



Six leading universities establish the ARQUS European University Alliance

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University news & events

On the morning of 27th November in Brussels the Rectors of the Universities of Granada (Spain), Graz (Austria), Leipzig (Germany), Padova (Italy) and Vilnius (Lithuania), and the President of the University of Lyon (France) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the ARQUS European University Alliance, an initiative designed to promote deep integration of the six institutions in their teaching and learning, research, outreach and civic engagement missions.

The six partner institutions bring together approximately 290,000 students, 22,000 academics, and 15,000 technical, administrative and support staff. Each of the universities is a leading participant in European projects and internationalization processes and has a strong role in their respective region's development.

The universities have agreed to work together towards a truly European approach to higher education, involving seamless mobility for students, academics, researchers and other university staff, joint projects at all levels of university activity, and shared initiatives for global engagement.

The ARQUS consortium, coordinated by the University of Granada, will participate in the pilot call for funding of "European Universities", launched in October by the European Commission in the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme.

The six universities share a long experience in joint projects in many fields, and a common profile as leading international research universities with deep regional engagement, in medium-sized, mostly non-capital, cities. "We share a strong



commitment to the core European values and democratic culture which underlie the social dimension of higher education and the promotion of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals," in the words of Dorothy Kelly, coordinator of the project, in the presentation.

They share the belief that together the six partners have the potential to progress further, faster and more firmly, and that European cooperation is essential to the future of their institutions.

The ARQUS Alliance will build its activities on the concept of universities as a space for personal and professional development for all, promoting widening access and inclusive policies for new diverse student, academic and professional communities. In line with the recent European Commission call for projects, ARQUS will promote innovative teaching and learning; it will respond to the grand global societal challenges of the UN's sustainable development goals through research, education and outreach; it will strive to promote multilingualism in the university community and beyond; and it will further foster the already strong regional engagement of the partner institutions, situating people clearly at the centre of their plans.

The Alliance's name stems from the polysemic Latin term *arcus/arquus*, for arch, representing the strong foundations the consortium is laying for building bridges toward a shared future. Moreover, the shape made by the six partners on the map of Europe resembles a double arch, from the far south west to the far north east of the continent.

The signing ceremony was attended by representatives of the universities, ministries, embassies, permanent representations of the six regions and EU member states involved, the national rectors' conferences of the six countries and other university networks and associations.