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 **Press Release**

**Active participation of the Agricultural University of Athens in the 1st EU-CONEXUS Scientific Conference in Rostock, Germany.**

The Agricultural University of Athens participated into the 1st Scientific Conference of the European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability *EU-CONEXUS*, which was held on Thursday, November 16 and Friday November 17, 2023 respectively, in Rostock, Germany. The group of the Agricultural University of Athens composed of eighteen (18) people, have taken part in the sessions and discussions held, thus contributing to the permanent goal and continuous mission of the European University Alliance towards sustainable development and cooperation.

At the Scientific Conference of *EU-CONEXUS*, entitled "Marine and Coastal Ecosystems: Challenges and Opportunities towards Sustainable Development", more than 150 people have given their presence, coming from research communities of different scientific backgrounds, getting in contact with each other, with a view to promoting collaboration in the framework of the Alliance, as well as exchanging knowledge and points of view on the sustainability of coastal areas.

 The Invited speakers from prestigious Organizations, such as the Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research (CIIMAR), the Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research (IOW) and the Institute of Marine Biology, Biotechnology and Aquaculture (IMBBC), along with the researchers, coming from the nine (9) partner Universities of *EU-CONEXUS*, have covered key topics of smart urban coastal development. By means of the interdisciplinary sessions, focused on the four (4) major themes of *EU-CONEXUS*, namely “Coastal Engineering”, “Social, Cultural and Human Sciences”, “Life Sciences and Biotechnology”, besides “Environmental Sciences and Biodiversity”, the researchers have had the opportunity to share their ideas and research interests, inasmuch discussing collaborative efforts for smart sustainable urban coastal zone management.

Processes and considerations of the administrative and coordinating bodies of *EU-CONEXUS* had been initiated shortly before, actually since Tuesday, on November 14, 2023. Specifically, the Governing Board, the Research Council, the Academic Council, the Management Board, the Student Board and the External Advisory Board, have gathered in Rostock, Germany, regarding the conduct of productive debates that pertain to the challenges and the future of *EU-CONEXUS*. On top of that, the Rector, Mr. Spyridon Kintzios, Professor, has represented the Agricultural University of Athens, accompanied by the Vice Rector for Academic and Administrative Affairs, Lifelong Learning and Extroversion, Mr. Emmanouil Flemetakis, Professor, the Vice Rector for the European University, Internationalization and Student Affairs, Ms. Helen Miliou, Professor and the Member of the External Advisory Board of *EU-CONEXUS*, Ms. Christina Legaki, Managing Director of Corteva Agriscience, too.

In this sense, the scientific meeting at issue has taken place between the representatives from the nine (9) *EU-CONEXUS* Universities and the significant delegates from industry, inasmuch the administrative authorities of the European Union, in Rostock, Germany, in order to set out on the next chapter of the Alliance of the European University *EU-CONEXUS*. By means of placing education, research and innovation at the core of the discussions generated, such consultations have deepened towards the exchange of good practice among the partners, in addition to addressing challenges related to the involvement of students and researchers in the undertakings performed and the projects implemented on the part of the Alliance. The participants have drawn main conclusions, like the necessity for changes in the national legislative systems upon regularisation and recognition of joint study proposals under the framework of *EU-CONEXUS*, the importance of communication in raising awareness about European Universities, as well as the crucial role of *EU-CONEXUS* in providing professional knowledge and skills to students.

The Agricultural University of Athens remains committed to that Alliance of Universities, having made its contribution to many levels through its know-how and human resources. The ultimate purpose of all the participants has been shaping and planning a sustainable future for the Alliance, which shall make a real difference to the lives of students, researchers and communities alike, on the basis of collective effort.