EU CONEXUS
European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

Co-funded by the European Union

Report on the outcomes of SmUCS conferences and workshops

D9.1

WP9, Support Joint Research Structures

Contractual due date (from GA): M48 – 31 October 2026 Final delivery date: M48 – 19 October 2026
WP leader: Agricultural University of Athens Contributors: LRUniv, AUA, UCV, KU, UNIZD, UTCB, SETU, UROS, FredU, EU-CONEXA
Dissemination level : public

DISCLAIMER: Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Table of Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/ABSTRACT 3
2.DESCRIPTION 4

2.A. CONSTRAINTS, MITIGATION MEASURES AND ACHIEVEMENTS REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION OF THE JRIS SEMINARS 4

2.A.1. REGISTRATIONS IN SEMINARS ORGANIZED BY LSBI 13

2.A.2. REGISTRATIONS IN SEMINARS ORGANIZED BY ESBI 15

2.A.3. REGISTRATIONS IN SEMINARS ORGANIZED BY CEI 18

2.A.4. REGISTRATIONS IN SEMINARS ORGANIZED BY SCHSI 20

2.B. CONSTRAINTS, MITIGATION MEASURES AND ACHIEVEMENTS REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION OF THE JRIS IN-PERSON ANNUAL CONFERENCES 22

3. IMPACT OF THE JRIS SEMINARS AND IN-PERSON ANNUAL CONFERENCES 32

4. DISCUSSION/CONTENT 34

5. CONCLUSION 35

1. Executive summary/abstract

WP9 aimed to strengthen the organization of the EU-CONEXUS European University's research structure and to foster networking and multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary interactions among research groups and scientists within the existing Joint Research Institutes (JRIs), as well as between researchers of EU-CONEXUS partners and other research institutes/alliances. To achieve these goals, WP9 supported the organization of online seminars/workshops and of in-person Conferences open to the broader scientific community and stakeholders. Regarding the online seminars/workshops, WP9 supported the organization and promotion of virtual seminars/workshops conducted by scientific staff/researchers and/or postgraduate students. Concerning the in-person Conferences, WP9 supported the organization of four (4) annual JRIs physical Conferences that included plenary and parallel sessions for all JRIs and a PhD track (or PhD day), and they were hosted in rotation by EU-CONEXUS partners.

Furthermore, to enhance interaction among researchers and foster collaborations, in addition to organizing online JRIs seminars and in-person EU-CONEXUS conferences, the Research Managers collaborated closely with the members of the Project Development Support Office (PDSO) to organize research workshops (6 online workshops and in-person workshops during the EU-CONEXUS Conferences with the primary aim of forming research teams to develop joint proposals), as well as with the representatives of the Joint Communication Unit (JCU) to develop the conference and webinar platforms and to disseminate information regarding WP9 activities to the scientific community.

This deliverable reports the outcomes of the online JRIs seminars and of in-person EU-CONEXUS Conferences organised within the framework of WP9. The target values of the respective Task 9.3 (T9.3) are shown below:

	Quantitative indicators			Qualitative Indicators	Evaluation methods / Source of Verification
Activity	Unit of measurement	Baseline	Target values		
WP9	Number of EU-CONEXUS participants to the 4 physical scientific conferences	48	300 participants		Registration to conferences
	Number of participants to virtual workshops/seminars	0	540 researchers		Registration to workshops/seminars

Both target values were achieved and significantly exceeded, as **the four annual EU-CONEXUS conferences attracted 910 registered in-person participants**, while **the 44 JRIs seminars organized garnered 1,001 researcher registrations**.

2. Description

The EU-CONEXUS research community has been organized in four (4) JRIs: the Institute of Life Sciences and Biotechnology (LSBI), the Institute of Environmental Sciences and Biodiversity (ESBI), the Institute of Coastal Engineering (CEI), and the Institute of Social Culture and Human Sciences (SCHSI).

To strengthen the organization of JRIs, WP9 supported the recruitment of four (4) Research Managers, one per JRI. The EU-CONEXUS partners that appointed Research Managers were: the Agricultural University of Athens (AUA, which appointed the Research Manager of LSBI), the Klaipeda University (KU, which appointed the Research Manager of ESBI), the Technical University of Civil Engineering (UTCB, which appointed the Research Manager of CEI) and the University of Zadar (UNIZD, which appointed the Research Manager of SCHSI).

Thus, each JRI is represented by the Head, the Research Manager and 1 – 3 researchers-representatives from each partner, who jointly participated in online WP9 meetings organized by the AUA representative. This core group functioned both as an organizational team and as a representative decision-making body for issues proposed by JRI Heads and Research Managers, based on the requirements of WP9. All decisions required for the implementation of WP9 were taken collectively, rather than simply by a majority vote. This participatory approach was instrumental in the adoption of best practices for the implementation of WP9, as well as in ensuring that each partner left its own mark on the final outcome, based on its specific characteristics.

WP9 supported the organization of virtual seminars and in-person annual Conferences by the JRIs. Described below are the constraints encountered in the organization of these activities of WP9, the mitigation measures adopted to overcome these limitations, and the achievements regarding the targets set by WP9 for seminars and conferences.

2.A. Constraints, Mitigation measures and Achievements regarding the organization of the JRIs seminars

To ensure the effective organization of the JRIs seminars, it was necessary to define and articulate their core concept — specifically, the content of the seminars, who could apply to present a seminar, who could attend/participate in, how a seminar would be structured, how it would be promoted, how it would be organized, and so on.

To better define the aforementioned issues, the concept for the JRI seminars was created and documented by the LSBI Research Manager and presented during the

WP9 meeting. The concept was refined with input from the JRIs Heads and Research Managers and approved by the JRIs representatives. Then, the concept of the JRIs seminars was validated by the Research Council (16/1/2024).

The concept of the JRIs seminars included the following important points:

1. The JRIs seminars are related to research and technology aspects of JRIs. The duration of each seminar is 1 h maximum and includes a 20-30 min presentation and time for questions, answers and discussion purposes.
2. The JRIs seminars subjects could include presentation of project results, of research activities accomplished in the frame of a funded proposal, of PhD or Master thesis results, of a recently accepted publication of the presenter researcher, of a technology/technique developed by the presenter or in which the presenter has experience.
3. The target group of the JRIs seminar presenters is Researchers and Scientific University Staff (Professors, Postdoctoral Researchers, Laboratory Technicians etc), and postgraduate students (PhD Students, Master students).
4. The target group of the JRIs seminar attendees is Researchers and Scientific University Staff, postgraduate students as PhD and Master students, Bachelor students, stakeholders and entrepreneurs.
5. The expected outcomes of the JRIs seminars could include laboratory training for researchers, postgraduate and Bachelor students, dissemination of specialized and innovative knowledge, opportunities for research and development, introduction to cutting-edge achievements and state-of-the-art technologies, fostering of collaborations.
6. The candidate for a JRIs seminar presentation had to register, select the JRI that is related to his/her presentation and submit an abstract/short description of the seminar up to 400 words in length.
7. The abstract/short description of the seminar is evaluated by the relevant JRI Research Manager or the JRI Head or a JRI representative, based on the following criteria:
    a) Relation of the abstract/short description to the respective JRI research activities
    b) Innovative knowledge presented
    c) New technologies used
    d) Opportunities for collaboration
8. Upon accepting the seminar, the presenter is informed by the Research Manager of the respective JRI and the date/time of the seminar is scheduled. The seminar is then announced.

To better promote and organize the JRIs seminars, it was deemed necessary to create a JRIs seminars dedicated platform hosted on the EU-CONEXUS European University website. This platform would facilitate the promotion of the JRIs seminars and enable researchers and students wishing to present or attend a seminar to register. Consequently, the JRIs seminar platform would be accessible not only to the entire

EU-CONEXUS community but also to researchers and students from other (external) institutions.

However, since such a JRIs seminars platform would have to be built from scratch and would take time, an effort was made to organize the first JRIs seminar before the platform was even operational, so as to obtain an initial gauge of the researchers' response to these JRIs seminars.

Thus, the first seminar entitled "**WP4 on doctoral research in EU CONEXUS**" was organized by CEI and it was offered by FredU, UTCB and SETU (**Figure 1**). This was a 2 h-duration seminar as it included many presentations. The seminar attracted 45 researchers from EU-CONEXUS partners and other Institutes.



Figure 1: *Advertisement of the 1st seminar organized by CEI.*

The distribution of the attending researchers to EU-CONEXUS partners or external Institutes was as follows:

Distribution of Researchers by University		
University	**Number of researchers**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	0	0%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	0	0%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	15	33%

Klaipeda University, KU	2	4%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	2	4%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	1	2%
South East Technological University, SETU	6	13%
Rostock University, UROS	0	0%
Frederick University, FredU	17	38%
Other institution	2	4%
Total	**45**	**100%**

However, the traceability of researchers based on the recording of the videoconference platform proved difficult and tracking student participation was not possible. Furthermore, the advertisement for this seminar may not have reached the researchers or the students of certain partners.

Therefore, the subsequent JRI seminars were organized following the completion and launch of the JRIs seminars platform.

The JRIs seminars platform was developed as a dedicated landing page in the EU-CONEXUS website (**Figure 2**). Through this platform users could access information about the JRIs seminars and/or register as seminar presenter/attendee (https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/joint-research-institutes-seminars/). The JRIs seminars platform apart from containing general information about the JRIs seminars, as the JRIs seminar duration, possible seminar subjects and indicative objectives and disciplines of the 4 JRIs, provided the guidelines for the submission of the seminar abstract/short description and the evaluation criteria of the submitted abstract/short description.

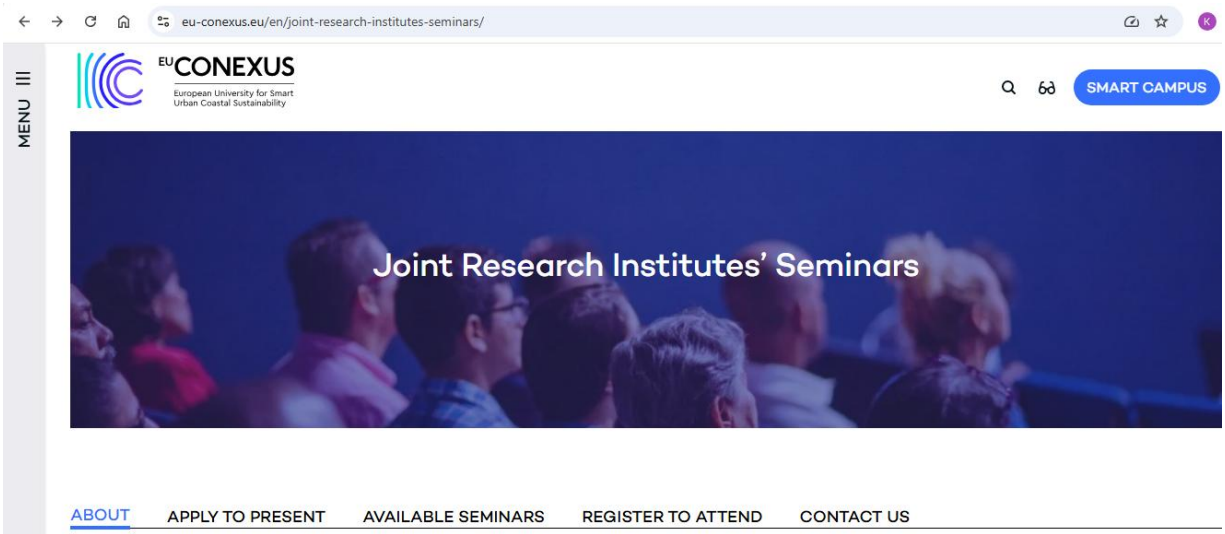


Figure 2: *The JRIs seminars platform, where one can find information about the seminars, view scheduled and completed seminars, as well as apply to present a seminar or register to attend a seminar.*

Since some JRIs seminars attracted a small number of researchers, to boost participation in the JRIs seminars, the time interval between the seminar announcement and the scheduled date was extended to about 3 weeks, ensuring sufficient time to promote it to all partners.

With the aim of further boosting participation in the JRI seminars, the Head and the Research Manager of SCHSI and the Research Manager of of CEI, each presented a seminar, attracting a large number of researchers and students.

In total, **43** JRIs seminars were scheduled and advertised using this JRIs seminar platform, as well as via e-mail (**Figure 3**) and announcements to social media (facebook, instagram, linkedin).

The option was also provided for some JRIs seminars to be held in a hybrid format (with participants attending the JRI seminar in person and others attending online).



EU-CONEXUS Joint Research Institutes' Online Seminars

The European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (**EU-CONEXUS**) invites you to join the next online seminar of the **Joint Research Institutes** series, bringing together researchers from across the Alliance to exchange knowledge, share research outcomes and explore opportunities for future collaboration.

Upcoming Online Seminar

Physicochemical and Biological Characterisation of Sustainable Bioproducts

- **Scientific Domain:** Life Science and Biotechnology Institute (LSBI)
- **Date of presentation:** **30/09/2026**
- **Time:** **16:00–17:00 CET**
- **Presenters:** [redacted] (PhD student at the Catholic University of Valencia) and [redacted] (PhD student at South East Technological University)

The seminar will present the main outcomes of an **EU-CONEXUS seed-funded 2025 project** developed through collaboration between SETU and UCV. The project focused on the physicochemical characterisation of hybrid films and the biological characterisation of drug-incorporated natural-based solvent systems and their antiviral activity, while also exploring their potential biomedical applications.

Further details about the seminar and access to the registration form can be found at the following link: JRI Webinar | Physicochemical and Biological Characterisation of Sustainable Bioproducts

After registration, you will receive the seminar attendance link via email.

Figure 3: *The announcement of a JRI seminar as advertised through e-mail.*

As the representatives of some partners reported that researchers found writing an abstract to be a time-consuming process, to boost the number of applications, the first version of the JRIs seminars platform was modified to make it more appealing to

researchers wishing to present a seminar; the requirement for the seminar description was reduced from an "abstract" to a "brief description".

The version of the JRIs seminars platform was further improved to boost collaboration opportunities by:
a) introducing more questions under the option “APPLY TO PRESENT” regarding the laboratory of the presenter and the scientifically responsible researcher (Pricincipal Investigator) of the presented work or the Horizon topic/other call the presentation was most closely related to. Thus, the affiliated laboratory and the scientifically responsible researcher (Pricincipal Investigator) could be directly linked with the scientific objectives/activities of the presented work.
b) offering, under the option “REGISTER TO ATTEND”, the opportunity to researchers to share a short (one-slide) overview of their research activities during the seminar to express their interest in potential collaboration with the seminar presenter’s group. In this way, researchers had the opportunity to introduce themselves online face-to-face and begin building a collaboration with the presenter's laboratory based on shared interests.

Indeed, these last changes were leveraged in several JRIs seminars by the participating researchers, creating opportunities for new collaborations on specific research topics, subject areas, or project calls (**Figure 4**).


JRIs seminars + Opportunities f...

Παραλήπτης [redacted] Ημερομηνία 2026-01-30 14:58

Dear Prof [redacted]

I am happy to inform you that during and after the seminar on "**Functional Additives: Shaping the Future of Aquafeeds**" the following researchers expressed their interest to collaborate with you on the topic HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-FARM2FORK-06: Unleashing the potential of sustainable small-scale aquatic food production and recreational fisheries for prosperous local communities.

Pof [redacted] ([redacted]@setu.ie) from SETU
Prof [redacted] ([redacted]@setu.ie) from SETU
Prof [redacted] ([redacted]@setu.ie) from SETU
Prof [redacted] ([redacted]@ucv.es) from UCV
Prof [redacted] ([redacted]@aua.gr) from AUA

I hope you can start a fruitful collaboration. Please, keep me updated.

Best regards

[redacted]

Research Manager of LSBI

Figure 4: *The informational email regarding the interest expressed by certain researchers who attended the specific seminar in collaborating with the Scientifically Responsible Researcher (Pricincipal Investigator) of the presented work. This email was sent to the Scientifically Responsible Researcher (Principal Investigator) by the Research Manager of the corresponding JRI that organized the seminar.*

In total, 44 online seminars were organized by the JRIs. The number of seminars organized per JRI, the registrations of participants (researchers, students, others) and more especially of researchers and students are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Seminars organized by JRIs, registrations of researchers and students and total registrations (researchers, students and others)

JRI	Number of seminars organized	Number of Researchers registered	Number of Students (BSc, MSc, PhD) registered	Total Participants registered
LSBI	12	227 (1 from associated partner, 7 external researchers)	430 (12 external students)	682
ESBI	15 (2 offered by external researchers)	261 (15 external researchers)	348 (10 external students)	672
CEI	6	133 (5 external)	82 (2 external students)	220
SCHSI	11 (2 offered by external researchers)	380 (3 from associated partners, 8 external researchers)	356 (30 external)	824
In total	**44 (4 offered by external researchers)**	**1001 (4 from associated partners, 35 external researchers)**	**1216 (54 external)**	**2398**

More specifically, the overall contribution of the partners to the number of researchers, students and participants to all seminars organized the JRIs was as follows:

Distribution of Researchers to seminars of all JRIs		
University	**Number of Researchers**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	34	3,4%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	179	17,9%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	74	7,4%
Klaipeda University, KU	232	23,2%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	40	4,0%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	255	25,5%

South East Technological University, SETU	42	4,2%
University of Rostock , UROS	34	3,4%
Frederick University, FredU	72	7,2%
Other institutions/Associated partners	39	3,9%
Total	**1001**	**100%**

It emerges that there was unequal participation among the partners regarding the total number of researchers who registered for the JRI seminars. Three (AUA, KU, UNIZD) of the four partners who appointed a Research Manager achieved the highest participation. Also, the large number of external researchers registered in the JRIs seminars is noteworthy.

Distribution of Students (PhD, MSc, BSc) to seminars of all JRIs		
University	**Number of Students (PhD, MSc, BSc)**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	17	1,4%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	722	59,4%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	18	1,5%
Klaipeda University, KU	114	9,4%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	20	1,6%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	162	13,3%
South East Technological University, SETU	8	0,7%
University of Rostock , UROS	95	7,8%
Frederick University, FredU	6	0,5%
Other institutions/Associated partners	54	4,4%
Total	**1216**	**100%**

Similarly, three (AUA, KU, UNIZD) of the four partners who appointed a Research Manager achieved the best results also in the case of students registered in the JRIs seminars. In combination with the results regarding researcher registration in the JRIs seminars, these findings demonstrate highly effective dissemination and promotion of the JRIs seminars in these three partners. In the student category, the AUA recorded particularly high student participation, as more than half of the students who registered for the JRIs seminars came from this partner. Also, the large number of external students registered in the JRIs seminars is noteworthy.

Distribution of Participants to seminars of all JRIs		
University	**Number of Participants**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	57	2,4%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	917	38,2%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	94	3,9%

Klaipeda University, KU	402	16,8%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	69	2,9%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	446	18,6%
South East Technological University, SETU	67	2,8%
University of Rostock , UROS	142	5,9%
Frederick University, FredU	85	3,5%
Other institutions/Associated partners/Other Entities	119	5,0%
Total	**2398**	**100%**

Analytically, the respective results per JRI are shown below.

2.A.1. Registrations in seminars organized by LSBI

The following LSBI seminars were organized:

Seminars organized by the LSBI	
No	**Title of the seminar**
1	CrSBD1: A novel stress response regulator in Chlamydomonas reinhardtii
2	Fish waste and biotechnological management
3	The return of the Phages! Bacteriophage therapy 2.0
4	Valorization of Food Waste to Develop Biodegradable Packaging Materials
5	Design of freshness indicators and their application for the development of smart packaging materials
6	Two Sides of the Same Coin! Bacteriophage Selection resensitizes antibiotic-resistant bacteria
7	Identification and selection of hydrocarbon-degrading microorganisms from the Baltic Sea for oil spill clean-up
8	The Mediterranean Diet as an example of planetary friendly diet
9	Functional Additives: Shaping the Future of Aquafeeds
10	Too much animal source food diet changes your brain and behavior
11	Rapid Molecular Tools for Authenticating Fish Species and Protecting Marine Biodiversity
12	Physicochemical and Biological Characterisation of Sustainable Bioproducts

The total number of registrations for the seminars organized by the LSBI was as follows:

Distribution of Researchers to seminars of LSBI		
University	**Number of Researchers**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	20	8,8%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	78	34,4%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	3	1,3%
Klaipeda University, KU	33	14,5%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	20	8,8%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	36	15,9%
South East Technological University, SETU	18	7,9%
University of Rostock , UROS	11	4,8%
Frederick University, FredU	0	0,0%
Other institutions/Associated partners	8	3,5%
Total	**227**	**100%**

Distribution of Students (PhD, MSc, BSc) to seminars of LSBI		
University	**Number of Students (PhD, MSc, BSc)**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	12	2,8%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	344	80,0%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	3	0,7%
Klaipeda University, KU	18	4,2%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	10	2,3%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	9	2,1%
South East Technological University, SETU	3	0,7%
University of Rostock , UROS	18	4,2%
Frederick University, FredU	1	0,2%
Other institutions/Associated partners	12	2,8%
Total	**430**	**100%**

Distribution of Participants to seminars of LSBI		
University	**Number of Participants**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	32	4,7%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	430	63,0%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	6	0,9%

Klaipeda University, KU	56	8,2%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	31	4,5%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	45	6,6%
South East Technological University, SETU	22	3,2%
University of Rostock , UROS	31	4,5%
Frederick University, FredU	1	0,1%
Other institutions/Associated partners/Other Entities	28	4,1%
Total	**682**	**100%**

Regarding the registrations of researchers and students, AUA accounted for a substantial proportion of registrations in the seminars organized by the LSBI. Naturally, we did not expect an equal number of participants from all partners in the seminars organized by the LSBI, given the significant differences in the number of researchers and students among EU-CONEXUS partners, as well as the specific research expertise of each partner — which may not align with the research activities on which the LSBI focus. However, regarding the researchers, most partners participated, and regarding the students, all partners participated in the seminars organized by the LSBI. The number of researchers (8) and students (12) from outside the core EU-CONEXUS partner group, as well as the number of participants from outside the scientific community (25) who registered for the LSBI seminars, was noteworthy, given that most of the topics presented were quite specialized.

2.A.2. Registrations in seminars organized by ESBI

The following ESBI seminars were organized:

Seminars organized by the ESBI	
No	**Title of the seminar**
1	The UN Ocean Decade and the Nautilos Summer School
2	Marine mammals and vessel noise: Exposure and impacts
3	Digital Tools for Environmental Monitoring and Citizen Science: From Water Quality to Methane Mapping
4	Are Estuaries Sources or Sinks of Plastic Pollution? High-Resolution Modeling of Macroplastic Emissions, Transport, and Fate
5	Varying spatial behaviour of a breeding seabird across a diversified coastal ecosystem
6	Remote sensing methods in estimating Svalbard glacier melting
7	How do you catch cormorants and other birds?
8	A Model Toolchain to Forecast the Future Hydrodynamic Responses of the Lower Nemunas River to Climate Change

9	Pollution and treatment of stormwater runoff (with focus on non-urban land uses)
10	Feeding the Future: How Cities Can Grow Their Own Food
11	Transboundary transitional waters: concept, methods, issues
12	Diving behaviour of rehabilitated grey seal juveniles in the Baltic Sea
13	Arctic oases: how deglaciation forms novel coastal ecosystems?
14	The Evolution of Agrobiodiversity **(offered by an external researcher)**
15	Atmospherically induced high-frequency sea-level extremes: insights from the Adriatic Sea meteotsunami monitoring and warning network **(offered by an external researcher)**

The total number of registrations for the seminars organized by the ESBI was as follows:

Distribution of Researchers to seminars of ESBI		
University	**Number of Researchers**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	8	3,1%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	42	16,1%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	6	2,3%
Klaipeda University, KU	123	47,1%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	2	0,8%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	7	2,7%
South East Technological University, SETU	6	2,3%
University of Rostock , UROS	13	5,0%
Frederick University, FredU	39	14,9%
Other institutions/Associated partners	15	5,7%
Total	**261**	**100%**

Distribution of Students (PhD, MSc, BSc) to seminars of ESBI		
University	**Number of Students (PhD, MSc, BSc)**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	4	1,1%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	191	54,9%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	1	0,3%
Klaipeda University, KU	81	23,3%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	6	1,7%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	13	3,7%
South East Technological University, SETU	0	0,0%

University of Rostock , UROS	42	12,1%
Frederick University, FredU	0	0,0%
Other institutions/Associated partners	10	2,9%
Total	**348**	**100%**

Distribution of Participants to seminars of ESBI		
University	**Number of Participants**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	14	2,1%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	237	35,3%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	7	1,0%
Klaipeda University, KU	241	35,9%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	8	1,2%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	20	3,0%
South East Technological University, SETU	8	1,2%
University of Rostock , UROS	61	9,1%
Frederick University, FredU	42	6,3%
Other institutions/Associated partners/Other Entities	34	5,1%
Total	**672**	**100%**

Regarding the registrations of researchers and students, KU accounted for a substantial proportion of registrations in the seminars organized by the ESBI. Regarding the registration of students the contribution of AUA was also very high. Again, we did not expect an equal number of participants from all partners in the seminars organized by the ESBI, given the significant differences in the number of researchers and students among EU-CONEXUS partners, as well as the specific research expertise of each partner — which may not align with the research activities on which the ESBI focus. However, regarding the researchers, all partners participated, and regarding the students, most partners participated in the seminars organized by the ESBI. The number of researchers (15) and students (10) from outside the core EU-CONEXUS partner group, as well as the number of participants from outside the scientific community (63) who registered for the ESBI seminars, was notable, given that most of the topics presented were highly specialized. The delivery of 2 seminars by external researchers was also highly significant for networking among researchers and increasing the visibility of the EU-CONEXUS alliance's activities.

2.A.3. Registrations in seminars organized by CEI

The following CEI seminars were organized:

Seminars organized by the CEI	
No	**Title of the seminar**
1	WP4 on doctoral research in EU CONEXUS
2	Using AI, AR and VR to generate and visualize 3D City Models and applications concerning the impact of the built environment on urban climate
3	Overview of the Sustainable Development Goals in action and on the involvement of UTCB in sustainability projects
4	Structure, Services and Innovation: The Role of the Mathematics & Computer Science Department at UTCB in Engineering Education
5	Combining Traditional Building Systems with Contemporary Technology: The case of "Archontikon" in Akaki village, Nicosia
6	Sustainable built environment at UTCB, european research collaborations and applied innovations within planetary boundaries

The total number of registrations for the seminars organized by the CEI was as follows:

Distribution of Researchers to seminars of CEI		
University	**Number of Researchers**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	0	0,0%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	13	9,8%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	58	43,6%
Klaipeda University, KU	20	15,0%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	2	1,5%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	7	5,3%
South East Technological University, SETU	8	6,0%
University of Rostock , UROS	2	1,5%
Frederick University, FredU	18	13,5%
Other institution/Associated partners	5	3,8%
Total	**133**	**100%**

Distribution of Students (PhD, MSc, BSc) to seminars of CEI		
University	**Number of Students (PhD, MSc, BSc)**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	0	0,0%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	51	62,2%

Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	13	15,9%
Klaipeda University, KU	2	2,4%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	0	0,0%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	3	3,7%
South East Technological University, SETU	1	1,2%
University of Rostock , UROS	8	9,8%
Frederick University, FredU	2	2,4%
Other institutions/Associated partners	2	2,4%
Total	**82**	**100%**

Distribution of Participants to seminars of CEI		
University	**Number of Participants**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	0	0,0%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	65	29,5%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	72	32,7%
Klaipeda University, KU	23	10,5%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	2	0,9%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	10	4,5%
South East Technological University, SETU	9	4,1%
University of Rostock , UROS	10	4,5%
Frederick University, FredU	20	9,1%
Other institutions/Associated partners/Other Entities	9	4,1%
Total	**220**	**100%**

Regarding the registrations of researchers in the seminars organized by CEI, the contribution of UTCB was high. Concerning the registrarion of students, the contribution of AUA was high. The unequal number of participating researchers from the different partners in the seminars organized by CEI could be attributed to the significant differences in the number of researchers and students among EU-CONEXUS partners, as well as the specific research expertise of each partner — which for many of them may not align with the research activities on which the CEI focus. However, regarding both researchers and students, most partners participated in the seminars organized by the CEI. The number of researchers (5) and students (2) from outside the core EU-CONEXUS partner group, as well as the number of participants from outside the scientific community (5) who registered for the CEI seminars, was significant, given that most of the topics presented were highly specialized and the number of CEI seminars offered was comparatively low.

2.A.4. Registrations in seminars organized by SCHSI

The following SCHSI seminars were organized:

Seminars organized by the SCHSI	
No	**Title of the seminar**
1	The additional cost of living for people with disabilities
2	Understanding Aphasia: How stroke affects language and communication
3	Your Brain on Happiness: Chemistry, Connections, and the Pursuit of Well-Being
4	Navigating Parenthood: How Perfectionism and Identity Shape Burnout and Parental Adjustment
5	Governance challenges in the Blue Economy **(offered by an external researcher)**
6	Beyond Stereotypes: Understanding Gen Z's Minds, Motivations & Mental Health
7	The Pact on Migration and Asylum as a Stress Test for EU Fundamental Rights Architecture **(offered by an external researcher)**
8	Teacher's Self-Efficacy, Personality and Psychological Characteristics of the Situation – A Dynamic Approach
9	The Production of Destination Imaginaries: Rethinking Coastal Tourism
10	Impact of Religious and Spiritual Practices on Urban Coastal Environments
11	Seagull Swoop: A design-based-research project on game-based science education and communication

The total number of registrations for the seminars organized by the SCHSI was as follows:

Distribution of Researchers to seminars of SCHSI		
University	**Number of Researchers**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	6	1,6%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	46	12,1%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	7	1,8%
Klaipeda University, KU	56	14,7%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	16	4,2%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	205	53,9%
South East Technological University, SETU	10	2,6%
University of Rostock , UROS	8	2,1%
Frederick University, FredU	15	3,9%
Other institution/Associated partners	11	2,9%
Total	**380**	**100%**

Distribution of Students (PhD, MSc, BSc) to seminars of SCHSI		
University	**Number of Students (PhD, MSc, BSc)**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	1	0,3%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	136	38,2%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	1	0,3%
Klaipeda University, KU	13	3,7%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	4	1,1%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	137	38,5%
South East Technological University, SETU	4	1,1%
University of Rostock , UROS	27	7,6%
Frederick University, FredU	3	0,8%
Other institutions/Associated partners	30	8,4%
Total	**356**	**100%**

Distribution of Participants to seminars of SCHSI		
University	**Number of Participants**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	11	1,3%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	185	22,5%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	9	1,1%
Klaipeda University, KU	82	10,0%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	28	3,4%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	371	45,0%
South East Technological University, SETU	28	3,4%
University of Rostock , UROS	40	4,9%
Frederick University, FredU	22	2,7%
Other institutions/Associated partners/Other Entities	48	5,8%
Total	**824**	**100%**

Regarding the registration of researchers in the seminars organized by SCHSI, the UNIZD contributed the most, followed by KU and AUA. Regarding the registration of students the contribution of UNIZD and AUA was high.

The unequal number of participating researchers from the different partners in the seminars organized by SCHSI could be attributed to the significant differences in the number of researchers and students among EU-CONEXUS partners, as well as the

specific research expertise of each partner — which for many of them may not align with the research activities on which the SCHSI focus. However, regarding both researchers and students, all partners participated in the seminars organized by the SCHSI. The number of researchers (11) and students (30) from outside the core EU-CONEXUS partner group was notable, as was the particularly high number of participants from outside the scientific community (88) who registered for the SCHSI seminars, highlighting the significant impact these seminars had on the scientific community and society at large. The delivery of 2 seminars by external researchers was also highly significant for networking among researchers and increasing the visibility of the EU-CONEXUS alliance's activities.

2.B. Constraints, Mitigation measures and Achievements regarding the organization of the JRIs in-person annual Conferences

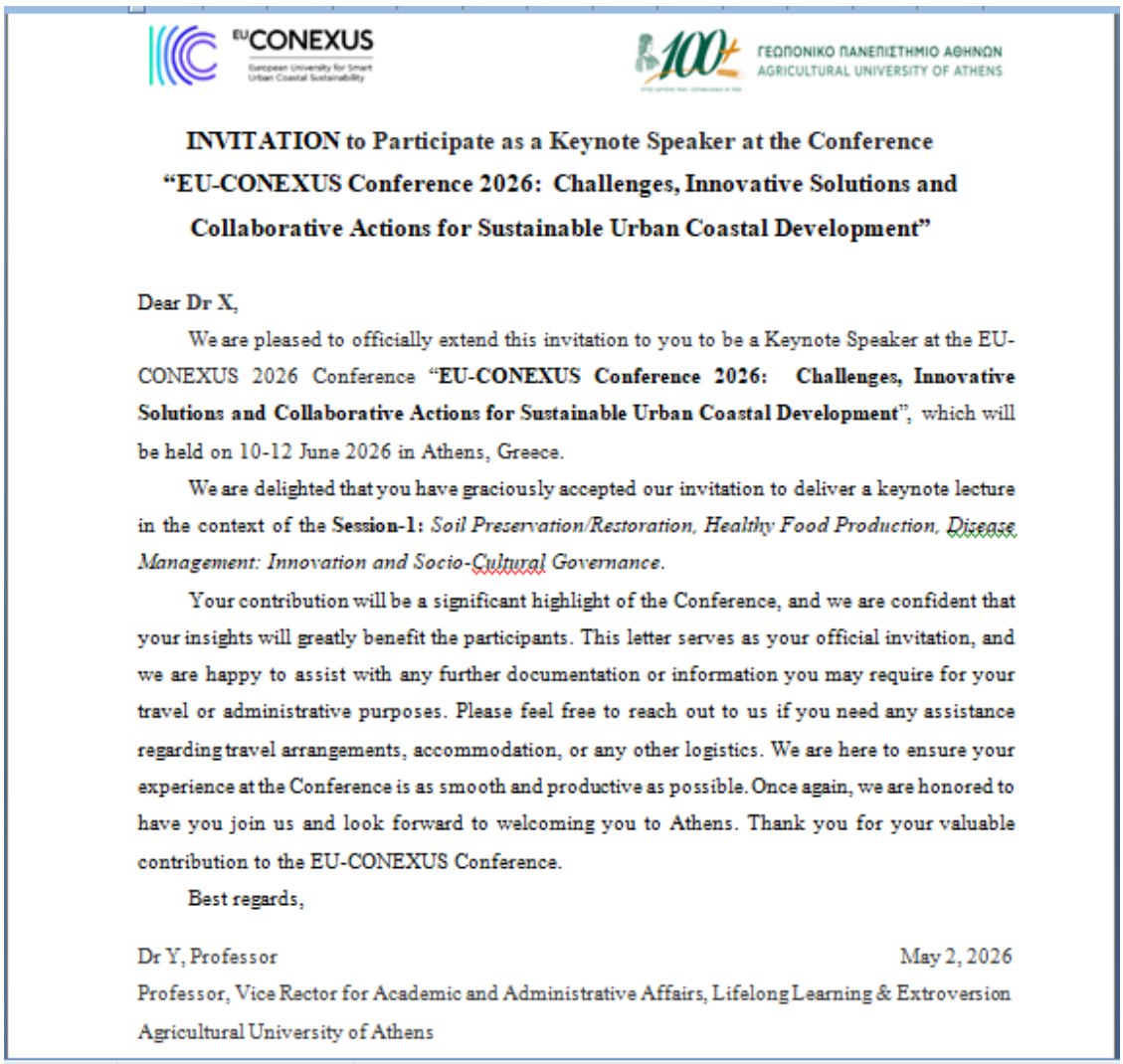
Preparations for each annual JRIs Conference began at least six months prior to the event as it included several steps:

1) Proposal regarding the title and thematic scope of the Conference, and consultation with representatives of WP9 on the final title and topics of the Conference. Two of these Conferences were organized by partners (UTCB, AUA) that host a JRI Head and the corresponding Research Manager. In these instances, the Conference theme/concept and title were proposed by the respective JRI Head and Research Manager. In the case of UTCB, the EU-CONEXUS Conference was organized jointly with EENVIRO. For the Conference organized by the UROS, the theme/concept and title were proposed by the Head and the Research Manager of the LSBI. For the conference organized by the UCV, the theme/concept and title were proposed by the organizing partner (UCV).
2) Validation of the concept of each Conference by the Research Council.
3) Selection of the Organizing Committee by the host of the Conference.
4) Selection of the Scientific Committee members or of reviewers for the evaluation of abstracts submitted to be presented as oral presentations.
5) Selection of the Keynote speakers based on proposals from the Scientific Committee members or from WP9 representatives.
6) Invitation of Keynote speakers (**Figure 5**) and securing funding for their travel to the Conference for the external (outside the alliance) researchers (in collaboration with WP8).
7) Preparation of the text to be used for promoting the Conference, with the contribution of the organizers and the WP9 representatives. This text was used to advertise the Conference in the Conference Platform.
8) Provision of templates for abstracts and posters by the Research Managers or the Organizing Committee of the host.
9) Construction of the Conference Platform for promoting the Conference, enabling online preregistration, submitting abstracts, posting the Conference program, and providing information to visitors (in collaboration with the JCU – WP18).

10) Dissemination of information regarding the Conference organization among EU-CONEXUS partners (**Figure 6**) and posting an announcement on social media.
11) Evaluation of abstracts by the Scientific Committee members or the reviewers and notification of researchers regarding the results, in order to confirm which authors will deliver oral presentations.
12) Selection of moderators of each Conference session by the Organizing Committee or the Research Manager of the host. The moderators were invited via email and their selection was based on the aim of ensuring that all partners were represented in every scientific session, as well as on achieving gender balance to the greatest extent possible.
13) Preparation of the final Conference program by the Research Managers and/or the Organizing Committee of the host and uploading the program to the Conference Platform by the JCU.
14) During the Conference: implementation of the Conference program and ensuring on-site registration of participants.

In total, four annual Conferences were organized:

1) The University of Rostock (UROS) hosted the **"EU-CONEXUS Conference 2023: Aquatic and Coastal Ecosystems: Challenges and Opportunities towards Sustainable Development"**, on 16 – 17 November 2023.
2) The Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest (UTCB) hosted the **"EU-CONEXUS EENVIRO Research Conference 2024: Sustainable Solutions for Energy and Environment"**, on 29 – 31 October 2024.
3) The Catholic University of Valencia (UCV) hosted the **"EU-CONEXUS Conference 2025: Transformative Research for Urban Coastal Sustainability"**, on 21 - 23 October 2025.
4) The Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) hosted the recently organized **"EU-CONEXUS Conference 2026: Challenges, Innovative Solutions and Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Urban Coastal Development",** on 10 - 12 June 2026.



INVITATION to Participate as a Keynote Speaker at the Conference "EU-CONEXUS Conference 2026: Challenges, Innovative Solutions and Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Urban Coastal Development"

Dear Dr X,

We are pleased to officially extend this invitation to you to be a Keynote Speaker at the EU-CONEXUS 2026 Conference "**EU-CONEXUS Conference 2026: Challenges, Innovative Solutions and Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Urban Coastal Development**", which will be held on 10-12 June 2026 in Athens, Greece.

We are delighted that you have graciously accepted our invitation to deliver a keynote lecture in the context of the **Session-1:** *Soil Preservation/Restoration, Healthy Food Production, Disease Management: Innovation and Socio-Cultural Governance.*

Your contribution will be a significant highlight of the Conference, and we are confident that your insights will greatly benefit the participants. This letter serves as your official invitation, and we are happy to assist with any further documentation or information you may require for your travel or administrative purposes. Please feel free to reach out to us if you need any assistance regarding travel arrangements, accommodation, or any other logistics. We are here to ensure your experience at the Conference is as smooth and productive as possible. Once again, we are honored to have you join us and look forward to welcoming you to Athens. Thank you for your valuable contribution to the EU-CONEXUS Conference.

Best regards,

Dr Y, Professor — May 2, 2026

Professor, Vice Rector for Academic and Administrative Affairs, Lifelong Learning & Extroversion

Agricultural University of Athens

Figure 5: *Example of a formal Invitation to a Conference Keynote Speaker*



EU-CONEXUS Conference 2026: Challenges, Innovative Solutions and Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Urban Coastal Development

| 10-12 Ιουνίου, Αθήνα | Καταληκτική ημερομηνία υποβολής περιλήψεων: 31 Μαρτίου 2026, εδώ↗ |

Καταληκτική ημερομηνία online εγγραφών (υποχρεωτική): 24 Απριλίου

Figure 6: *The announcement regarding the* ***"EU-CONEXUS Conference 2026: Challenges, Innovative Solutions and Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Urban Coastal Development"*** *as advertised at the AUA through e-mail.*

By fostering researcher networking, highlighting research activities, and engaging stakeholders, the 4 Conferences aimed to promote the development of Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (SmUCS).

In total, the 4 EU-CONEXUS Conferences attracted **910** participants, as shown below. As expected, the host institutions generally accounted for a larger share of conference participation. Nevertheless, participation rates broadly distributed across the partner Institutions. The presence of representatives from outside the EU-CONEXUS alliance was noteworthy (14%) — this group included the invited external researchers.

Distibution of Participants to all 4 EU-CONEXUS Conferences		
University	**Number of participants**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	74	8%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	142	16%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	161	18%
Klaipeda University, KU	52	6%

Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	92	10%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	47	5%
South East Technological University, SETU	81	9%
Rostock University, UROS	90	10%
Frederick University, FredU	42	5%
Other institution/organization/entity	129	14%
Total	**910**	**100%**

Analytically:

1) The **"EU-CONEXUS Conference 2023: Aquatic and Coastal Ecosystems: Challenges and Opportunities towards Sustainable Development"** focused on highlighting the impacts of climate change, specifically its effects on coastal environmental zones worldwide and the intense pressure it exerts on local populations, the way it influences all the activities of coastal communities, as well as on the measures that could be taken to mitigate these impacts. The Conference aspired to highlight the cutting-edge scientific achievements of the EU-CONEXUS research community working on objectives related to SmUCS, to achieve the dissemination of specialized and innovative knowledge on SmUCS and to boost the development of collaborations among the EU-CONEXUS research community and external scientists on SmUCS topics.

The respective Conference platform (https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/aquatic-and-coastal-ecosystems-challenges-and-opportunities-towards-sustainable-development/) is shown in **Figure 7**. The Conference programme included keynote talks, oral and poster presentations, workshops that supported the collaboration of researchers and dedicating networking opportunities.

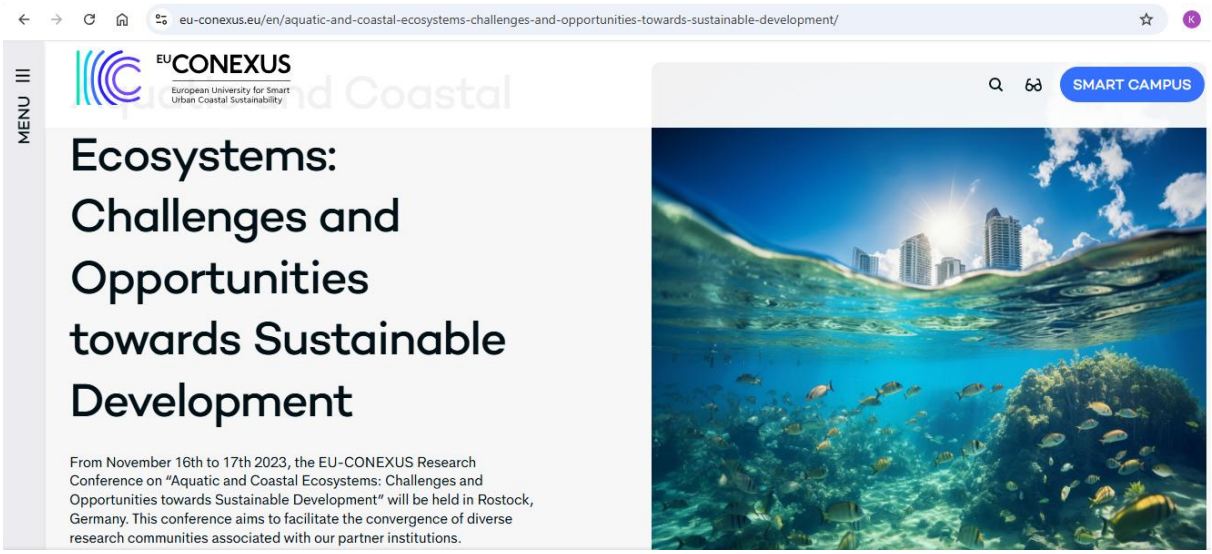


Figure 7: *The platform created to advertise the* ***"EU-CONEXUS Conference 2023: Aquatic and Coastal Ecosystems: Challenges and Opportunities towards Sustainable Development"*** *to receive the submitted abstracts and to allow pre-registrations online.*

In total, 81 abstracts were submitted (including 30 abstracts submitted by PhD students) and accepted for presentation. The programme included 7 keynote talks (3 talks were delivered by external researchers) and the Conference attracted 217 participants including at least 34 students (PhD, MSc, BSc students, 27 of them from EU-CONEXUS partners).

Distribution of Participants to "EU-CONEXUS Conference 2023: Aquatic and Coastal Ecosystems: Challenges and Opportunities towards Sustainable Development"		
University	**Number of participants**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	25	12%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	14	6%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	18	8%
Klaipeda University, KU	20	9%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	17	8%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	14	6%
South East Technological University, SETU	18	8%
Rostock University, UROS	53	24%
Frederick University, FredU	12	6%
Other institution/organization/entity	26	12%
Total	**217**	**100%**

2) The **"EU-CONEXUS EENVIRO Research Conference 2024: Sustainable Solutions for Energy and Environment"** was focused on highlighting solutions for developing sustainable and safer cities, urban infrastructure and resilient buildings. The Conference aspired to present Nature-Based Solutions specifically tailored for urban environments, biotechnology achievements for environment protection, sustainable agriculture and aquaculture, or new product development, plants and microorganisms for environment protection and disaster prevention, science applications for eco-friendly energy production, as well as connections between environment and society with special focus on linking scientific knowledge with social, cultural, and ethical insights to deeper understand the complexity and significance of life in connection with energy and environment.

The respective Conference platform (https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/eu-conexus-eenviro-research-conference/) is shown in **Figure 8**. The Conference programme included a full PhD day, keynote talks, oral and poster presentations, workshops that supported the collaboration of researchers and visits to UTCB laboratories.



Figure 8: *The platform created to advertise the* ***"EU-CONEXUS EENVIRO Research Conference 2024: Sustainable Solutions for Energy and Environment"****, to receive the submitted abstracts and to allow pre-registrations online.*

In total, 159 abstracts were submitted of which 146 were accepted for presentation. The programme included 14 keynote talks (6 talks were delivered by external researchers, 2 talks were delivered by researchers of associated partners) and the Conference attracted 258 participants including at least 65 students (PhD, MSc, BSc students) from EU-CONEXUS partners.

Distribution of Participants to "EU-CONEXUS EENVIRO Research Conference 2024: Sustainable Solutions for Energy and Environment"		
University	**Number of participants**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	15	6%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	16	6%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	107	41%
Klaipeda University, KU	11	4%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	17	7%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	7	3%
South East Technological University, SETU	13	5%
Rostock University, UROS	9	3%
Frederick University, FredU	7	3%
Other institution/organization/entity	56	22%
Total	**258**	**100%**

3) The **"EU-CONEXUS Conference 2025: Transformative Research for Urban Coastal Sustainability"** was focused on reimagining how coastal cities tackle their challenges. The conference aimed to foster innovative, collaborative solutions that transcend conventional approaches by integrating social, environmental, and economic dimensions to highlight long-term strategies and technologies that radically reshape urban systems, making them more resilient, sustainable, and adaptable to threats such as climate change, population growth, and environmental degradation. At the same time, the conference aspired — through interdisciplinary collaboration and the active participation of local communities and stakeholders — to highlight ways to achieve a more sustainable and equitable future for coastal cities, making them more livable and resilient.

The respective Conference platform (https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/eu-conexus-conference-2025/) is shown in **Figure 9**. The Conference programme included roundtable keynote talks/discussions, poster presentations and workshops that supported the collaboration of researchers.

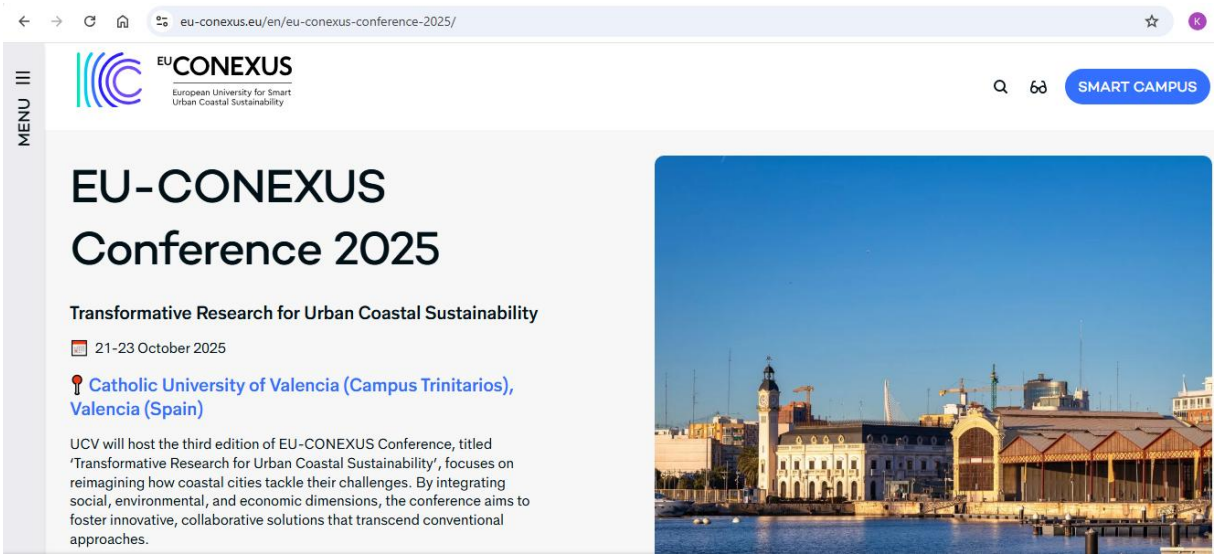


Figure 9: *The platform created to advertise the* ***"EU-CONEXUS Conference 2025: Transformative Research for Urban Coastal Sustainability"****, to receive the submitted abstracts and to allow pre-registrations online.*

In total, 86 abstracts were submitted and presented as posters. The programme included 24 keynote talks during the round tables (7 talks were delivered by external researchers) and the Conference attracted 186 participants including 59 students (PhD, MSc, BSc students, 57 of them from EU-CONEXUS partners).

Distribution of Participants to "EU-CONEXUS Conference 2025: Transformative Research for Urban Coastal Sustainability"		
University	**Number of participants**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	23	12%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	14	8%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	16	9%
Klaipeda University, KU	10	5%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	42	23%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	17	9%
South East Technological University, SETU	25	13%
Rostock University, UROS	14	8%
Frederick University, FredU	12	6%
Other institution/organization/entity	13	7%
Total	**186**	**100%**

4) The **"EU-CONEXUS Conference 2026: Challenges, Innovative Solutions and Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Urban Coastal Development"** was focused on the challenges faced by communities in urban and semi-urban coastal regions of rivers, seas, and oceans. Such challenges include:

- The development of Smart Coastal Infrastructure for the Mitigation of Disasters
- The Sustainable Management of Waste in the Coastal areas
- The Sustainable Management of Diseases
- The Conservation & Remediation of Soil and the Safety & Quality of Food
- The Protection of Oceans, Seas and Waters
- The Adaption and Mitigation of Global Climate Change in Coastal Environments

The Conference aimed to examine the impact of these challenges on society, to highlight the innovative solutions offered by the scientific community to address these challenges, to present collaborative actions being taken to face them, and to discover how society perceives the solutions offered by the scientific community and how they can integrated into policymaking, to cope with these challenges in a sustainable way.

The respective Conference platform (https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/eu-conexus-research-conference-2026/) is shown in **Figure 10**. The Conference programme included keynote talks, round-table discussions, oral and poster presentations, workshops that supported the collaboration of researchers, sessions that gave the opportunity to researchers to present themselves and their scientific work and to students to describe the training opportunities offered to them by the EU-CONEXUS European University, presentations of other European University Alliances by representative researchers, as well as the presentation of results from a Hackathon activity organized in parallel to the Conference programme.

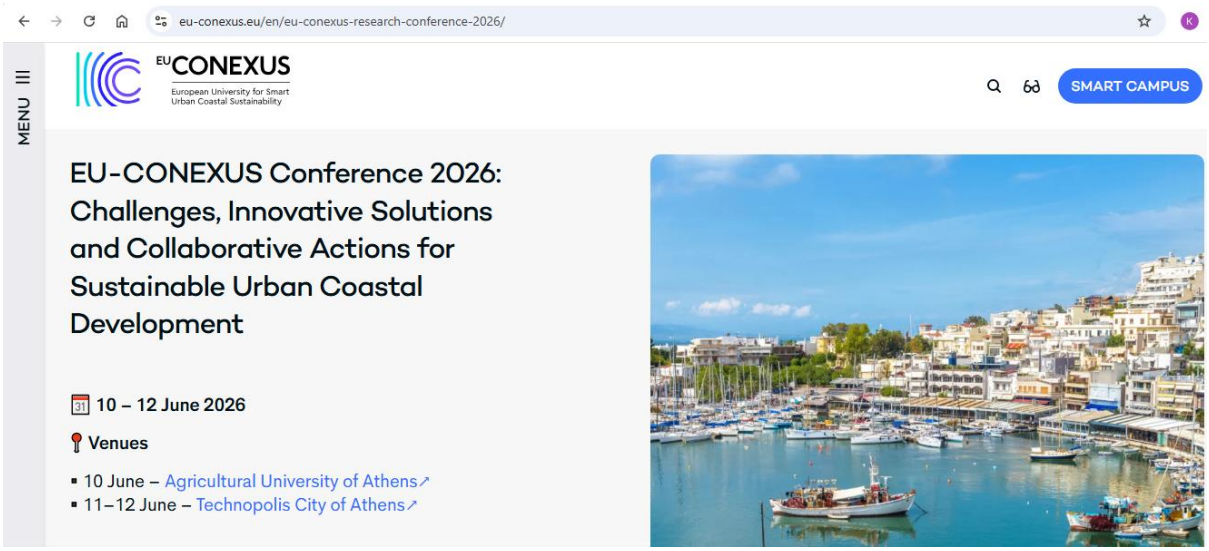


Figure 10: *The platform created to advertise the* ***"EU-CONEXUS Conference 2026: Challenges, Innovative Solutions and Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Urban Coastal Development"****, to receive the submitted abstracts and to allow pre-registrations online.*

In total, 117 abstracts were submitted and accepted for presentation. The programme included 9 keynote talks (7 talks were delivered by external researchers), oral presentations by representatives of 5 other European University Alliances, and the Conference attracted more than 249 participants including at least 117 students (PhD, MSc, BSc students).

Distribution of Participants to "EU-CONEXUS Conference 2026: Challenges, Innovative Solutions and Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Urban Coastal Development"		
University	**Number of participants**	**Percentage (%)**
La Rochelle Université, LRUniv	11	4%
Agricultural University of Athens, AUA	98	39%
Technical University of Civil Engineering, UTCB	20	8%
Klaipeda University, KU	11	4%
Catholic University of Valencia, UCV	16	6%
University of Zadar, UNIZD	9	4%
South East Technological University, SETU	25	10%
Rostock University, UROS	14	6%
Frederick University, FredU	11	4%
Other institution/organization/entity	34	14%
Total	**249**	**100%**

3. Impact of the JRIs seminars and in-person annual Conferences

The high level of participation in online JRIs seminars and in-person EU-CONEXUS conferences enhances the impact of these activities on the broader research community, students, and stakeholders, contributing to meaningful academic engagement, knowledge transfer, and the building of the scientific community. The high participation results serve as excellent data points for providing clear evidence of measurable academic outreach.

The JRIs seminars and the EU-CONEXUS conferences generated profound academic, professional, and societal impacts by accelerating knowledge exchange, fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration and supporting participants' professional development. They facilitated meaningful networking and establishing collaboration across the parnter institutes.

Both activities fostered the dissemination of knowledge, serving as platforms for researchers and students to present new methodologies, experimental findings, and emerging scientific trends; at the same time, they enabled presenters to receive real-time critical feedback from leading experts, thereby contributing to the refinement of methodologies and data analysis, essential for early stage researchers.

Both activities fostered international networking by facilitating direct interaction among researchers, which builds trust and creates long-term international and interdisciplinary collaborations capable of evolving into joint research projects.

As for the students — and particularly for PhD and Master students — these activities gave them the opportunity to introduce themselves to the scientific community (for many, it was their first time), to transition from passive recipients of knowledge to active participants by presenting posters or delivering talks and developing scientific communication skills, as well as to cultivate their autonomy, global perspective, and adaptability.

For Bachelor (BSc) students, these activities fostered personal scientific development and ensured their smooth integration into the scientific community; they connected students with research groups generating new knowledge and opened up new prospects and opportunities for postgraduate and doctoral studies, as well as for career advancement. Students learn how to critically assess data, present complex ideas, and network with established professionals in an international community bringing together different experiences and outlooks which were invaluable.

For Bachelor (BSc) and Master's (MSc) students, these activities served as a powerful recruitment tool, inspiring them to pursue advanced degrees (including PhD) or careers in research.

Furthermore, through their topics, the EU-CONEXUS conferences and the JRIs seminars helped foster public dialogue on pressing societal issues in the area of smart urban coastal development and highlighted science-based solutions to these problems; presented collaborative actions being taken to face them, and helped discover how society perceives and policy adopts the solutions offered by the scientific community to cope with these challenges in a sustainable way. In this way, both activities contributed to bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Both activities created an intellectual hub allowing experts to share cutting-edge methodology, exchange knowledge, discuss emerging trends and spark new joint research projects.

The presence of participants from outside the scientific community like industry professionals, policymakers, or community members fostered the dissemination and communication of the academic research outside the "ivory tower," paving the way for technology transfer and evidence-based policy.

Overall, these activities enhanced the visibility of EU-CONEXUS research community to the global scientific community and reiterated the importance of smart urban coastal development.

4. Discussion/content

The two activities of WP9 were successfully completed, significantly exceeding the set targets. The JRIs seminars and annual EU-CONEXUS conferences attracted interest from researchers and students affiliated with the EU-CONEXUS alliance partners, as well as from external researchers, students, and individuals outside the scientific community. Regarding the JRIs seminars in particular, although the target-group was the researchers — in accordance with the requirements of WP9 — student participation exceeded that of researchers. The high level of student participation highlights their need to stay informed about the laboratories' current research activities; to be aware of environmental problems, their impacts, and proposed solutions; to take an interest in how the cities we live in can become more sustainable and resilient; and to understand contemporary social issues. As for the researchers, both the JRIs seminars and the EU-CONEXUS conferences enabled them to interact face-to-face, stay informed about the research activities and methodologies of other researchers as well as available laboratory technologies, explore the potential for new collaborations, showcase their research to the broader scientific community and interact with stakeholders.

5. Conclusion

In light of the above, the JRI seminars and annual EU-CONEXUS conferences proved to be effective instruments for strengthening networking, knowledge exchange, interdisciplinary collaboration, and engagement across the EU-CONEXUS research community and beyond. The strong participation of researchers and students, together with the involvement of external institutions and stakeholders, demonstrates the added value of such activities in supporting scientific collaboration and enhancing the visibility of EU-CONEXUS research.

The results therefore highlight the importance of continuing to support seminars, conferences, and related networking activities within future Erasmus+ initiatives, as these activities provide tangible benefits for researchers, students, partner institutions, and society at large.