intonations of the 36 words born from « Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability » gathered in the nine languages of EU-CONEXUS Alliance.

Water is an essential component of this video as the bond that unites us all in EU-CONEXUS.

The promotion and dissemination of the video started at the beginning of February 2025 on EU-CONEXUS webpage and social media but as well at the opening ceremony of the 4th edition of EU-CONEXUS Festival in Limassol, Cyprus (13-15th May 2025).

An evening workshop at la *Maison des Ecritures* in La Rochelle, France, on 14th October 2024 gave an opportunity to share this multilayered project to the French local public. The session was supervised by Jennifer Macavinta with the participation of Stéphanie Melyon-Reinette, performer, dancer-choreographer, and independent researcher on the sociologies of the French Caribbean and the Americas who was in residence at la Maison des Ecritures.





CONEXUS Dance at SETU, April 2024

https://www.setu.ie/news/setu-staff-and-students-participate-in-eu-conexus-dance-project


EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY FOR SMART URBAN COASTAL SUSTAINABILITY
Synergy — Sustainability — Expertise
Bravery — Novelty
eu-conexus.eu


SETU
EU CONEXUS
European University for Smart Coastal Sustainability
Co-funded by the European Union

Impact and challenges

Impact analysis

EU-CONEXUS Alliance counts around 70 000 students and 10 000 staff members.

	Participation		
Activities	**Students**	**Staff**	**TOTAL**
Short story contest on the future of coastline	4	N/A	4
Visual arts exhibitions	29	N/A	29
Poetry contest on a sense of place	79	5	84
Comic strip in science	2	7	9
Photo contest on memories, history and heritage of coastal cities	150	32	182
Sound creations	4	5	9
EU-CONEXUS song	12	N/A	12
Coast molding project	25	6	31
Conexus dance	115	25	140
	420	**80**	**500**

Total number of participants to the nine projects is of 500 with a significant split between the student participation of 420 and the staff participation of only 80.

Relative to the total number of the student and staff communities at EU-CONEXUS levels, these figures represent a student participation to the cultural projects of 0.6% and of 0.8% for the staff.

Even if these figures remain low, it is to be noticed that an increase of participation happened in the last projects (poetry contest, photo contest) which proposed a money prize and in Conexus dance which offered an encounter with an artist.

Challenges

Budget

In terms of budget, it is to specify that there was no dedicated budget allocated to Task 17.2 to implement cultural and artistic activities.

WP17 budget was mainly for the organization of the two Festival editions by La Rochelle Université (France) and Frederick University (Cyprus) with an envelope of 30 000 EUR for each festival. Each other seven universities of the Alliance had an allowance of 1.000 EUR for student projects.

The necessary budget was found in the French national budget PIA3 allocated to La Rochelle Université (3rd *programme d'investissement d'avenir* - in support of the French higher

education institutions involved in European Alliances) and in the remaining budget from the 3rd edition of EU-CONEXUS 2023 Festival (out of the envelope of 30 000 EUR).

Out of the nine projects, the most two costly were Conexus dance and the comic strip in science project which involved professional artists.

In the case of Conexus dance, the travel budget with six masterclasses being run by Jennifer Macavinta at the partner universities was the main cost.

The other projects were designed to minimize costs and the very first projects even offered no kind of incentive to reward the participants which can maybe explain the low participation.

Geographical distance between EU-CONEXUS campuses

Since 2000, La Rochelle Université has had a long history in cultural and artistic practice.

Various formats are offered to La Rochelle student community: support for cultural and artistic student initiatives, artistic projects supervised by professional artists in all year round weekly workshops, short or long format internships with professional artists, annual festival *Les Etudiants à l'Affiche* in which the students perform their artistic work.

Based on this experience, La Rochelle Université proposed to take WP17 lead. However, the geographical distance between EU-CONEXUS campuses changed considerably the format of activities to be proposed to the community.

The distance mode made more complex the artistic practices and the choice to propose contests or calls for artistic projects allowed to bypass this challenge.

Working closely with an artist over a significant period of time, going in depth in a practice or gaining some skills in an artistic discipline, could not be provided to the community. This would have entailed a different project format which was not explored over these four years period. To compensate, Conexus Dance was created to give a similar but shorter opportunity to the community.

Incentive

Some projects were launched at almost no cost and with no specific incentive for the participants. They relied mainly on the interest and motivation of EU-CONEXUS community to be part of them.

In the case of Conexus dance and the comic strip in science project, we were expecting that the perspective to meet with professional artists, to work with them and share some practices would be enough to motivate the community to participate. This was wrong.

The gathering of the community (students and staff) for Conexus Dance masterclasses was not easy at some universities (Universities of Zadar, Rostock and Frederick) and participation remained poor (respectively 6, 8 and 11 people per masterclass).

For the comic strip in science project addressing researchers and PhD students - even though we knew that only nine research projects (one per country) could be transposed into a comic - the number of applicants was only of 20 which was also poor.

The other projects showed that any kind of reward increases the community participation. The money prize for the poetry and photo contests made a significant change in participation for both community (student and staff).

Staff participation

For the staff community, the issue is different. To reach this community, our conclusion is that the projects have to be no time consuming and offer a good incentive.

A photo contest with 17,58% staff participation out of the total number of participants is a good example. This type of activity does not take long to complete and can be motivated by a good reward.

The poetry contest with 5.95% staff participation out of the total number of participants may take already too long.

Conexus dance remains maybe a special case. Even with three to five hours masterclasses, the staff participation was of 17,85%. The interest in dance and an artistic encounter may have prevailed.

Conclusion and recommendations

Nine cultural and artistic projects, individual or collective, were organized over the 2022-2026 period in the objective to reinforce EU-CONEXUS identity and sense of belonging to the Alliance through arts and culture.

Three key points are necessary to develop these projects:

- a consultation of the student community in order to feel on which discipline or under which format these projects should be performed;

- a minimum budget as cultural and artistic practices as well as the work with professional artists remain costly; some artistic disciplines rely also on the pleasure to meet and perform together and a mobility budget should also be thought off.

- an incentive as motivation or interest in the project discipline is not always enough.

Contests with an interesting prize were a success even though it is difficult to conclusively measure long-term behavioural.

Granting ECTS to the student community could also be considered. A prize is always appealing but the grant of ECTS adds another recognition of the skills and knowledge gained through cultural and artistic projects and they also valorize - better than a prize - the work with an artist.

Collective projects or inter institutional projects were developed to strengthen the cultural bonding between students or staff of the Alliance. They have shown that without a coordinator it is very difficult for the students to create inter campuses links and identify the relevant match.