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Europe's Civic University Alliance

CIVIS Alliance – Open Lab Project
Impact Assessment Report

01 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Title of the project Linguistic Cultures and Communities in Europe Past and Present: Building the Eurotales Museum

Project coordinator Prof. Nadia Cannata, SUR

Universities involved SUR, UB, UAM, UH2C, SFAX

Hub theme Society, culture, heritage

Project duration December 2025 – May 2026

Place of the activities Rome, Madrid, Bucharest, Sfax, Casablanca *(those outside of the EU covered with other than CIVIS2 funds)*

02 – PARTNERS/TARGET AUDIENCE

Number of internal and external stakeholders involved in and impacted by the project

INTERNAL (All CIVIS universities)				EXTERNAL (All CIVIS cities/regions)	
Academics	Researchers	Students	Admin personnel	Citizens	Other - please specify
18	6	100	2	Approx. 300	44

Non-university associations and organisations that have been involved in the project

ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANISATIONS		
Name	Country	Description
Artestudio	Italy	Theatre Company
Paesaggi di voci	Italy	Poetry and literature
Cora	Italy	Choir
Scuola Popolare di Musica, Testaccio	Italy	Music School

03 – PROJECT IMPACT

Social dimension

EUROTALES (www.eurotales.eu) seeks to transform public discourse about languages and society by showing that the conceptual categories of majority and minority languages are untenable and divisive, and that we must strive to acquire the ability to acknowledge and give back a memory of all the voices which resonate in Europe today and have done so in the past. Languages, dialects, forms of expression which are not named under such categories have coexisted and informed each other in and between territories. Succeeding in mapping them is not only a significant way of furthering language studies, but also a precious way of recognizing Europe's past and helping to build a peaceful and democratic future. This is, in fact, both the scientific impact of the project (to readdress the very problematic notion of "language" linguistic identity, 'majority' and minority languages' and so on) and the expected societal effect of a successful redefinition of such categories and of the consequent acknowledgement of the nature of any social grouping. In the long run the idea that all our societies are multilingual and multicultural may promote the learning and daily use of more than one language, and encourage European youth to value and possibly undertake humanistic studies in particular in their native languages. Both the societal and scientific impact are in accordance with EU guidelines and Sapienza's policies regarding the Social Responsibility and Sustainability in order "to respond to the need for effective collaboration between all social stakeholders in terms of the values, needs and expectations of European society."

The project tackles the socio-linguistic context of Europe, today and in the past. To date, the Eurotales museum project of which the Faro Lab is an offshoot, through its bottom-up grassroots data collection mapped 243 distinct mother tongues active across Europe, which includes 34 European languages, 148 regional dialects, and 61 non-European languages (with Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic, Farsi, and Filipino being the most prominent).

By interviewing participants about their linguistic biographies, the project challenges the current conceptualization about languages and aims at representing the actual linguistic variety and reality of Europe. It also contributes to giving voice to culturally marginalized sections of society. Moreover, it empowers ordinary citizens to recognize the value of their speech, turning them into active stakeholders in preserving intangible cultural identity. The Faro Lab yielded 221 interviews on individual linguistic cultures in the academic and non-academic communities in Italy, Spain, Romania, Morocco and Tunisia.

Students and visitors participate actively in the creation of the museum by submitting metadata for the collections (Resonances Past and Present, Traces, Milestones) and physically or digitally posting thoughts on interactive exhibits like the "Diffuseum" and the "Wall of Memories".

Cultural dimension

Enhancing knowledge and interdisciplinarity: Eurotales links historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, art history, and museum studies to reveal an "archaeology of languages" stratified over time across European urban landscapes. It challenges standard national monolithic views of language by proving that no individual is truly monolingual (with at least two languages recorded per person).

Eurotales is a virtual as well as physical museum. All materials gathered through the CIVIS courses, and labs held at Sapienza are vetted and added to our dataset, which in turn constitute the collections regularly published on the website. The museum relies on digital displays, infographic map wheels, and is expanding into GPS site-specific prompts to make intangible language heritage immediately accessible to the public directly inside local territories.

The Faro Lab entailed travels to Bucharest /17-18 Dec), Sfax (7-8 Jan), Madrid (28-29 Jan), Casablanca (25-27 March) where workshops and labs were held, reaching approximately 20 students in Bucharest (Dec 13-16), 10 in Madrid, 15 in Sfax and Casablanca. Students from Sapienza travelled to Madrid (10-11th March), Bucharest (17-18th March). Unfortunately students from Casablanca were not granted visas in time, and students from Sfax did not complete the required work.

All students from the abovementioned CIVIS universities, came to Roma for the concluding Festival which was held 18-22nd May to present their work and participate in the many activities and events dedicated to understand the Open Lab mission. The Faro Lab yielded the following results and student-led projects:

- 221 interviews / questionnaires completed monitoring the linguistic cultures in the academic and non-academic communities in Italy, Spain, Romania, Morocco and Tunisia.
- 33 museum entries relative to linguistic traces attached to objects and territories in Italy, Spain and Romania
- 27 linguistic biographies of historical characters of relevance to Spanish, Romanian and Italian culture
- 4 different linguistic itineraries across Europe: Ireland, Spain, Italy, Greece, Romania

Economic dimension:

Financial revenues and internal funding: the project has successfully translated its academic framework into tangible operational resources by securing core internal backing from the Sapienza University of Rome via competitive departmental and public engagement funds. Acting as the coordinating institution, Sapienza allocated resources to establish a permanent physical exhibition space at the Marco Polo building, integrating touch-screen technology and multimedia installations.

Leveraging external and alliance frameworks: by serving as a premier Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme (BIP), the project channels European educational funding to support physical and virtual student mobility across the alliance. This mechanism avoids the heavy financial constraints of traditional brick-and-mortar museum setups by relying on a shared digital repository.

Removal of economic barriers and employment: the open-access, zero-cost architecture of the web museum ensures that top-tier linguistic education and interactive tools are entirely free to the public, removing financial barriers to cultural participation. Furthermore, it has driven concrete professional development by providing specialized training, digital curatorial experience, and research opportunities for university students and volunteering academics who build the collections.

Added value for the beneficiaries

The project uses a highly innovative, hands-on learning approach. Students are active museum co-authors, field researchers, and curators. This co-creation framework boosts civic pride and personal well-being by validating the unique linguistic biographies of participants.

The project features major technological advancements, deploying four core relational databases (Traces, Resonances Past, Resonances Present, and Milestones). To raise citizen awareness, the project has conducted targeted workshops, a major event in Rome, successfully capturing individual "voices" across European cities.

Eurotales actively breaks down standard nationalistic hierarchies by displaying languages (or, what we prefer to call 'voices') on an equal footing with canonical and 'national' languages. By proving that monolingualism is historically an exception rather than the rule, it cultivates an inclusive environment all sectors of society.

Relevance to the context

The project matches the Public Engagement and Third Mission strategies of Sapienza and of the broader CIVIS Alliance. It links historical linguistics and sociolinguistics, museum studies and digital humanities into an interconnected research hub. Eurotales responds to the need to acknowledge the extent to which today, as in the past Europe constitutes a multicultural urban landscape. By providing public, site-specific historical records of language usage, it connects local heritage directly to the community's daily life. The growing sense of belonging is enhanced by the continuous grassroots contribution of data, thanks to which the general public voluntarily register and get to know their linguistic culture and help map the living "archeology of languages" in Europe.

Explain how the project has fulfilled the goals and objectives of the European project CIVIS2 (Erasmus+, 2022-2026).

The EUROTALES framework safeguards endangered languages and those spoken by marginalised communities in both the past and present, while also providing an avenue to empower citizens to recognize the role of their languages in the formation of their cultural identities and society, thereby becoming stakeholders in the process. We believe that language is a key for social inclusion, integration, mutual understanding and dialogue.

The project aligned with CIVIS 2 goals, such as civic engagement and European integration: collecting data about the cultural and linguistic background of students-citizens involved in our project has enhanced and improved engagement and citizenship ideals of equality and solidarity; and contributed to outreach, both by ensuring exhibition spaces in partners' institutions, and offering a centralised, physical and virtual space for sharing results from all partners.

The wider impacts of the outcomes of EUROTALES' work are exceptionally far-reaching and resound beyond the zones in which the partners are based. Showing the constant and daily experience of linguistic encounters that is an essential part of our past and present cultural heritage brings to light the artifice of conceptualising language(s) as 'ours' or 'theirs', or as 'good' or 'bad'. Recognizing this prompts a conscious rethinking of how individuals relate to each other within society. We believe that the motto of the project could be 'Diversity is our Identity'.

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