



ARQUS Alliance selected by the European Commission as one of the first “European Universities”

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University news & events

ARQUS, the European University Alliance that brings together the universities of Bergen, Granada, Graz, Leipzig, Lyon, Padova and Vilnius, has been endorsed by the European Commission as part of the group of pioneering Alliances in the European Universities Initiative.

On Wednesday, 26 September 2019, the European Commission announced the selection of 17 of the 54 applications submitted, allocating them a total funding of 85 million euros. The 17 alliances selected by 26 independent experts cover a total of 114 higher education institutions from 24 member states. Each of these first 17 European Universities will receive €5 million in funding over the next three years in order to start implementing their plans and pave the way for other higher education institutions across the EU to follow. The Commission plans to fully roll out European Universities under Erasmus+, with a significantly increased funding during the next multi-annual EU Budget running from 2021-2027.



European Universities will enhance the quality and attractiveness of European higher education and boost cooperation between institutions, their students and staff.

According to Tibor Navracsics, the Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, the “first 17 European Universities, [...] will act as role models for others across the EU. They will enable the next generations of students to experience Europe by studying in different countries. I am convinced that this initiative, a key building block of the European Education Area, will be a real game changer for higher education in Europe, boosting excellence and inclusion”.

The European Commission expects European Universities to become inter-university campuses around which students, doctoral candidates, staff and researchers can move seamlessly. They will pool their expertise, platforms and resources to deliver joint curricula or modules covering various disciplines. These curricula will be very flexible and will allow students to personalise their education, choosing what, where and when to study and get a European degree. European Universities will also contribute to the sustainable economic development of the regions where they are located, as their students will work closely with companies, municipal authorities, academics and researchers to find solutions to the challenges their regions are facing.

The ARQUS European University Alliance

The 7 universities that make up ARQUS share extensive experience in developing joint projects of different types, as well as a common profile of leading international research universities located in medium-sized cities with a clear and deep regional commitment. They also share the belief that working together within this alliance will allow for faster and stronger progress and that European cooperation is essential for the future of their institutions.

The principal ambition of the Arqus Alliance is to act jointly as a laboratory for institutional learning from which to move forward in the design, testing and implementation of an innovative model for deep inter-university cooperation. The Alliance aims to consolidate a joint governance structure to facilitate the development of consensual joint policies and action plans, to consolidate participative structures to facilitate cross-cutting integration at all levels of the partner institutions, and to share its experience with other groupings in order to communicate the added value to be found in its model of integration.

The Arqus Alliance aims to centre its efforts on enabling people: enabling a widely diverse student body and enhancing their learning experience; enabling a similarly diverse staff community and promoting their individual and collective professional development; enabling society at large by opening our doors and fully responding to the mission it has entrusted us.

In particular, the major goals of ARQUS for 2025 are:

1. **INTEGRATION:** The principal ambition of the Arqus Alliance is to act jointly as a laboratory from which to move forward in the design, testing and implementation of an innovative model for deep inter-university cooperation. The Alliance aims to consolidate a joint governance structure to facilitate the development of consensual joint policies and action plans, to consolidate participative structures to facilitate cross-cutting integration at all levels of the partner institutions, and to share its experience with other groupings in order to communicate the added value to be found in its model of integration.
2. **ENABLING PEOPLE:** The Arqus Alliance aims to centre its efforts on enabling people: enabling a widely diverse student body and enhancing their learning experience; enabling a similarly diverse staff community and promoting their individual and collective professional development; enabling society at large by opening our doors and fully responding to the mission it has entrusted us.
3. **WIDENING ACCESS AND INCLUSION:** The Alliance aims to promote widening access for diverse student and staff populations, facilitating inclusive admission and recruitment policies, and attracting talent from less represented groups. The Alliance aims to develop shared policies for inclusion and diversity for all members of the university community.
4. **QUALITY STUDENT LEARNING:** To enhance the quality of student learning and employability, the Alliance aims ultimately to have a shared academic offer. The Alliance aims to share new forms of mobility and best practice for recognition of all kinds: for credit mobility; for formal, informal and non-formal learning; for prior learning; for service learning; and of qualifications. The Alliance aims to share innovative and inclusive teaching and learning methodologies and staff development initiatives.
5. **MULTILINGUAL UNIVERSITY:** The Alliance aspires to ensuring truly multilingual environments at partner universities using its language diversity to promote multilingualism throughout the universities' activities, for the entire community and beyond. The Alliance aspires to moving beyond language competence in order also to promote intercultural communication competence amongst students and staff.
6. **ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY AND REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT:** The Arqus Alliance aims to stimulate entrepreneurship and creativity amongst the entire university community and across different areas of activities, through mutual learning, by engaging regional resources and building on the complementary strengths of all its members. It aims further to devote its efforts to developing and sharing innovative cross-sectoral collaborations.

7. RESEARCH SUPPORT AND EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT:

The Alliance aims to share best practice in research management and support and to find ways in which to share a variety of resources. It aims to promote joint doctoral and post-doctoral initiatives as the basis for early-stage researcher development and to promote shared opportunities. It further aims to enhance actual research collaboration within the Alliance and with European and global partners.

8. GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT: The Alliance aims to set up joint global initiatives in education and research, building on the complementarity of the members' strategic partners worldwide. It further aims to build on that complementarity to promote Europe and Arqus as an attractive space for talent from around the world to study, research or work.

The aforementioned goals will be supported by the following cross-cutting enabling strategies:

1. PEOPLE CENTRED: The policies and activities of the Alliance are designed to provide quality provision and attention to the entire community of diverse persons participating in our higher education institutions, and to ensure their full participation in and ownership of this initiative. The strategy will address the three major groups composing the university community: students and potential students; academic staff; administrative, technical and support staff.

2. A LABORATORY FOR INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING: The Alliance will work as a shared laboratory for experimentation in innovative actions for deep university integration and inter-university cooperation. The results of the experimentation will provide a sound and informed source for deep evidencebased institutional learning within the Alliance, and for the enhancement of higher education policies at national and European level. They will be shared with other universities and networks and with the higher education sector in general.

3. MOBILITY AND RECOGNITION: Building on this experience and existing cooperation, the Alliance takes up the challenge of working towards seamless mobility of all kinds with full recognition for all members of the community, by promoting physical, blended and virtual mobility in a wide variety of formats, including -where appropriate- structured and embedded mobility in the form of joint programmes in all cycles.

4. JOINTNESS AND PARTICIPATION: The Alliance has designed shared governance structures to ensure smooth and efficient dialogue among the partner institutions at all levels.

5. OPENNESS: The Alliance is committed to contributing actively to the reshaping of

Open Science and publication culture, specifically regarding Open Access and Open Data. The partners will stimulate open interdisciplinary and crossdisciplinary approaches to both study programmes and research to ensure the acquisition of the high-level, transferable competences required by the rapid evolution of technology, the economy and the labour market. 6. SUSTAINABILITY: The cross-cutting participation of staff and students at partner universities in governance structures and work plans for the Alliance will ensure potential for lasting cooperation in teaching & learning, research and outreach activities.

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