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EU-CONEXUS and CHARM-EU Become the First European University Alliances to deliver programmes carrying a Joint European Degree Label

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM – July 15, 2026 — Today, at an event hosted by the European Commission, [EU-CONEXUS](#) and [CHARM-EU](#) officially made history by becoming the first two European University alliances to be awarded [the Joint European Degree Label](#).



The label was awarded to two master's degree programmes: the [EU-CONEXUS Joint Master in Marine Biotechnology](#), a 120 ECTS programme coordinated by the [Catholic University of Valencia](#), and [CHARM-EU's Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability](#), a 90 ECTS programme academically led by [Trinity College Dublin](#) and administratively managed by the [University of Barcelona](#).

This milestone recognises the role of European University alliances in developing high-quality joint programmes and testing new models of transnational cooperation, mobility and recognition in European higher education.

The [Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency AQU Catalunya](#) was also recognised at the event as the first quality assurance agency to award this quality label. The assessment process was carried out by AQU Catalunya in cooperation with [UNIBASQ Quality Agency](#).

A New European Label for Joint Transnational Programmes

The Joint European Degree Label is granted to joint programmes delivered through transnational cooperation between higher education institutions in at least two EU Member States or EEA EFTA States.

It recognises programmes with strong joint governance, integrated academic cooperation and a clear European dimension, including sustainability, digital integration, multilingualism, mobility and shared European values.

As a quality assurance and visibility tool, the label helps students, employers and institutions identify high-quality joint programmes with a strong European profile. It is also an important step towards the future development of a possible Joint European Degree.

Celebrating the Milestone in Brussels

The award ceremony featured opening remarks from **Diana Jablonska, Director at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture**, and a keynote address by **Pia Ahrenkilde, Director-General of DG EAC**, who awarded trophies to the two programmes. The programme directors also delivered the European Degree Label certificates to the graduates attending the event.

Roxana Mînzatu, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness, underlined the wider European significance of the programmes recognised with the label:

"Today's award of the first Joint European Degree Labels marks the beginning of a new chapter for European higher education. We are recognising programmes that are designed together, taught together and prepare students to tackle challenges that no country can address alone. And this approach is something truly unique."

The ceremony brought together representatives and graduates from both alliances, including rectors, academic leaders, programme coordinators and students from the two recognised master's programmes.

For the graduates, the label is also a recognition of the international learning experience and the opportunities created by the programme. **Emilie Gober, graduate of the EU-CONEXUS Joint Master in Marine Biotechnology**, said:

"The JMPMB gave us the opportunity to connect with relevant industry partners and learn together in an international environment. The European Degree Label is an excellent acknowledgement of our diverse experiences, and as students, we are honoured to graduate under it."

Professor Jerónimo Chirivella Martorell, Chair of the Master's Programme Board, underlined the importance of the label for the programme and its students:

“Receiving the Joint European Degree Label is a strong recognition of the EU-CONEXUS Joint Master in Marine Biotechnology and of the European cooperation behind it. It confirms that the programme offers students high-quality international education and prepares graduates with the skills needed in the growing blue biotechnology sector.”

Regarding CHARM-EU Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability, **Anouk Ruijters, one of the graduated from the 4th edition of the master's,** said:

“The Joint European Degree Label demonstrates the value of learning across different countries. CHARM-EU is a unique degree, emphasising transdisciplinarity and challenge-based learning to address global sustainability challenges. The label highlights this value, making it more visible to future employers”

Underlining the success of the European Universities Initiative, **Joan Guàrdia, Rector of [the University of Barcelona](#),** states:

“The European university system and its stakeholders have long called for an initiative of this kind, which has successfully mapped out the skills and competencies of a new generation of European graduates. These capabilities are far better adapted to the demands of a changing, globalized job market.”

He also highlights how CHARM-EU has reinforced its partner institutions:

“Furthermore, the network has strengthened the position of participating universities as leading global educational destinations. This helps attract and retain top talent, as demonstrated by the prestigious recognition we are so proud to receive.”

Coinciding with today's award, the European Commission also announced new funding results supporting the further development of joint European study programmes. The EU-CONEXUS Joint Master in Marine Biotechnology has secured €4.6 million under the 2026 Erasmus+ Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters call, and CHARM-EU has been awarded €1 million to accredit additional programmes with the Joint European Degree Label.

About EU-CONEXUS

EU-CONEXUS, the European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability, is an alliance of nine European universities co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme and coordinated by La Rochelle Université. The alliance brings together education, research and innovation to address the social, economic, environmental and technological challenges facing Europe's urban and semi-urban coastal regions.

The EU-CONEXUS Joint Master's Programme in Marine Biotechnology is an international, multidisciplinary, full-time programme coordinated by the Catholic University of Valencia. The 120 ECTS, two-year programme leads to a joint Master of Science in Marine Biotechnology and prepares graduates for the blue biotechnology sector, including applications in health, cosmetics, agri-food, aquaculture and the sustainable use of marine bioresources.

For more information, please visit <https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/> and <https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/marine-biotechnology/>.

About CHARM-EU

CHARM-EU is an alliance of nine European universities co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme and coordinated by the University of Barcelona. The alliance works to create a sustainable, inclusive and challenge-driven higher education model addressing global societal challenges.

The CHARM-EU Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability is an international programme based on challenge-driven, research-based and transdisciplinary learning, with student mobility across different European universities.

For more information, please visit www.charm-eu.eu and <https://charm-eu.eu/learning/educational-offer/master-programme/>.

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