



## **D09.6 – ARQUS PRE-MOBILITY PROGRAMME**

Work Package: 09- **Arqus on the Move**

Dissemination level: public

Arqus II - Arqus Erasmus + Work Plan 2022-2026

(Project number: 101089551)

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## DESCRIPTION

The Arqus Alliance has successfully run **three editions** of its pre-mobility **virtual, interdisciplinary, multilingual and multicultural** exchange programme, [Arqus MoVEs](#), with a pilot edition held in July 2023 and the other two implemented throughout the 2023/24 academic year.

This programme is completely based on remote attendance, with both synchronous and asynchronous activities, and designed for students looking for new learning experiences carried out in an international framework. It is open to both international **degree-seeking** and **exchange students**, as well as **local ones who have not yet had the opportunity to study abroad** but are eager to engage in an intercultural and multilingual setting.

Arqus MoVEs is a tool designed to improve **student mobility** and **internationalization at home**, boost **intercultural competence** (ICC), and develop **global skills**. It supports current ICC trends that connect with **JEDI** (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) initiatives. These trends focus on a holistic approach to learning, stressing the importance of Social-Emotional Learning (**SEL**). The focus is on peer learning and assessment, with students actively participating in their intercultural education. The tool also links **ICC education to real-world issues**, particularly the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, and encourages **activism**. This approach helps students understand global challenges and gain the skills needed to address them effectively.

This initiative is meant to involve students across:

- different academic backgrounds
- different cultures
- different languages
- different ages
- different disciplines
- different time zones

The programme, moreover, aims to connect exchange students, from or visiting an Arqus university, preparing for their upcoming semesters abroad (Autumn/Winter and Spring/Summer).

## FORESEEN LEARNING OUTCOMES

Arqus MoVEs participants gain:

- Enhanced soft skills
- Improved intercultural and global competence
- Increased critical thinking abilities
- Greater awareness of global issues
- Stronger participant cohesion
- Curiosity about other cultures and active listening skills
- Inclusive multilingualism
- Advanced linguistic and digital competences
- Simultaneous practice of multiple languages
- Boosted mobility readiness

## MAIN FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMME

The project includes different communication modes:

- **Many-to-many** communication with the use of multiple languages beyond English
- **Few-to-few** communication through collaborative activities

The programme runs for 8-10 weeks and each edition so far was scheduled before mobile students' departure, which means that activities always tend to conclude before the starting of the academic year or the spring/summer term.

The estimated workload is **2-3 hours per week** and it incorporates, as mentioned, synchronous and asynchronous activities involving confrontation and the completion of cooperation-based tasks.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

Arqus MoVEs is available at no cost to students from Arqus partner universities or doing an exchange hosted by an Arqus partner.

Spots are limited and selection is based on motivation and previous experience, which are recorded through a dedicated application form.

## RECOGNITION AND REQUIREMENTS

Students who meet the following requirements receive a badge, a certificate of participation, and, for outstanding commitment and remarkably active participation, a certificate of award:

- Attend at least 80% of eight/nine of the synchronous online sessions
- Write a final essay on the overall exchange (including a diary of language and culture)
- Participate in collaborative activities (such as infographic creation)
- Comments on their peers' posts and infographics
- Complete several online questionnaires, including pre- and post-exchange surveys, soft skills self-assessments, and overall project evaluations

## PROMOTION

To promote the project across all Arqus universities, the communication team created a poster showcasing the project's features along with the logo and the **motto**, "**Growing Together in Diversity.**" The poster also includes the **quote**, "*We are mosaics - pieces of love, history, stars - glued together with magic and music and words,*" by Anita Krishan, to convey the essence of the project.

GROWING TOGETHER IN DIVERSITY



“We are mosaics - pieces of light, love, history, stars - glued together with magic and music and words.”  
-Anita Krishan

## VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

INTERDISCIPLINARY

MULTILINGUAL

MULTICULTURAL



Participants will work **online collaboratively** with students coming from various countries to enhance their **soft skills, intercultural, linguistic and digital competence** and get prepared for **physical mobility**.

### GOALS

Prepare for an INTERNATIONAL STUDY ABROAD PERIOD


The project will last from 8 to 10 weeks. Students' workload is estimated around 2/3 hours/week and combines synchronous and asynchronous activities.

Enhance and foster  
**SOFT SKILLS**

Boost  
**STUDENT'S MOBILITY**

Promote  
**INCLUSIVE MULTILINGUALISM**


Stimulate  
**interest in GLOBAL ISSUES**



STUDENTS

DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS  
CULTURES  
LANGUAGES  
COMPETENCES  
DISCIPLINES  
TIME-ZONES

## TOPICS



### WHEN

twice a year,  
prior to  
departure

1ST SEMESTER ARRIVALS:  
**>>>>**  
**JUN - JUL**

2ND SEMESTER ARRIVALS:  
**>>>>**  
**NOV - FEB**

### PLATFORMS AND ACTIVITIES

Students will communicate in different ways:

- communication many-to-many (multiple languages)
- communication few-to-few (collaborative activities)



### LANGUAGE BUBBLES

To boost multilingualism, other than English, several other languages will be used within language bubbles, pushing intercomprehension towards seemingly related languages such as romance, germanic or slavic languages.



### WHAT WILL STUDENTS GAIN?

Students who will be punctual in meeting the following requirements\*\*\*\*, will be given a **badge**, a **certificate of participation** and even a **certificate of award** if they will distinguish themselves in terms of commitment as well as of active participation.



### \*\*\*\*REQUIREMENTS:

- hand in at least 1 diary of language and culture
- contribute to at least 6 discussions on the ecommunity platform
- write a final essay on the overall exchange
- participate to at least 4 synchronous online sessions (out of 9)
- participate to at least 3 collaborative activities (creation of infographics)
- fill in online several questionnaires: pre and post exchange soft skills self-assessment questionnaires overall evaluation of the project questionnaire


### WANT TO TAKE PART?

We are waiting for you!  
Register here



<https://forms.gle/wFA4T5oat22379o>

For further info please reach:  
[moves@arqus-alliance.eu](mailto:moves@arqus-alliance.eu)



European University Alliance

Co-funded by  
the European Union 

CALLS PUBLISHED ON THE ARQUS WEBSITE

<https://arqus-alliance.eu/call/arqus-moves-virtual-exchanges/>

<https://arqus-alliance.eu/call/arqus-moves-1st-edition/>

<https://arqus-alliance.eu/call/arqus-moves-2nd-edition/>

PROGRAMME: METHODOLOGY, CONTENT AND FORM

This virtual initiative focuses on advancing the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** across social, environmental, and economic dimensions. Over the course of eight/nine online meetings, the focus extends beyond **diversity, equity, inclusion, human rights, and eco-sustainability** to also include the development of **intercultural and global competence** to prepare participants for their future international mobility.. The following paragraphs will explore the programme through four levels: **intercultural, methodological, linguistic, and technological.**

INTERCULTURAL LEVEL

Intercultural competence relies on developing intercultural awareness, which is crucial for enhancing understanding among diverse groups. A **common metaphor** likens this concept to an **iceberg**, where the visible tip represents surface-level cultural elements, while the submerged part signifies underlying beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, and feelings. Focusing only on observable aspects of culture provides a limited, superficial understanding of others, constrained to visible actions and expressions. To achieve a genuine understanding and connection, learners must explore beyond these surface-level elements. While examining **visible cultural elements** such as music, food, language, art, dress, books and movies is important, addressing **controversial global topics**—such as gender issues, the role of media, social inequalities, AI impact and climate change—provides a more nuanced and comprehensive grasp of varied perspectives.

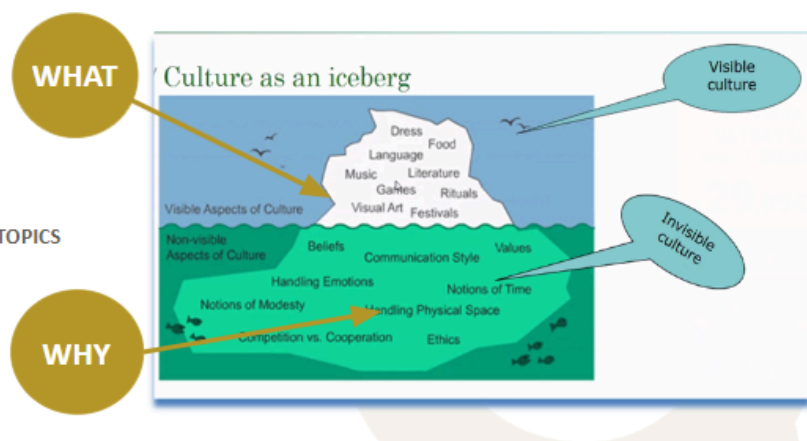
FOSTERING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

NEUTRAL TOPICS

- TRADITIONS
- MUSIC
- FOOD
- LANGUAGE
- BOOKS
- ART
- ...

GLOBAL & CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

- GENDER GAPS
- SOCIAL INEQUALITIES
- CLIMATE CHANGE
- TECHNOLOGY AND AI
- ROLE OF MEDIA
- ...



EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES



**List of activities content:** (The order of the items has changed across the 3 editions and will continue to change depending on the time period and current global, controversial, and critical news; the following list is based on edition 2)

**1st week:** technological and social familiarization: we are mosaics growing together in diversity

**2nd week:** Food Padlet (strangest food, I love animals, sustainable food and gig economy etc.)

**3rd week:** Art Padlet (if you were an artwork what would you be?, the art of climate protest, the art of artificial intelligence etc.)

**4th week:** Dress Padlet (appearance idioms, dress code and fast/slow fashion, clothes idioms etc.)

**5th week:** Music Padlet (what kind of music are you?, music and gender - director, not directress, are you a good listener?, Why is active listening so important?, etc.)

**6th week:** Language Padlet (ableist language, inclusive language, language idioms, idioms and nationalities, cultural, social and economic gaps, etc.)

**7th week:** Books and Movies Padlet (chit chatting about books and reading, chit chatting about tv, movies and series, 3 things you are good or not at doing, what soft skills are needed for the AI age?, normalizing failure, etc.)

**8th week:** cultural activities and infographics presentations (superstitions, how rude was that?, cultural etiquette, hypothetical situations, etc.)



**9th week:** final meeting - cultural activities (culture shock, culture symbols, which fruit are you?) and overall feedback on the project.

#### METHODOLOGICAL LEVEL

All prompts are designed in alignment with the principles of **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**. The incorporation of both **visual and textual** elements is essential for ensuring accessibility and catering to diverse learning styles and preferences, thereby fostering an inclusive and enriching experience for all participants. Additionally, inputs are presented in a thought-provoking manner to stimulate **dialogue rather than debate**. This approach encourages participants to understand and respect differing viewpoints rather than persuading others to adopt their own opinions.

#### LINGUISTIC LEVEL

Language is fundamental in promoting **diversity and inclusion, with inclusive multilingualism** being a crucial yet often underestimated component.

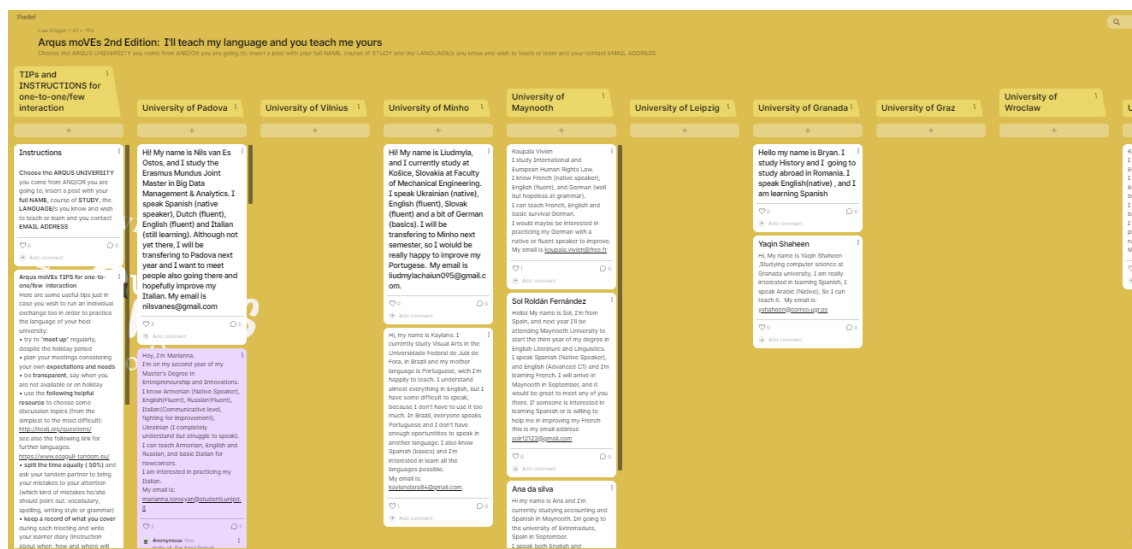
Umberto Eco, a very important Italian philosopher and novelist, aptly expressed this notion, stating that a truly inclusive multilingual Europe is not about mastering multiple languages but about people understanding each other's languages while speaking their own (Eco, 1993, p. 355). This concept of intercomprehension fosters inclusivity without requiring complete fluency.

This principle applies globally, especially among languages with common features, such as **Romance, Germanic, and Slavic languages**. Recognizing these linguistic similarities enables individuals to express themselves more freely and convey subtle nuances, thus enhancing communication and understanding in diverse settings.

This understanding underpins the creation of various **language bubbles** designed to support and facilitate effective communication across various language groups. In online sessions, facilitators use breakout rooms, such as "Romance Languages Bubble" or "Slavic Languages Bubble," to allow participants to practice languages other than English.

Additionally, to promote **multilingualism and help students better integrate** at their host universities, participants are encouraged to share their contact information on a specific Padlet platform named **'I'll teach my language and you will teach me yours'**. On a voluntary basis, they can **add their details to the relevant section for each allied university**, as illustrated in the Padlet image below, which also provides tips for fostering interaction among language and university partners.

[https://unipd.padlet.org/Lisa\\_Griggio/argus-moves-2nd-edition-i-ll-teach-my-language-and-you-teach-g42w094kqx7c8y0h](https://unipd.padlet.org/Lisa_Griggio/argus-moves-2nd-edition-i-ll-teach-my-language-and-you-teach-g42w094kqx7c8y0h)

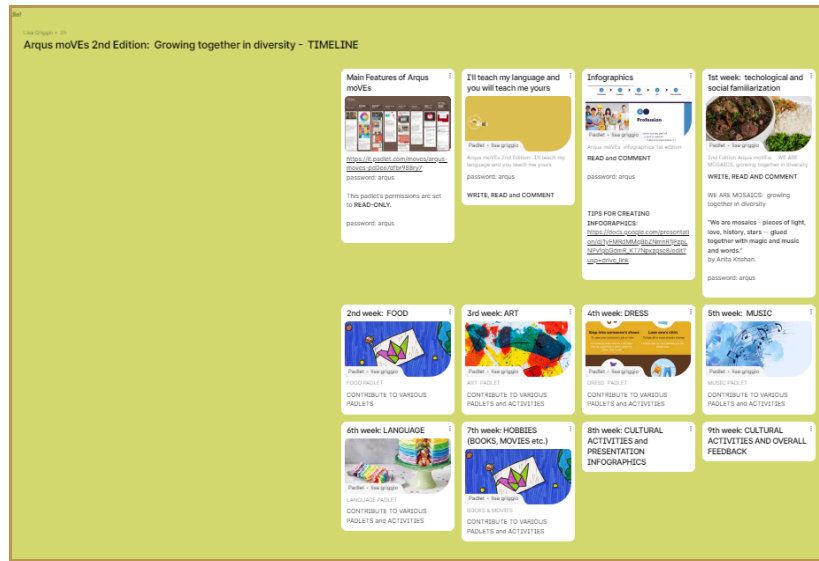


## TECHNOLOGICAL LEVEL

Over three editions of Arqus Moves, we used various tools. We noticed that students preferred synchronous meetings via Zoom, so **we increased the number of online meetings and reduced the use of asynchronous platforms**. The tools evolved over time based on student preferences to enhance their engagement. During the pilot edition, Facebook, Padlet, and Google Classroom, WhatsApp were all used for asynchronous communication and activities. However, Google Classroom was dropped after the pilot edition due to account management difficulties. In the first edition, we discontinued the use of Facebook as participants found it antiquated. During the second edition, we **exclusively used the Padlet and WhatsApp platform** because participants expressed a preference for them.

The main **Padlet platform** below contains additional Padlet platforms where students share their insights, opinions, feelings, and emotions.

[https://unipd.padlet.org/Lisa\\_Griggio/arqus-moves-2nd-edition-growing-together-in-diversity-timeli-aki-ygygblaf7eubo](https://unipd.padlet.org/Lisa_Griggio/arqus-moves-2nd-edition-growing-together-in-diversity-timeli-aki-ygygblaf7eubo)



## INSIGHTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

Here are some insights from the participants, collected from their **final reflection essays**:

*Violeta: "...it's undoubtedly a truly **enriching and transformative experience**... the programme opened doors to a world of possibilities and perspectives that exceeded all my expectations... memorable moments allowed us to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity... **the chosen topics were relevant and stimulating** and the structure of activities allowed active participation from all involved. The discussion session and presentations of topics were conducted professionally and thoughtfully...**my experience in Arqus MoVEs was invaluable**". The best thing about this virtual exchange was the opportunity to meet students from around the world and share their unique perspectives and experiences. Through this digital platform, we connected and collaborated, **breaking down geographical barriers and expanding our horizons**. The cost-efficiency and flexibility of the virtual format allowed for **greater inclusivity, making it accessible** to a wider range of individuals. This exchange not only enriched our understanding of different cultures and viewpoints but also showcased the potential of technology to foster meaningful global connections*

*Simone "I learned the value of **diversity, the importance of actively listening** without judgment, and the significance of **cross-cultural understanding**. Arqus moVEs improved global awareness, enhanced critical thinking abilities, expanded networks, strengthened adaptability, and developed teamwork skills." "I felt **very enthusiastic every session that I attended**... it really helped me to relax about **my Erasmus** and get excited about my departure. I **would really suggest this project even to people who are not planning a physical mobility**. I have surely learnt active listening and respect others opinion, even if it differs from mine"*

*Kateryna: "Honestly, I **didn't feel like a foreigner in this stream**, I was like a puzzle in this **wonderful ecosystem** of thoughts. It was **truly magical** how everyone was immersed in the conversation, how each person was interested in each other, which makes **this experience unique** in the world of social media and fake communication."*

Enrique: "It's a **beautiful linguistic and cultural dance** between two or more parts"

Richie "...the actual programme still managed to **surprise and amaze** me with its depth and breadth...it introduced me to a world of possibilities, **inspiring an insatiable curiosity** for culture".

Diletta: "The idea behind it is **impressive**..."

We have summarized additional feedback using the key terms in the following **word clouds**:

*expanding our horizons*  
I would really suggest this project  
*it really helped me to relax about my Erasmus*  
I soon realized how rewarding these virtual experiences can be  
the screen became our window to the world  
it helped me get excited about my departure  
breaking down geographical barriers  
freedom of speaking

UNEXPECTED REVEALING VALUABLE  
REWARDING ENRICHING SURPRISING  
AMUSING OPEN-MINDING  
STIMULATING

We also gathered their feedback anonymously at the end of each online session using **Jamboard**, a virtual whiteboard, where everyone could add their comments on the meeting and see their peers' comments:

Write your comments on TODAY's meeting:  
Sum it up with one word or a sentence  
Which are your takeaways?  
What did you like?  
What did you dislike?  
What have learnt from your mates?

22nd and 23rd July 2024

failure culture is very impactful

Really nice topics, love the resilience one!

Being resilience is more important for professional and personal growth

normalizing failure is so important

Very important topics and amazing atmosphere!

failure can feel very lonely but everybody experiences it

interesting topics! resilience is very important in every aspect

Everyone has their insecurities, so we shouldn't be afraid to talk about our feelings.

interesting topic about the IA and the skills

Bamboo is known for its ability to bend without breaking. This represents how resilient people can adapt to difficult situations and stress without being overwhelmed.

I appreciated the open discussions about personal experiences with failure

You learn more by failing than by succeeding on the first try, but it can be hard on your moral and self-esteem, so it's important to take care of yourself. <3

interesting topic, learn new information today

you get a job with hard skills but keeping it depends on the soft skills

Interesting topics especially the one about Failure!

Wrap Up / collection of thoughts about Arqus ...

4th-5th September 2023  
AI-related issues and soft skills

INSTRUCTIONS:  
Pick up a sticky note (4th icon down) and write on it.  
Write your comments on TODAY's meeting:  
Sum it up with one word or a sentence  
Which are your takeaways?  
What did you like?  
What did you dislike?  
What have you learnt from your mates?  
...  
COMMENTS ARE ANONYMOUS

Very interesting topic and ideas transmitted among others :)

Loved the open discussion and creative thinking from everyone

the topic is extremely relevant and thus a good one to engage in discussions upon.

Interesting and very up-to-date topics!

very interesting! I found it important to point out how soft skills are becoming more and more important

I loved the session, very very interesting. I'd like more hot topics like this one. In summary, there's a lot of work to do in order to grow as human species helped by this tech

I really liked today's topic, I think it's something all people have an opinion, and it's a controversial topic, but not in a way can make some people feel bad for their opinion :)

A very extensive topic with very good points raised

the most interesting meeting so far

I was not very interested in it but I learnt a lot of things and actually I discovered a new important topic

Write your comments on TODAY's meeting:  
Sum it up with one word or a sentence  
Which are your takeaways?  
What did you like?  
What did you dislike?  
What have learnt from your mates?

15-16 JULY 2024

It was a lovely conversation, we were able to see many different points of view

interesting topic, learn more new knowledge today

The group today was small and very engaging. Everyone was able to share the feelings openly

Really interesting session. Loved the topics. Very thought-provoking!! :))

Eye opener

It was so cool to discuss various topics, I loved it!

Time well spent, very nice group and interesting discussions :)

It was a great discussion with a lot of food for thought

It was enlightening to explore how the "Matilda effect" and "glass ceiling" impact professional opportunities for women in various fields

Arsenal for the league

There were such a sensitive topics but it was really fun to talk about it

It was nice opportunity to know about different cultures.

Interesting ideas from different countries to learn about their cultures

Super interesting topic, loved to hear my mates point of view

Everyone has their insecurities, so we shouldn't be afraid to talk about our feelings.

very controversial, so interesting and mind blowing

Nice time, interesting discussion

these topics can be controversial and it's nice to discuss with other cultures

Moreover, we used **Google Forms** to track participants' performance and assess the format, topics, and atmosphere of each session. The majority of feedback was overwhelmingly positive and encouraging:

### EXTRACT OF THE GOOGLE FORM

08/11/2023 16:53:19	5	5	4	5	5	5	great! thank you
08/11/2023 16:53:21	4	3	4	5	4	5	not at the moment
08/11/2023 16:53:26	4	3	3	4	3	3	Exciting
08/11/2023 16:53:30	5	5	5	5	5	5	Participants were a bit shy but I guess is normal for a first meeting
08/11/2023 16:53:35	5	4	4	5	4	5	Very enriching!
08/11/2023 16:53:52	4	4	4	4	4	3	Might be too long and people kept getting distracted. But all in all, it was good as an introduction.
08/11/2023 16:53:54	5	5	4	4	5	5	Great introduction!
08/11/2023 16:53:57	5	4	5	5	5	5	Im excited for the following sessions! Seems like a friendly community ~
08/11/2023 16:54:04	4	4	4	4	4	4	interactive
08/11/2023 16:54:31	4	4	4	4	4	4	NICE
08/11/2023 16:54:56	4	5	4	4	4	4	It's a good start and I hope we are able to achieve the objectives for the VE.
08/11/2023 16:56:42	5	4	4	5	4	4	It was a room full with kindness and helpful people
08/11/2023 16:57:29	5	5	5	5	5	5	Its great Thx for host and all of us.
07/11/2023 12:28:17	4	4	3	5	3	5	Very interesting
07/11/2023 12:29:27	3	3	3	4	3	3	Behause of the online Setting, it was at first hard to have a nice conversation. But I think that will get better, and the topics will also get more profound over time
07/11/2023 12:47:41	5	5	4	4	5	5	I like that we get to talk to new people and make friends
07/11/2023 12:49:29	3	4	3	3	4	2	It was great experience it's main purpose to great harmony across the world
07/11/2023 13:24:42	3	3	2	4	3	4	It was quite lengthy
07/11/2023 13:47:45	4	4	2	4	3	5	Mo
08/11/2023 11:49:21	5	5	5	5	5	5	Super, want more !!!
08/11/2023 11:49:28	4	4	4	3	4	4	Everything was fine. 😊
08/11/2023 11:49:55	5	5	5	5	5	5	Really enjoy a lot and get a lot exposure and experience from the sessions
08/11/2023 11:50:01	5	5	5	5	5	5	It was a nice opportunity thank you!
08/11/2023 11:50:11	4	3	3	4	4	5	Good start, good selection of a relevanttopic
08/11/2023 11:50:12	4	4	5	5	5	4	Sometimes I didn't hear anything because people have a problem with microphones. This session was really interesting, thank you!
08/11/2023 11:50:31	3	5	4	4	3	2	everything is quite good.
08/11/2023 11:51:48	5	5	5	5	5	5	It was a nice warming-up and informative session. Looking forward to the upcoming ones!
08/11/2023 11:57:11	5	4	4	5	5	5	I didn't really have an idea of how the meeting would take place, but it was really cool! The break-out rooms system is super to talk with a few people, and make it easier to share our thoughts. I am quite shy and don't dare to talk in another language usually, but today, I tried and even if it was a just for a short time, I am proud of myself for this. I really hope it will get better during other sessions!
08/11/2023 11:58:38	4	5	5	4	5	5	I'd love more time with the other participants (our breakout session was really interesting but a little short)
08/11/2023 12:00:05	5	5	5	5	5	5	I liked it very much. I felt accepted and less stressed about being in Erasmus+
08/11/2023 12:00:07	4	4	4	4	4	4	It was good, but I am waiting for more interesting and challenging parts
08/11/2023 12:00:39	5	5	4	5	5	5	Culturally encouraging
08/11/2023 12:00:42	3	4	4	3	3	4	There was not many interaction in the group room, but I think it is because everybody is getting used to the format
08/11/2023 12:01:08	5	5	5	5	5	5	very cool! excited for the new meetings
08/11/2023 12:03:38	4	2	4	5	3	4	The session was so fast
08/11/2023 12:07:16	4	4	5	5	5	5	looking forward to more adventures
08/11/2023 12:08:17	4	4	4	4	4	5	Very nice and positive environment, better than I thought!
08/11/2023 12:09:12	5	5	4	5	5	5	It was a good experience, and I am looking forward for the next steps
08/11/2023 12:20:39	3	4	3	2	4	3	can't wait to engage in discussions!
08/11/2023 14:47:57	4	4	4	4	4	4	It was nice meeting a bunch of new people
08/11/2023 14:48:03	3	4	3	4	3	4	Maybe we still need some more time to get used to the format, because now it was a little hard for us to open up to talk
08/11/2023 14:49:40	5	5	4	4	5	4	No critiques to be made. Personally, I couldn't finish the session due to my work schedule.
08/11/2023 15:16:12	5	5	5	5	5	5	Do Great things with all of you. Thx!*
08/11/2023 16:02:25	5	5	5	5	5	5	All great!
13/11/2023 16:52:34	5	3	4	5	5	5	Excellent

### RESULTS

At the end of the project, we distributed two different questionnaires: one evaluation questionnaire aimed at gathering **overall feedback** on the project, and a post-exchange **soft skills** questionnaire designed to help participants identify their strengths and weaknesses.

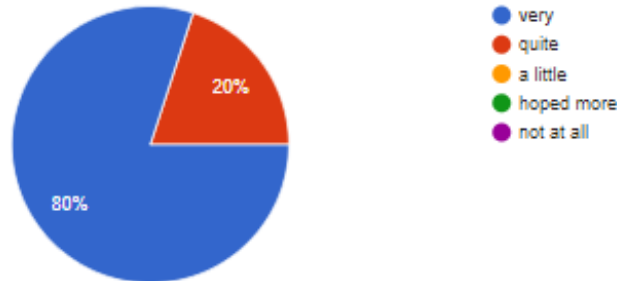
### OVERALL FEEDBACK ON THE PROJECT

As shown in the following graphs, 80% of respondents from the pilot and 1st edition (2nd edition participants have not responded yet to the moment this document has been produced), found this initiative to be very useful from a cultural perspective. In particular, this experience was valuable for gaining a better understanding of other cultures and for learning more about global issues. They got

along well with their peers, although they reported having difficulty with scheduling meetings and experienced an unequal distribution of workload.

### Culturally speaking, was this experience useful?

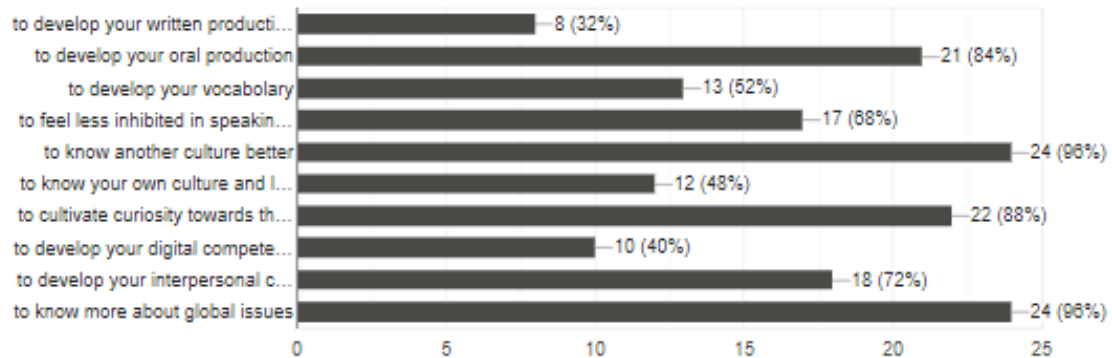
25 responses



### This experience was useful ... (you can select more than one)

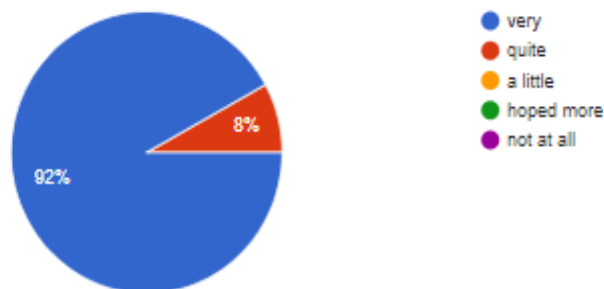


25 responses



### Did you get on well with your mate/s?

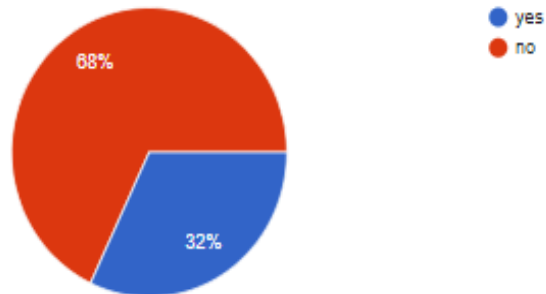
25 responses



### Was there anything that didn't work?

 Copy

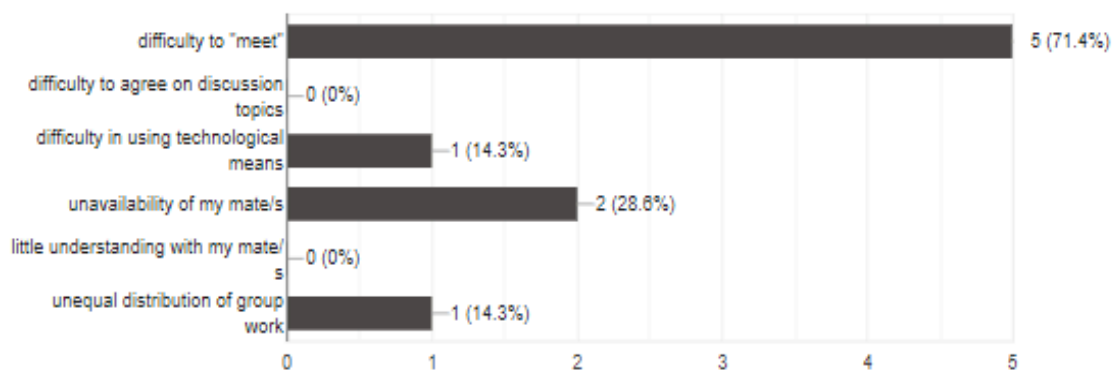
25 responses



### If yes, what?

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7 responses



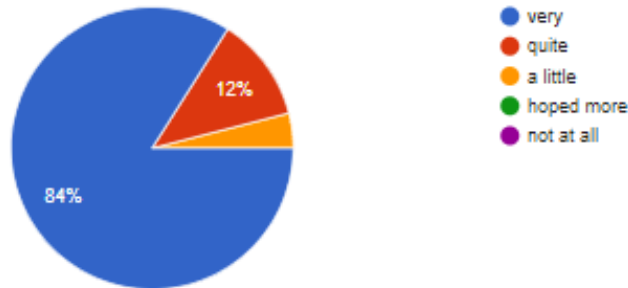
96% of the 25 respondents found the topics covered during the online sessions to be **very or quite interesting**. They preferred focusing on subjects such as food, eating and sustainability, stereotypes and prejudices, climate change, gender-related issues, and artificial intelligence. Additionally, the majority (80%) would strongly recommend that a colleague or friend participate in it. 96% assessed their experience overall as **very or quite useful**, and 92% felt **more confident about going abroad**.





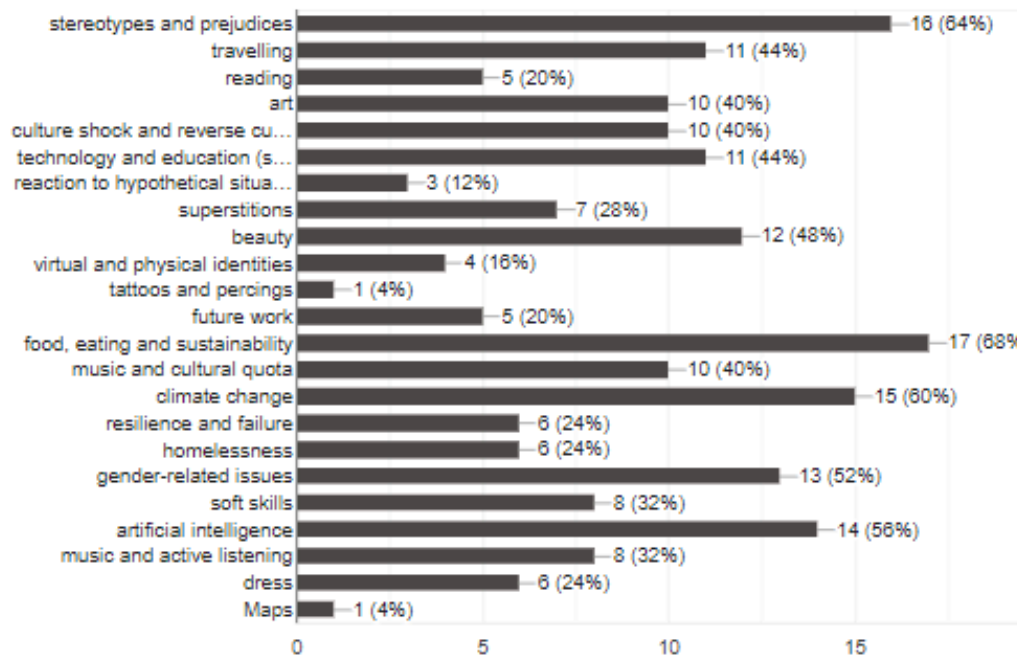
### How interesting do you find the topics proposed in the online sessions as well as in the e-community?

25 responses



### Which topic(s) did you prefer?

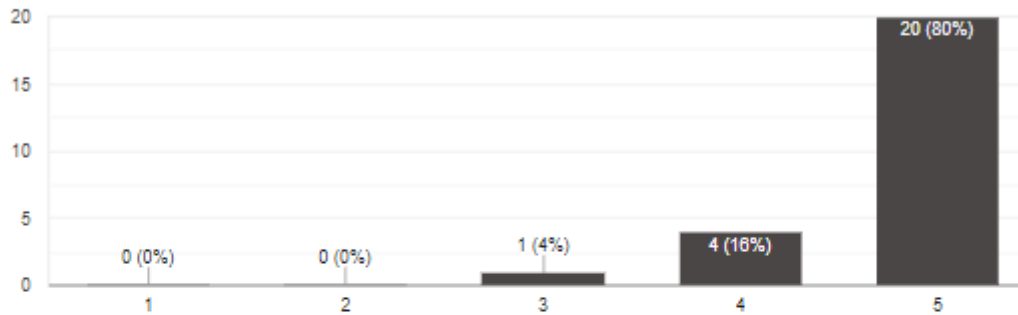
25 responses




How likely is it that you would recommend this virtual exchange to a friend or colleague?

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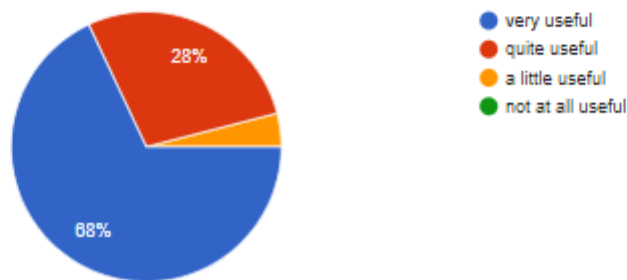
25 responses



How would you assess this experience globally?

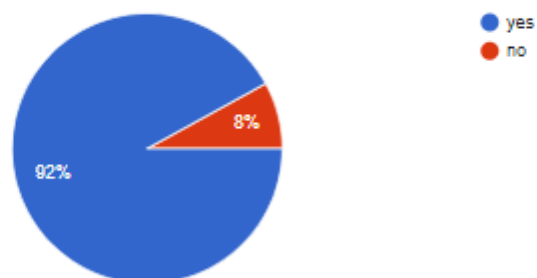
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25 responses



After this experience, do you feel more confident about going abroad in the setting of a student mobility?

25 responses

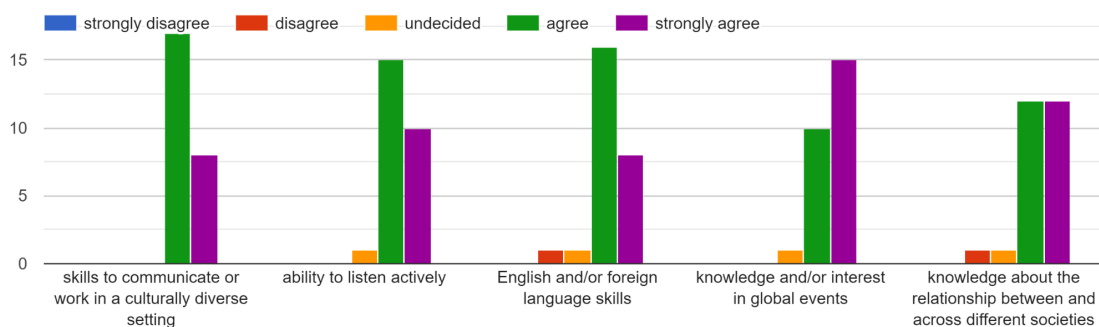


## POST-VIRTUAL EXCHANGE SOFT SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT

The post-virtual exchange soft skills self-assessment confirms the above: students improved their **knowledge and interest in global issues**, as well as their **ability to listen actively, work, and communicate in a culturally diverse setting**.

The questionnaire explored various dimensions, including intercultural, linguistic, methodological, social, personal, and digital. Here, we will report only a few data points related to the intercultural and social dimensions, as these are the most relevant. Respondents reported that, unlike at the beginning of the exchange, they were now able to see things from the other person's point of view and be considerate of their needs. They also noted that they treated their team members with respect and listened carefully to what others had to say. Additionally, they became more skilled at tailoring their messages to suit the person they were speaking to.

Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. Participating in this virtual exchange improved my:



## AMBASSADORS AND TUTORS

The number of people actively involved in implementing ARQUS moVEs initiatives has varied across the three editions. In contrast to the pilot edition, where only two language students from the University of Padova served as tutors, subsequent editions have seen **internship students** take on the tutor role. Additionally, several previous participants have been **invited to volunteer as both ambassadors and tutors**. All individuals involved received **specialized training**, which contributed to establishing a **sustainable structure** for the project and empowering students with responsibilities.

## CHALLENGES

### 1. STUDENTS ENGAGEMENT

Maintaining participant engagement until the project's completion, so they could earn a virtual badge and a certificate of participation, proved to be a significant challenge. Each edition saw a reasonable number of participants actively involved throughout the pathway, provided the availability of facilitators/tutors for each edition. The number of participants who stayed engaged until the end is shown by the table here below:

	active and engaged students attending at least one meeting	students eligible for a virtual badge/ certificate of participation	Percentage of students completing the course	infographics
<b>pilot edition</b>	40	20	50%	<a href="#">16</a>
<b>1st edition</b>	75	17	23%	<a href="#">27</a>
<b>2nd edition</b>	70	30 (TBC)	43% (TBC)	<a href="#">39</a>

This decline might be due to the **lack of academic credit recognition, as this is an informal/non-formal project.**

Further studies are currently being carried out by the task force, which is investigating the reasons behind withdrawals by contacting the concerned participants.

Meanwhile different strategies have already been taken into account and implemented after the first edition to tackle this challenge:

- As specified above, previous participants have been invited to volunteer as both ambassadors and tutors.
- In the last edition, tutors were asked to facilitate **additional sessions** alongside plenary ones, **focused exclusively to support and guide participants in creating groups and developing infographics.** They provided students with precise and detailed instructions, which proved to be a successful solution.
- We **doubled the number of meetings** by holding two identical sessions at different times (one in the morning and one in the afternoon, Rome Time) to accommodate students from various time zones, allowing them to choose the most convenient slot.
- We organized an **infographic contest** where students could participate with their individual as well as collective artifacts.
- We selected topics that **were both timely and relevant to students**, closely tied to the latest trends and hot news, with the aim of sparking engaging discussions and fostering a lively and vibrant dialogue.
- We adjusted our interactive setting to match their preferences: they favored the **synchronous format** over the asynchronous one.

However, we believe that offering **official recognition**, such as in the framework of a **micro-credential**, would boost both participation and completion rates in the programme.

## 2. IMBALANCED ORIGIN OF APPLICANTS/PARTICIPANTS

The pilot edition saw a limited participation in terms of partners represented in the applications, but that experience was fundamental to study and duly take into account some crucial dynamics:

- the relation between participants from a given university and the number of mobile students coming from or moving to that same university and the fact that the first aspect can heavily affect the latter;
- the propensity of degree seeking students, provided their numerosity among applicants, to join an activity involving interculturality and networking;
- the importance of cultivating the awareness of Arqus officers about the potentials of this project, for the sake of their future role as multipliers at their home institutions.

The diversity of applicants has remarkably grown during the 3 editions but there is room for improvement.

The three considerations listed above are the ground we are moving from to reach even more appreciable results. The building of a moVEs community within Arqus, as well as, in a more operative sense and as explained in the last chapter, the definition of a common communication strategy, are among the key actions to let Arqus moVEs reach out to a wider audience.

### 3. PRESENCE OF STUDENTS BELONGING TO COUNTRIES IN WAR

Given the current delicate geopolitical situations, having students from some specific countries involved in the programme and even maybe having them work together can be quite challenging. After having experienced some difficulties in facilitating the collaboration between a few Ukraine and Russian students without engaging in pre-constructed judgments towards each other or in aggressive debates, we instituted **golden rules** (see below) to foster vibrant and respectful communication on our online platforms, including both **WhatsApp and Padlet**. This approach worked smoothly and proved to be effective.

#### **WHATSAPP/PADLET GOLDEN RULES:**

Those who **do not embrace the spirit of this project and do not adhere to the following fundamental rules** are kindly asked not to join this group:

- Avoid using the group as a political platform.**
- Everyone can express their opinion, but please ALWAYS remember to use polite and respectful manners**
- Stay on topic and avoid sharing irrelevant messages.**
- Think before you post, and avoid responding hastily**

## STATS AND FURTHER INSIGHTS

The initiative was promoted mainly, but not exclusively, as an opportunity for mobile students. The number of applicants per edition, as mentioned above, has been increasing. The number of applicants who are not embarking in an international mobility programme remained very limited in all editions. The only exception was edition 1, with a consistent representative of non-mobile students from Vilnius (13 out of 18).

	Pilot edition	Edition 1	Edition 2
<b>N° of applicants</b>	87	141	165
<b>N° of non-mobile students</b>	7	18	7

On the application form we asked applicants to state if they were full students from an Arqus university or students from outside the Alliance but about to start an exchange hosted by one of our institutions. In the charts here below, the distribution of applicants have thus been represented according to the university they were connected with, whether home or host one.

## NOTES AND CONCLUSIONS

In the pilot edition we had 3 applicants not connected to Arqus in any way, who maybe received information about the programme from some classmates. They were the only ones not accepted in the programme, as no selection was actually made on others.

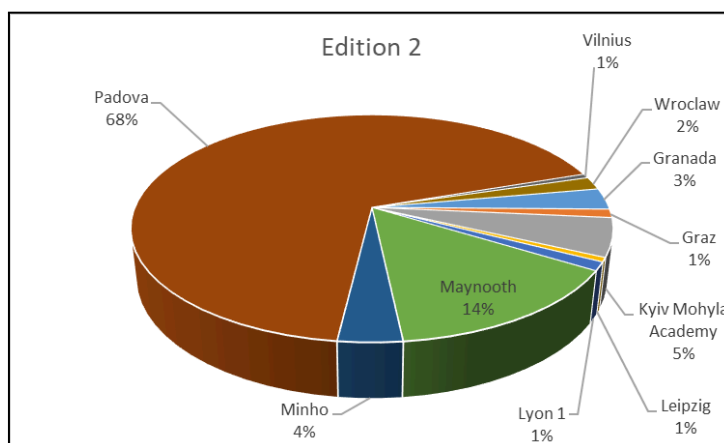
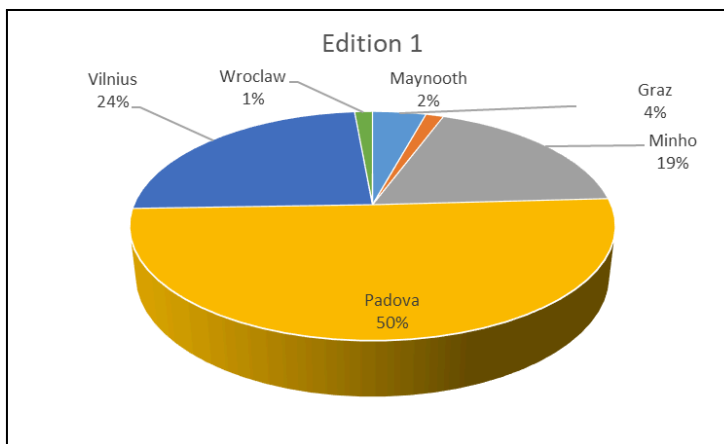
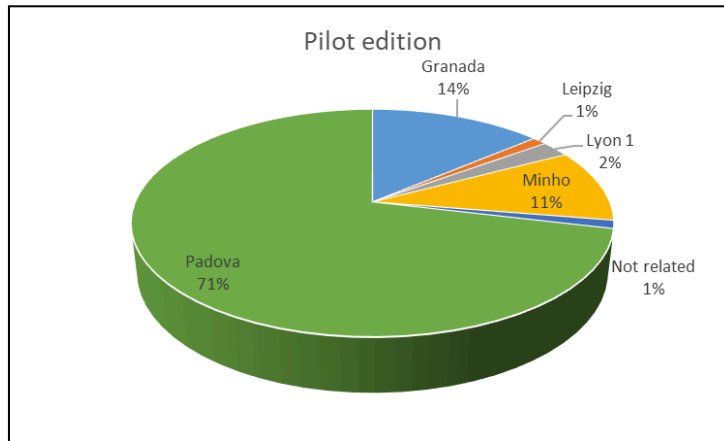
The selection process was conceived to tackle possible mismatches between actual applicants and the capacity of the group of facilitators, according to its consistency and capability to deal with a limited number of participants. Provided the experience gained by the working group in similar contexts (free of charge and no credit-awarding programmes), we estimated in a rate next to 50% the natural tendency of applicants to limit their commitment to just the application itself. On the basis of this assumption, no selections were carried out given the responses gathered during the opening of the different calls for application. In fact the students who initially applied have always been much more than those who, in the end, decided to attend the kick off meeting and to actually participate in at least one of the activities, which aspect confirmed the forecast above mentioned.

In general the variety of applying students has increased since the pilot edition. Thanks to the collaboration between partners, we have managed to reach a representative of applicants from each university. In the promotion of the second edition, the associate partner Mohyla Academy was as well activated and their students reacted positively to this new opportunity.

The consistency of applicants from each partner can still improve and the Working Group is considering different strategies to reach this goal:

- creating a common communication strategy based on good practices collected during this first phase and involving former participants as ambassadors (see dedicated chapter above) to play a pivotal role in the dissemination of results;

- expand the target group involving more non-mobile students, especially at those partner universities where the response was less enthusiastic so far.



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