D11.1: Report on participation in student and staff language development activities

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Table of contents

Introduction 3

Objectives and status on progress 3

Challenges, deviations and mitigation measures 4

Progress made by WG11 Towards the main objectives of the Alliance work plan 5

Tasks 6

Milestones 7

Deliverables 8

Summary and main highlights 8

INTRODUCTION

The Arqus Plurilingual and Intercultural Hub, established under Working Group 11 (WG 11), supports the Alliance's commitment to fostering plurilingualism, intercultural understanding and respect for linguistic and cultural diversity. Throughout the Arqus II funding period, the Hub has brought together students and staff from across the Alliance through a broad range of language learning, development and intercultural activities, while also creating and expanding resources and tools to support lifelong plurilingual and intercultural learning.

This deliverable, D11.1 *Report on participation in student and staff language development activities*, provides an overview of participation in the activities developed and implemented by WG 11 during the Arqus II period. It focuses in particular on progress towards enhancing the plurilingual competence of Arqus students and staff. In addition, it considers how these activities have contributed to intercultural competence and the broader objectives of the Alliance Work Plan.

The report presents the progress achieved against the relevant objectives and participation targets and also provides an overview of the challenges encountered and the measures taken to address these. It then describes the implementation of the main tasks and activities, including the Arqus Cafés, language courses, online programmes, communities of practice and resources for lifelong learning. The final sections give an overview of milestones and deliverables and highlight the main achievements and developments WG 11 has made over the reporting period.

Taken together, the activities described in this report demonstrate the wide range of opportunities developed across the Alliance to engage students and staff in language learning, intercultural exchange and cross-institutional collaboration. They also provide a basis for reflecting on the conditions needed to sustain and further develop plurilingual and intercultural initiatives beyond the current funding period.

OBJECTIVES AND STATUS ON PROGRESS

Objective 1: To enhance plurilingual competence of Arqus students and staff

The measure of this objective is based on the active participation of students and staff in the activities organised that are related to language and plurilingualism and underscores the impact of these initiatives in fostering plurilingual competence. This objective has been **successfully completed,** as planned activities have positively benefited a large number of both students and staff.

Over the four-year evaluation period, total student participation increased by 35.56%, from an adjusted baseline target of 720 students (600 base plus a 20% initial benchmark) to 976 students in 2025–2026, down from a peak of 1,293 in 2024–2025. This represents an equivalent annual growth rate of 7.90% per year, following an initial target trajectory of 20%. At the staff level, academic staff participation grew by 218.33%, expanding from the 120-member target baseline to 382 staff members in 2025–2026. This is an equivalent annual growth rate of 47.10% per year, significantly outpacing the original target. Professional staff participation reached 113 members in the final year, representing a 5.83% decrease relative to the 120-member target baseline. Despite a slow start in the 2022–2023 academic year (AY) for all groups, rapid expansion in the 23–24 and 24–25 AYs drove major scale, with academic and student participation peaking in the 24–25 AY before moderating in the 25–26 AY.

Objective 2: **To enhance intercultural competence of Arqus students and staff for democratic citizenship**

This objective is considered partially achieved even though the indicators for measuring it do not fully apply. Despite this, substantial progress has been made through a series of planned activities and meetings as well the establishment of communities of practice, all of which enhance intercultural competence. For example, the Community of Practice Network of Language Centre Directors met in Granada in June 2025 to work on the intercultural aspects offered in the Plurilingualism Module. Additionally, the Handbook on recognition of plurilingual/intercultural competence (D11.2) has been completed, and the Plurilingualism Module completed its pilot phase in October 2024 with nearly 40 student participants and its first full phase in January 2026 with 35 student participants. Further details on these initiatives can be found in the deliverables section below.

Objective 3: To develop multilingual Arqus resources and tools

This objective has been achieved in terms of timeline adherence and project completion. The objective is structured around specific tasks, deliverables and activities, all of which were completed in accordance with the work plan. Key products, available on WP 11's website – including the *Arqus English Style Guide*, Arqus Termbase, translation memories, *Recommendations and Resources for Multilingual Communication and Events*, a Web Space with Resources for Lifelong Plurilingual and Intercultural Learning (internal resources on the Arqus Plaza and public resources on the website), and the Pre-mobility Toolkit for Language and Culture (published on Working Group 9's One-Stop Shop for Mobility Beneficiaries) – have been finalised. The completion of these resources and tools supports the project's long-term plurilingual and intercultural goals.

CHALLENGES, DEVIATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Objective 1: To enhance plurilingual competence of Arqus students and staff

At the point of the midterm report, the data indicated exponential growth and surpassed expectations, but the objective could not yet be marked as fully achieved as the participation of non-academic staff remained significantly low. This had emerged as a cross-cutting challenge throughout the Alliance, and since then our team has actively worked to develop targeted dissemination strategies to better reach and engage this audience. For example, we had a substantial increase in academic staff participation as we offered several webinars that appealed to this target group. These included 9 Months, 9 Universities webinars on language and culture topics, webinars on English as a medium of instruction (EMI) offered by our community of practice for EMI and webinars on AI in teaching and learning offered by our community of practice with the same name. In addition, we had a moderate increase in professional staff participation as many took part in the Arqus Cafés and Arqus Lounges.

At the time of the mid-term report, we predicted that there were also notable risks that could hinder our ability to reach the targets set by September 2026. This proved to indeed be accurate. The scope and quality of activities necessary to sustain and increase plurilingual competence depend heavily on financial resources. As we did not receive any additional funding in the final year of the funding period, our capacity to maintain and expand these activities was compromised and impacted the number of programmes we could offer and participant involvement. For example, our numbers increased significantly in the 2024–2025 academic year as we received €10,000 through the Innovation Fund to offer A1 courses and we were able to use this money to offer these courses for almost all of the Arqus languages. Furthermore, in 2025, we acquired national funding in Germany to employ a student assistant who supported the WP with administrative work and with dealing with such large numbers. However, when their contract ended, so did the support. Additionally, while the baseline for this goal is set at 600 students, 100 academic staff, and 100 professional staff per year, with an ambitious target of 20% growth annually, consistently

reaching this target posed challenges. For students, we were only able to meet this goal in the 2024–2025 academic year when we had additional funding for both A1 language courses and a student assistant. As for professional and academic staff, the baselines were lower and we were able to meet the targets consistently. Many of our activities had academic staff as the target audience from the beginning (e.g. 9 Months, 9 Universities and EMI webinars), but at the mid-term point we realised that we would have to focus more on professional staff. We did so by offering two rounds of the Arqus Lounge to help professional staff increase their English skills and by advertising the Arqus Cafés to this group so that they would know they were welcome to participate and that the Arqus Cafés were intended to be for both students and staff. In the bridge period, maintaining this stability and upward trajectory for participation will require careful resource management and strategic planning in order to avoid additional setbacks in reaching the full breadth of the Hub's intended impact.

Objective 2: To enhance intercultural competence of Arqus students and staff for democratic citizenship

This objective has presented several challenges, primarily due to the limitations of the current indicators. As noted in Part A of the report, the existing indicators do not fully capture the scope and impact of this working group's efforts. To address this, we actively developed the Plurilingualism Module as a joint programme within the Alliance that is designed to provide a more structured and measurable framework for fostering intercultural competence. The students who take part in this module write ongoing reflections on both their language learning journey and on cultural aspects that have been part of this journey. Students and staff who take part in this and other programmes we offer tend to increase their intercultural competence and to develop an increased understanding of democratic values. To expand the programme and keep it open to all member institutions, reliable funding remains essential.

A significant challenge involved gathering comprehensive information across the Alliance, particularly as we wanted to create open-access resources that comply with the national regulations and standards of the countries in our alliance. However, we were able to develop several resources and tools that should be of value both to the Arqus community and the wider public for many years to come.

PROGRESS MADE BY WG11 TOWARDS THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE ALLIANCE WORK PLAN

The Arqus Alliance builds bridges toward European integration, intercultural cooperation, and respect for diversity. WG11 directly supports these goals by bringing students and staff together for cross-institutional dialogue and language learning. Through these exchanges, participants build language skills, explore new cultures and form lasting European networks.

The Arqus Café, for example, serves as a primary entry point into the Alliance. Qualitative feedback shows that many participants discover Arqus through the language cafés and therefore broaden their overall involvement in the Alliance. For example, one student started with a one-day introductory event (Arqus language dives), moved on to an online language course, completed an Erasmus semester in Lyon and later considered applying for an Alliance master's programme. Given their proven success in bringing people into the community, these language and cultural initiatives should be granted ongoing financial and structural support. In fact, they are the single most effective means to address and include all members of Arqus.

TASKS

Task Number and Title	Information and Status
T11.1: Developing plurilingual competence for students and staff	Full implementation and completion (100%). Partner's participation is 100%. Detailed activities: **a. Arqus Language Café**: Six editions completed in the Arqus II funding period. Thanks to the funding obtained through the Innovation Fund, a facilitator was assigned to oversee this task. Since then, the online cafés have been expanded, not only in number but also in format as three universities are now offering on-site cafés for their communities. In addition, we are now offering two levels (intermediate (A2–B1) and advanced (B2–C1) for several languages. There is a 100% partner's participation since all member universities are involved in the task force that is in charge of disseminating the information through their local channels. The task force meets after each edition to discuss which aspects went well and which aspects need to be changed or optimised. **b. Summer schools**: short-term mobilities to Granada and Leipzig under an Arqus Summer School Programme and to Braga and Wroclaw with in-person intensive language courses during summer. **c. Online series/programmes**: i**. 9 Months, 9 Universities** included 27 webinars in total and had over 700 views for the 2025–26 edition. **ii. Three EMI workshop series** completed with 19 webinars. In addition, the CoP met regularly, produced a semi-annual newsletter and offered summer courses at Maynooth University for lecturers teaching in English. **iii. Language courses**: two editions of Weekly Language Workshops for Teaching in English and five editions of A1 online courses (Lithuanian (4x), German (4x), Spanish (3x), Polish (4x), Irish (2x), French (1x), Portuguese (1x) and Italian (1x)). **iv. The Arqus Lounge for English** was offered twice for professional and academic staff as an opportunity for them to get to know colleagues from other Arqus universities and to talk about current topics, their daily work, related issues and other common interests. **v. AI in Teaching and Learning**: six webinars were offered by the CoP for AI and Language Learning and Teaching thanks to support they received through the Innovation Fund All of our public activities can be found here: https://arqus-alliance.eu/our-communities/our-hubs/arqus-plurilingual-and-intercultural-hub/
T11.2 Arqus framework for the development of plurilingual and intercultural competence	Full implementation (100%). Partner participation is 90%. The **community of practice Network of Language Centre Directors** was established and met six times in person at various universities (see event register in Part A of the final report). During these meetings, the following aspects were discussed: 1. presentation of the survey on language and culture needs during Arqus I [(a) mapping of level of language competence] 2. design of T11.1 programmes and series for Deliverable 11.1 [(b) needs analysis and the design of joint programmes to exploit the

	multilingual potential of partners, (c) the design of a programme for the enhancement of language teaching methodologies] 3. design of the Arqus Multilingualism Module and Multilingualism Certificate [(d) the further development of joint language accreditation practices] 4. design of T11.3, deliverables D11.3 and D11.4 [(e) the identification of resources]" 5. design of intercultural and language workshop series and overview of modules in language and centre management 6. maintaining and expanding language and culture programmes in the bridge funding period The CoP plans to continue working together in the bridge funding period. However, the name of the CoP may be changed as it now includes members who are not language centre directors. The group will continue to focus on the intercultural elements, especially in the context of the Plurilingualism Module. In addition, these meetings had training components in the form of short input sessions, conferences and workshops on various topics (e.g. English as a Medium of Instruction, management and artificial intelligence).
T11.3 Resources for lifelong plurilingual and intercultural learning	Full implementation and completion (100%). Resources and tools have been compiled and published. The last deliverable related to this task was due at the end of January 2025 and published on the Arqus website (Lifelong Plurilingual and Intercultural Resources). Partner participation is 100%. The resources collected were divided into the following categories: Category 1 (General language learning resources), Category 2 (Vocabulary trainers), Category 3 (Grammar trainers), Category 4 (Terminology resources), Category 5 (Practice resources such as cafés and tandems) and Category 6 (Resources for specific academic purposes) and an extra category of resources for teachers.
T11.4 Arqus language tools	Full implementation and completion (100%). Resources and tools are compiled and published.

MILESTONES

Milestone Number and Title	Information and Status
MS 19: Set-up of the Arqus Plurilingual and Intercultural Hub	Completed. Publicly available: https://arqus-alliance.eu/our-communities/our-hubs/arqus-plurilingual-and-intercultural-hub/

DELIVERABLES

Deliverable Number and Title	Information and Status
D11.1 Report on participation in student and staff language development activities	Deliverable fully implemented and completed (100%)
D11.2 Framework for plurilingual and intercultural development	Deliverable fully implemented and completed (100%)
D11.3 Web space with resources for lifelong plurilingual and intercultural learning	Deliverable fully implemented and completed (100%)
D11.4 Web space with Arqus language resources	Deliverable fully implemented and completed (100%)
D11.5 Recommendations for multilingual communication	Deliverable fully implemented and completed (100%)
D11.6 Handbook on recognition of plurilingual/intercultural competence	Deliverable fully implemented and completed (100%)

SUMMARY AND MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

Plurilingualism and interculturality continue to be central to the Arqus Alliance. The Alliance strongly supports the language skills of staff and students by creating and promoting activities such as the Arqus Cafés, the plurilingual summer and winter schools, and diverse online programmes (e.g. A1 language courses and lecture series). In the last two years (11th and 12th editions), the Arqus Cafés has offered 16 languages per edition and had more than 2679 visits. In addition, in-person Arqus Cafés have been established at Leipzig University, Vilnius University and the University of Granada. In this post-Covid era, we have noticed an increase in participants who prefer to attend the Arqus Café in person, and we therefore wanted to offer the cafés both online and in person at as many universities as possible. In addition, our online language courses – A1 courses for Irish, Italian, Lithuanian and Portuguese; English-Language Workshops for Staff; and talks in the Building the EMI Community of Practice as well as the AI in Teaching and Learning series – boasted over 100 participants. These two series were made possible thanks to the active participation of WG11 board members in both new and existing communities of practice. In total, our WG was connected with four CoPs: Arqus Academic Writing and Support Centres, Arqus English-Medium Instruction, AI and Language Learning and Teaching, and the Network of Language Centre Directors (i.e. Language and Culture).

The online series 9 Months, 9 Universities continued to be a popular format with over 700 views for the 2025–26 edition. WG11 members completed work on the Arqus Digital Pre-Mobility Toolkit and shared this resource with the One-Stop Shop that is part of WG9. The Network of Language Centre Directors has met six times now to actively work on the action fields in its Agenda 2030 for a Plurilingual and Intercultural University. In the context of these meetings, the Plurilingualism Module was developed and was piloted at Vilnius University in the 2024–25 academic year and then offered again in the 2025–26 academic year as an established programme with 35 participants who completed the module. The team has also continued to add to the language resources and tools available to the Arqus Community. In addition, the *Arqus English Style Guide* was published in November 2024 and has been used by the Arqus working groups for their deliverables and other Arqus texts as well as by the communications team for the Arqus website.

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