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5th | edition

The European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (EU-CONEXUS) presents the 5th edition of its International School Contest

‘Think smart, create green’

CONTEST RULES AND REGULATIONS

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1. Overview of the Contest

EU-CONEXUS 'European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability, formed by 9 European partner universities, is a transnational European higher education and research institution that studies smart urban coastal sustainable development from a global point of view.

EU-CONEXUS European University is also developing workshops and seminars for high schools and as part of this outreach, we deliver the International EU-CONEXUS School Contest 'Think Smart, Create Green'.

The EU-CONEXUS European University consists of 9 partners:

- La Rochelle Université (LRUniv), France
- Agricultural University of Athens (AUA), Greece
- Catholic University of Valencia (UCV), Spain
- Klaipeda University (KU), Lithuania
- University of Zadar (UNIZD), Croatia
- Technical University of Civil Engineering of Bucharest (UTCB), Romania
- South East Technological University (SETU), Ireland
- University of Rostock (UR), Germany.
- Frederick University (FredU), Cyprus

1.1 Main goals

The main goals of the contest are:

to raise awareness amongst school pupils about the sustainability of coastal areas and promote marine environmental consciousness through a specific but also a pan-European approach.

to bring university life closer to secondary education pupils, to encourage them to study STEM-related degrees and introduce future careers in related industries.

1.2 Expected impact

FOR PUPILS:

- To raise awareness about environmental sustainability, smart cities, and circular economy,
- To develop English language skills,
- To trigger interest in other countries and cultures and raise consciousness about shared coastal issues,
- To develop the sense of accomplishment and empowerment,
- To think critically and creatively,
- To develop team building skills,
- To encourage young people to become active for social change,
- To develop youth entrepreneurship and social responsibility.

FOR TEACHERS:

- To raise awareness about environmental sustainability, smart cities and circular economy,
- To develop English language skills,
- To develop strong bonds with pupils,
- To experience different teaching methods,
- To develop project management skills,
- To open venues to set up/participate in Erasmus+ teaching/research projects.

1.3 Target groups

There are two target groups:

Pupils aged 12-14
(born 2010 - 2012)

Pupils aged 14-17
(born in 2007- 2010)

Pupils who have reached the age of 14 at the time of team registration may choose to enter either of the two categories.

1.4 Topics' explanation

Since ancient times, coastal areas have been popular sites for human settlements due to their abundant natural resources, transportation access, and communication with other communities. Indeed, according to the United Nations, nearly 40% of the world's population lives within 100 km of a coastline. However, the increasing urbanization and industrialization of these areas have led to significant environmental challenges.

Statistics related to coastal areas and the environmental challenges they face:

- The United Nations reports that coastal and marine ecosystems are estimated to be worth over \$25 trillion annually, providing essential services such as food, water filtration, and climate regulation.
- The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) reports that coastal wetlands, which provide important habitat for birds, fish, and other wildlife, have declined by approximately 50% over the past century due to human activities.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that around 90% of the world's fish stocks are either fully exploited or overexploited. Coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to overfishing, which can lead to the collapse of fish populations and have severe consequences for local economies and food security.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that global sea levels could rise by up to 1.1 meters by the end of the century if greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase at their current rate. This could lead to flooding, erosion, and displacement of millions of people living in coastal areas.
- A study published in the journal Nature in 2020 found that the world's oceans have become more acidic due to the absorption of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This can have serious consequences for marine ecosystems, including the loss of coral reefs, which provide important habitats for fish and other marine species.

While coastal areas have long been considered ideal locations for human settlements, the increasing demand for natural resources and services has led to significant environmental challenges. It is crucial that we take steps to protect these fragile ecosystems and mitigate the impacts of climate change to ensure the long-term sustainability of our coastal communities.

Coastal sustainability is an essential aspect of responsible living, and it can be achieved by implementing the 9R framework. This framework emphasizes reducing waste and adopting a circular economy, which is crucial for coastal ecosystems'

health and longevity. By practicing the 9R framework, we can reduce the amount of plastic waste and other pollutants that end up in the ocean, thereby protecting marine life and maintaining the delicate balance of the coastal ecosystem. Ultimately, coastal sustainability and responsible living go hand in hand, and it's our collective responsibility to protect our oceans and ensure their long-term viability.

The 9R Framework is a set of principles that can help us transition to a circular economy. In a linear economy, we take resources from the earth, use them to make products, and then dispose of them when we are finished. This creates a lot of waste and pollution, and it's not sustainable in the long run. In a circular economy, we aim to keep resources in use for as long as possible and minimize waste and pollution.

The 9Rs stand for:

- **R0-Refuse:** This means refusing products that are not sustainable or necessary. For example, we can say no to single-use plastic bags, straws, or bottles.
- **R1-Rethink:** This means rethinking our current system and looking for ways to make it more sustainable. For example, we can design products to be reusable, repairable, and recyclable.
- **R2-Reduce:** This means reducing the number of resources we use. For example, we can use energy-efficient appliances, take shorter showers, or turn off lights when we're not using them.
- **R3-Reuse:** This means finding new uses for products and materials that would otherwise be thrown away. For example, we can donate clothes, books, or furniture, or use old jars as containers.
- **R4-Repair:** This means fixing products that are broken instead of throwing them away. For example, we can mend clothes, fix bikes, or replace parts in appliances.
- **R5-Refurbish:** This means restoring products to their original condition or upgrading them to extend their lifespan. For example, we can refurbish phones, computers, or cars.
- **R6-Remanufacture:** This means using old products and materials to create new ones. For example, we can use recycled plastic to make new products or use

old car parts to build new cars.

- **R7-Repurpose:** This means using discarded product in a new product with the same function.
- **R8-Recycle:** This means turning waste into new products or materials. For example, we can recycle paper, glass, or metal, and turn them into new products.
- **R9-Recover:** This means recovering energy or resources from waste that cannot be recycled or reused. For example, we can use biogas from organic waste or extract metals from electronic waste.

By applying the 9R Framework, we can create a more sustainable and circular economy that benefits both people and the planet. We can reduce waste, save resources, and create new jobs and businesses that contribute to a healthier and more equitable world.

1.5 Projects' specifications

1.5.1. CATEGORY 1: pupils aged 12-14

All teachers must register their pupils 1st, before completing the next steps.

PHASE 1 – Creation (3 steps)

- Step 1:** Following a video on sustainability, each team of pupils must answer an online **Quiz**, estimated time 3 minutes.
- Step 2:** Each team must collect recycled items and make any new object that will be creative, innovative or impactful.
- Step 3:** Each team will be required to submit a **presentation** (10 slides including at least 5 photos, a short description of the new object and evidence of creativity, innovation or impact and also relevance to smart urban coastal sustainability topics).

PHASE 2 – National Final

Up to five teams from each country will proceed to their National Final. Teams will be given 10 minutes to deliver the presentation made at Phase 1 Step 3 to their national jury.

PHASE 3 – International EU-CONEXUS Final

The winning team from each country will proceed to the International Final and make a presentation to the international jury.

There will be one National Winner in each age category.

1.5.2. CATEGORY 2: pupils aged 14-17

All teachers must register their pupils 1st, before completing the next steps.

PHASE 1 – Creation (4 steps)

- Step 1:** Following a video on sustainability, each team of pupils must answer an online Quiz, estimated time 3 minutes.
- Step 2:** Identify a sustainability issue in your community, propose an innovative solution with relevance to smart urban coastal sustainability topics, describe the impact in your community, detail an implementation plan and create a strategy to promote their solution. Describe the above in a 5-page written **report**, following our template.
- Step 3:** Design a **presentation** of up to 10 slides documenting all the elements mentioned above (a template will be provided).
- Step 4:** Record a 1-minute TikTok style **video** underscoring the positive impact of your solution.

PHASE 2 – National Final

Up to 5 teams in each country will proceed to their National Final. Teams will be given 10 minutes to deliver the presentation made at Phase 1 Step 2 to their national jury.

PHASE 3 – International EU-CONEXUS Final

The winning team from each country will proceed to the International Final and make a presentation to the international jury.

There will be one National Winner in each age category.

2. Eligibility

- Participants can be members of only one team, while teachers can lead more than one team within the same category.
- Teams of 3-4 pupils are accepted.
- Teams can be led by a maximum of two (2) teachers.
- Candidates must be school pupils in any of the EU-CONEXUS country member.
- The project should have been originally created by the participants.
- Only materials in the provided templates will be accepted and evaluated.
- All entries to this competition, including the presentation, poster and video MUST only be in English.

3. Timeline

- Registration – 29th of November (Friday) 2024, 5 PM CET Paris Time
- Submission of deliverables – 31st of January (Friday) 2025, 5 PM CET Paris Time
- Announcement of the teams for each National Final– 28th of February 2025
- National Finals – March 2025 (dates to be announced) – Physical
- EU-CONEXUS International Final – 10th of April 2025 – Online

4. How to Participate

4.1 Information

The information about the Contest will be disseminated by the EU-CONEXUS school committee representatives. The rules will be published on <https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/> and member universities' websites.

4.2 Registration

Participants, via their leading teacher, should complete their registration adding all the teams that he/she leads. The link for both categories' registration will be available on EU-CONEXUS dedicated webpage for the School Contest under the Society tab.

Registration for the competition is through Microsoft Forms. After registration each teacher will receive an email from their local coordinator with all the information:

- Contest rules and regulations
- One Drive cloud folder link for uploading the documents required in Phase 1, including the authorization agreements for the pupils.
- Microsoft Forms link for the Sustainability Quiz
- Details of the timeline and deadlines

4.3 Authorization forms

The legal guardians of the pupils must:

- authorize the pupils' participation by signing the consent form. This consent form covers the copyright, image rights, etc. for EU-CONEXUS dissemination and public assessment of works in national and international competition.
- The files of each country will be accessible to download on the <https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/> page.

4.4 Projects' submission

4.4.1. CATEGORY 1: pupils aged 12-14

After registration each team must submit by the project submission deadline: **January 31st, 2025.**

Sustainability Quiz will be received by the teacher by e-mail.

The presentation in PowerPoint format (.ppt or .pptx) must have a maximum of 10 slides and include at least 5 photos of the team making the object.

All digital files must be uploaded in a cloud folder provided by the organizers after registration.

4.4.2. CATEGORY 2: pupils aged 14-17

After registration each team must submit by the project submission deadline: **January 31st, 2025.**

Sustainability Quiz will be received by the teacher by e-mail.

- A 5-page report in MS Word format
- A presentation about the issue, their solution, the promotional strategy and the

expected impact in PowerPoint format with up to 10 slides.

- A video underscoring the positive impact of the solution in TikTok style format and it should be .avi, .mpeg, .mp4, .mov or .flv.
- All digital files must be uploaded into a cloud folder provided by the organizers after registration.

5. Jury Composition

5.1 National jury

Eight (8) national juries will be formed (one (1) in each EU-CONEXUS country (except for Germany which is not participating in this edition of this contest). The national jury will be composed of 3 or 5 members in total:

- 1-3 staff members of the university involved in the EU-CONEXUS Plus Universities to School program.
- 1 stakeholder
- 1 local student

5.2 International jury

One (1) international jury will be composed of 9 members in total: 1 representative from each university of 8 partners involved in the organization of the School Contest and one neutral jury member. To ensure the fairness of the judging process, the national jury members cannot evaluate their own teams.

6. Winners´ selection

6.1 National winners´ selection procedure

- Only the works submitted on time will be considered for the national (and later international) selection process.
- Pre-selection: The national jury will select up to five (5) best works per category
- Final selection: A maximum of five projects will be selected to participate in the National Final, where pupils will present their projects to the National Jury. This event is organized by the host university
- The contestants can present their projects orally in English. 10 minutes will be given for their project presentation and the jury will have a maximum of 5 minutes for questions.
- The National juries will decide the winners, one per category, on the day of the national final.

6.2 International winners´ selection procedure

- Each EU-CONEXUS University will submit the work of the national winners (one (1) per category) to the international jury.
- The international contestants will present their works in English (virtually).
- Each finalist will have 10 minutes to present their projects. The international jury will have a maximum of 5 minutes to ask questions/ make comments. The jury will announce the winners on the same day. There will be a podium of three (3) places, and the first, second and third place projects will be announced.
- The winners will be informed by email.

6.3 Contest winner assessment

6.3.1. SPECIFIC CRITERIA CATEGORY 1: [pupils aged 12-14](#)

PHASE 1

STEP 1 Sustainability Quiz	up to 10 points One point per correct answer in the sustainability quiz. No answers correct, no marks.				
SCORE	No work	Significant improvement required	Some improvement required	Good job	Excellent
STEP 2 (Making of the object)	disqualified	up to 10 points the object shows hardly any creativity or usefulness	up to 20 points the object shows a few signs of creativity or usefulness	up to 30 points the object shows some creativity, usefulness & original solution implemented	up to 40 points Outstanding creativity solution and usefulness, making the object unique.
STEP 3 Presentation (10 slides)	disqualified	up to 10 points the presentation shows hardly any creativity, quality, and no ease of understanding	up to 25 points the presentation shows a few signs of creativity, quality, and ease of understanding	up to 35 points the presentation shows some creativity, quality, and ease of understanding	up to 50 points Outstanding creativity, quality, and ease of understanding making the presentation unique.

PHASE 2 and 3

<p>TIME MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>up to 10 points</p> <p>Less than 5 minutes or more than 10:30 minutes</p>	<p>up to 15 points</p> <p>5-7:30 minutes</p>	<p>up to 20 points</p> <p>Outstanding creativity solution and usefulness, making the object unique.</p>	<p>up to 25 points</p> <p>9:30 to 10:30 minutes</p>
<p>PUBLIC PRESENTATION SKILLS</p>	<p>up to 10 points</p> <p>Too much hesitation impeding pronunciation/ diction. Reading all the time, not a presentation / No faces seen, impossible to determine if they are reading/ The participant does not look at the jury.</p>	<p>up to 15 points</p> <p>Some hesitation: articulation/ pronunciation/ diction difficult to follow at times. Too much reading, the participant hardly ever addresses the jury.</p>	<p>up to 20 points</p> <p>Hardly any hesitation; clear enough articulation/ pronunciation/ diction. Occasional reading, i.e. note checking here & there. The participant tries, not always successfully, to address the jury.</p>	<p>up to 25 points</p> <p>Clear articulation; good pronunciation/ diction throughout; appropriate body language. No reading at all, not even notes. The participant appropriately addresses the jury.</p> <p>Best project.</p>

6.3.2. SPECIFIC CRITERIA CATEGORY 2: pupils aged 14-17

PHASE 1

STEP 1 Sustainability Quiz	up to 10 points One point per correct answer in the sustainability quiz. No answers correct, no marks.				
SCORE	No work	Significant improvement required	Some improvement required	Good job	Excellent
STEP 2 Report	disqualified	up to 5 points is not relevant	up to 15 points some relevance of their report	up to 20 points relevance of their report	up to 25 points outstanding summary with relevance of their report
STEP 3 Presentation design of a sustainability challenge	disqualified	up to 10 points the presentation shows little creativity, quality, and little understanding	up to 20 points the presentation shows a few signs of creativity, quality, and ease of understanding	up to 30 points the presentation shows some creativity, quality, and ease of understanding	up to 40 points Outstanding creativity, quality, and ease of understanding making the presentation unique.
STEP 4 Video promoting your solution (1 min.)	disqualified	up to 5 points is not relevant, shows little creativity, poor technical skills	up to 15 points some relevance of their solution, shows a few signs of creativity and few technical skills	up to 20 points relevance of their solution, shows some creativity and some technical skills	up to 25 points outstanding relevance of their solution, creativity, and technical skills

PHASE 2 and 3

TIME MANAGEMENT	<p>up to 10 points</p> <p>Less than 5 minutes or more than 10:30 minutes</p>	<p>up to 15 points</p> <p>5-7:30 minutes</p>	<p>up to 20 points</p> <p>7:30-9:30 minutes</p>	<p>up to 25 points</p> <p>9:30-10:30 minutes</p>
PUBLIC PRESENTATION SKILLS	<p>up to 10 points</p> <p>Too much hesitation impeding pronunciation/diction. Reading all the time, not a presentation / No faces seen, impossible to determine if they are reading/ The participant does not look at the jury.</p>	<p>up to 15 points</p> <p>Some hesitation: articulation/pronunciation/diction difficult to follow at times. Too much reading, the participant hardly ever addresses the jury.</p>	<p>up to 20 points</p> <p>Hardly any hesitation; clear enough articulation/pronunciation/diction. Occasional reading, i.e. note checking here & there. The participant tries, not always successfully, to address the jury.</p>	<p>up to 25 points</p> <p>Clear articulation; good pronunciation/diction throughout; appropriate body language. No reading at all, not even notes. The participant appropriately addresses the jury. Best project.</p>

6.3.3. Scoring method

PHASE 1 – Creation (Pre-selection for National final)

In the initial phase, participants go through multiple stages, and based on their performances, they can earn up to 100 points awarded by the National Jury. Up to 5 teams, based on cumulative scores, progress to the National phase. However, specific scores from this phase are not disclosed to the teams.

PHASE 2 – National Final

Scores from Phase 1 are carried over and additional points are awarded, with up to 50 extra points available. These additional points are awarded based on the timeliness of the participants' presentations and their presentation skills. The cumulative scores from Phases 1 and 2 determine which teams advance to the International phase and wins the National Phase.

PHASE 3 – International EU-CONEXUS Final

In this final phase, 9 jury members score the teams using the same criteria established in Phase 2, with up to 50 points available. However, jury members do not score the team from their own country. In case of a tie, the team with the higher score from the National phase prevails. If the tie persists, seven jury members (excluding those from the countries of the tied teams) will cast a vote to decide the winner.

7. Prize

Disclaimer – The certificates and money prizes will be sent to the winning teams in a month's time following the end of the international phase of the contest. This is due to the procedures that must be followed by our Alliance.

7.4 General rules

- All the teams will receive a certificate of participation.
- One (1) winner per category will be selected from among the participating teams in each EU-CONEXUS country (national winner).
- Then, each national winning team will compete at the international level.

7.5 National prize

EU-CONEXUS corporate goodies and certificates will be given to all the national participants. The National Winners (one per age category) will be awarded a prize by the host university.

7.6 International prize

- Prizes for a total value of approximately 1000 Euros will be shared among all the members of the team who achieves the 1st place in the international competition, leading teacher included.
- Prizes for a total value of approximately 750 Euros will be shared among all the members of the team who achieves the 2nd place in the international competition, leading teacher included.
- Prizes for a total value of approximately 500 Euros will be shared among all the members of the team who achieves the 3rd place in the international competition, leading teacher included.

8. Contacts of EU-CONEXUS Universities' representatives

Country	University's name	Contact person	Contact e-mail
Greece	Agricultural University of Athens (AUA)	Antonios Vlassopoulos	avlassopoulos@aua.gr
Lithuania	Klaipeda University (KU)	Milda Borisovienė	milda.borisoviene@ku.lt
France	La Rochelle Université (LRUniv)	Christelle Tallon	schoolcontest-eu-conexus@univ-lr.fr
Spain	Catholic University of Valencia (UCV)	Raquel Blave	euconexus@ucv.es
Croatia	University of Zadar (UNIZD)	Ivana Zubak Čižmek	izubak@unizd.hr
Romania	Technical University of Civil Engineering of Bucharest (UTCB)	Paul Dancă	paul.danca@utcb.ro
Ireland	South East Technological University (SETU)	Sheila Donegan	sheila.donegan@setu.ie
Cyprus	Frederick university (FredU)	Loutsia Nardi	l.nardi@frederick.ac.cy



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Annex 1 – TEACHER SHORT DOCUMENT CATEGORY 1: **pupils aged 12-14**

One page that includes:

- short description of EU-CONEXUS
- phases and steps
- registration
- project submission formats.

Annex 2 – TEACHER SHORT DOCUMENT CATEGORY 2: **pupils aged 14-17**

One page that includes:

- short description of EU-CONEXUS
- phases and steps
- registration
- project submission formats.

External documents:

- Contest poster on page
- Power point with presentation format
- Report template format