

The Coimbra Group

Davis, May 21, 2009

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Coimbra Group

a network of 38 European universities
with typical profile

4 characteristics:

- high quality research universities
- long - established
- in university-dominated cities outside capital
- comprehensive

(membership by invitation only)



Universität Jena



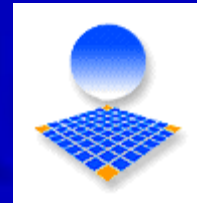
UNIVERSIDAD DE SALAMANCA



Università di Siena

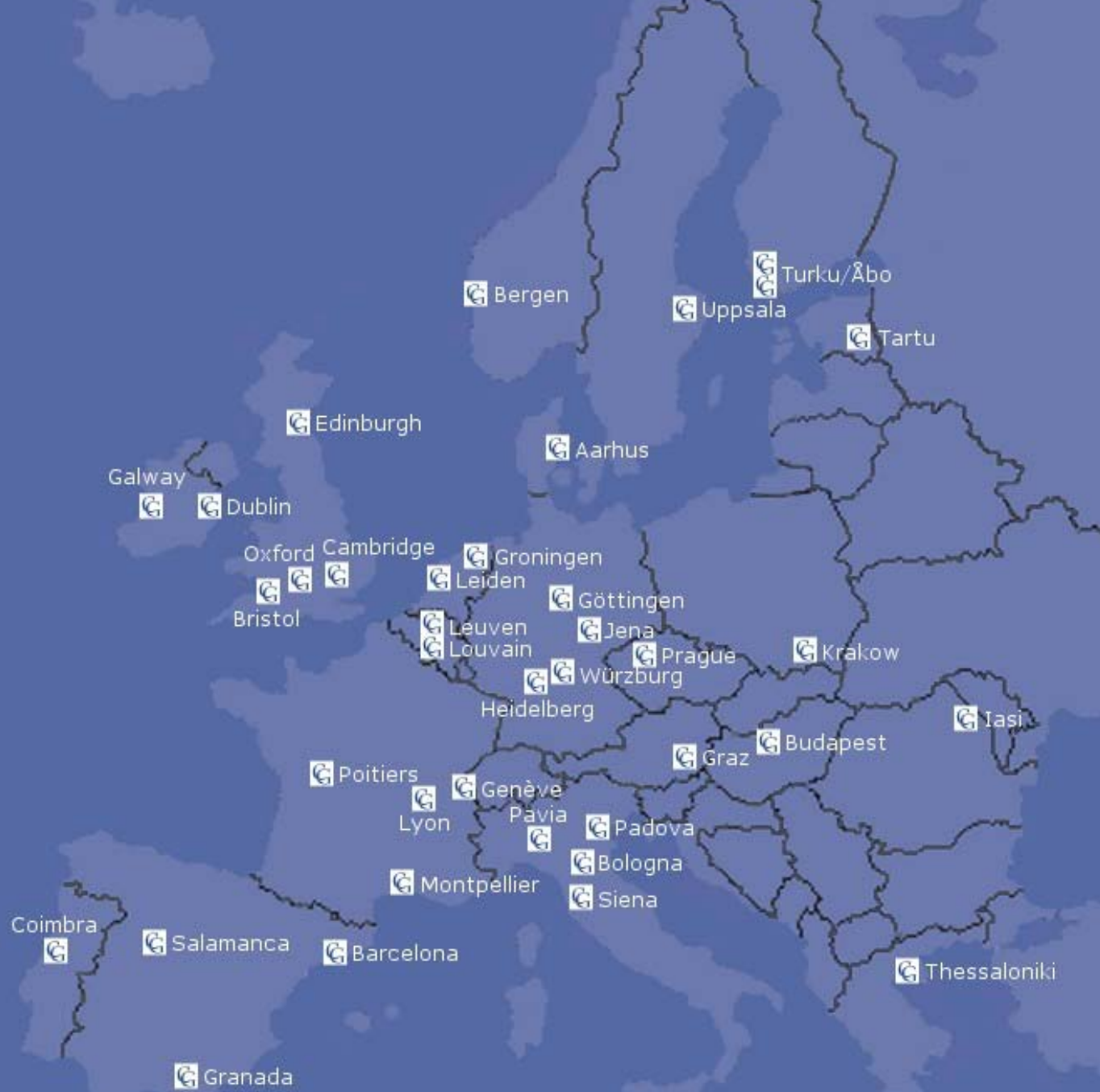


Aristotle University of Thessaloniki



Coimbra Group members

Austria:	Graz
Belgium:	Leuven, Louvain-la-Neuve
Czech Republic:	Prague
Denmark:	Aarhus
Estonia:	Tartu
Finland:	Åbo, Turku
France:	Lyon, Montpellier, Poitiers
Germany:	Göttingen, Heidelberg, Jena, Würzburg
Greece:	Thessaloniki
Hungary:	Budapest
Ireland:	Galway, Trinity College Dublin
Italy:	Bologna, Padova, Pavia, Siena
Norway:	Bergen
Poland:	Cracow
Portugal:	Coimbra
Romania:	Iași
Spain:	Barcelona, Granada, Salamanca
Sweden:	Uppsala
Switzerland:	Geneva
The Netherlands:	Groningen, Leiden
United Kingdom:	Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Oxford







Louvain-la-Neuve



Leuven



Coimbra Group Origin

- Coimbra Group created as network of universities with similar profile similar challenges (strong impact on region, historical buildings...)
 - 1985 Louvain-la-Neuve & Leuven invite potential network members
 - 1986 first General Assembly in Coimbra
- CG at origin of European Erasmus Programme still extremely active in Erasmus mobility
 - CG universities "see" ~ 19 % of total annual European Erasmus mobility
 - ~ 1/3 of outgoing CG Erasmus students to CG partner universities
 - [annual survey by Prof. Donà dalle Rose, Padova]*
- CG very strongly participating in *Erasmus Mundus master programmes* and in the new *Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Windows*
 - 42 out of 104 Erasmus Mundus master courses have one or more CG Universities as partners

From Coimbra Group Mission Statement

The Coimbra Group is committed to the promotion of academic collaboration between its members

3 levels:

- mutual exchange of experience
- development of best practice
- influencing European policy

Coimbra Group in practice

- **General Assembly (all rectors)**
1 meeting/year in framework of Annual Conference
- **Executive Board (8 elected members)**
1 meeting/month
- **Rectors' Advisory Group (7 elected members)**
2 meetings/year together with Executive Board
- **8 Task Forces (all member universities can join) !**
each Task Force meets several times/year

Coimbra Group 8 Task Forces

- Education, Training and Mobility
- Employment and Career Guidance
- Doctoral Studies and Research
- Culture, Arts and Humanities
- e-Learning

- Eastern Neighbouring Countries
- Latin American Countries
- ACP countries

Education, Training & Mobility

Mission & Action Points:

- To develop best practice on the implementation of the Bologna reform, internationalization of curricula and degrees, new teaching methods, life long learning, quality assurance...
- To acquire early information about new European educational initiatives and to influence the European educational policy.
- To support the development of joint programmes whenever an added value of such a joint initiative is apparent.
- To promote international staff and student mobility between Coimbra Group universities.

Doctoral studies & Research

Mission & Action Points:

- To share information about the organisation of doctoral studies and research management structures at CG universities.
- To facilitate the mobility of doctoral students by disseminating information among Coimbra Group universities concerning doctoral study programmes and topics for PhD theses in the individual member universities.
- To promote the mutual academic recognition of programme units followed at partner universities or organized jointly.
-
- To facilitate joint supervision of doctoral students between two Coimbra Group partner institutions.
- To share knowledge and experience about the transfer of research outcomes to society and economy.

Culture, Arts and Humanities

Mission & Action Points:

- To highlight, on the basis of the cultural heritage of the Coimbra Group Universities, advanced cultural competence and historical awareness
- To promote widely in our universities artistic creativity and sensitivity to cultural heritage
- To facilitate the exchange of views and information on the role of Arts and Humanities in university education and research on the level of both policymaking and scholarship.
- To follow closely and contribute to European policymaking in education and research and its impact on the Arts and Humanities sector. Special attention will be devoted to the publication and citation analysis methods used by policymakers and their applicability for the Arts and Humanities sector.

Latin America

Mission & Action Points:

- to disseminate knowledge about the CG universities and the European higher education system among partner institutions in Latin America
- improving, among the CG universities, the knowledge about Latin American universities and their scientific and cultural contribution
- facilitate and support collaboration projects between CG members and partners in Latin America.



Cambridge



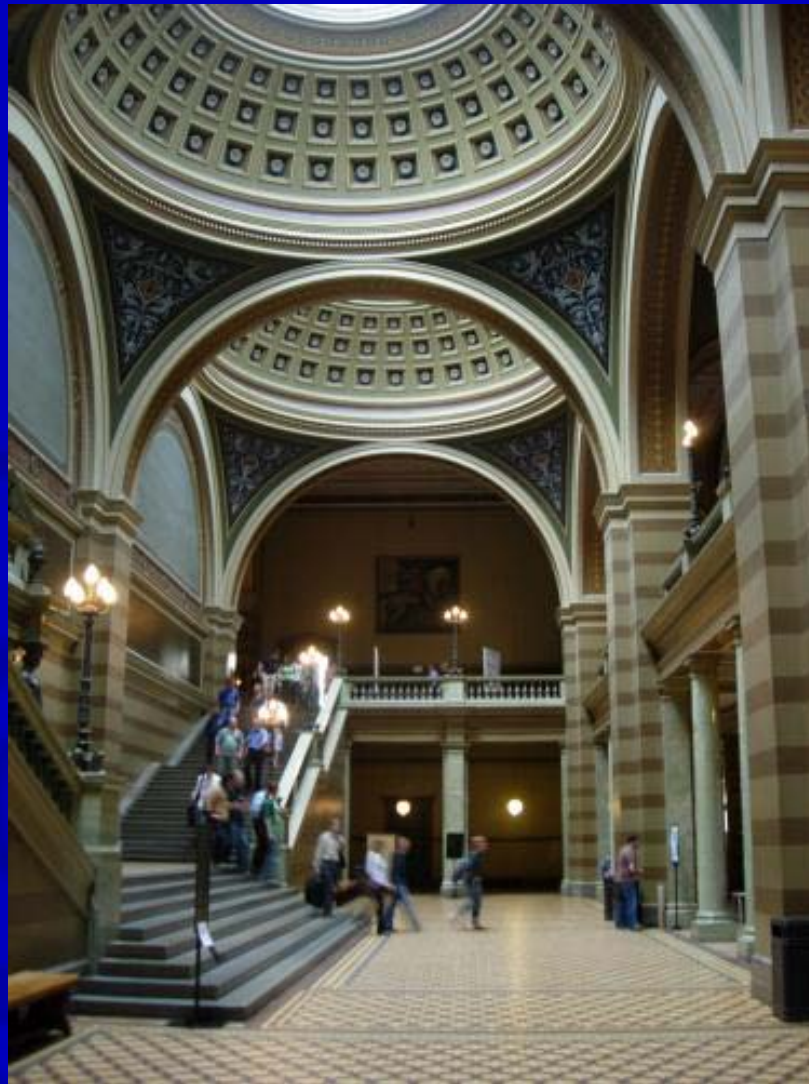
Bristol



Trinity College, Dublin



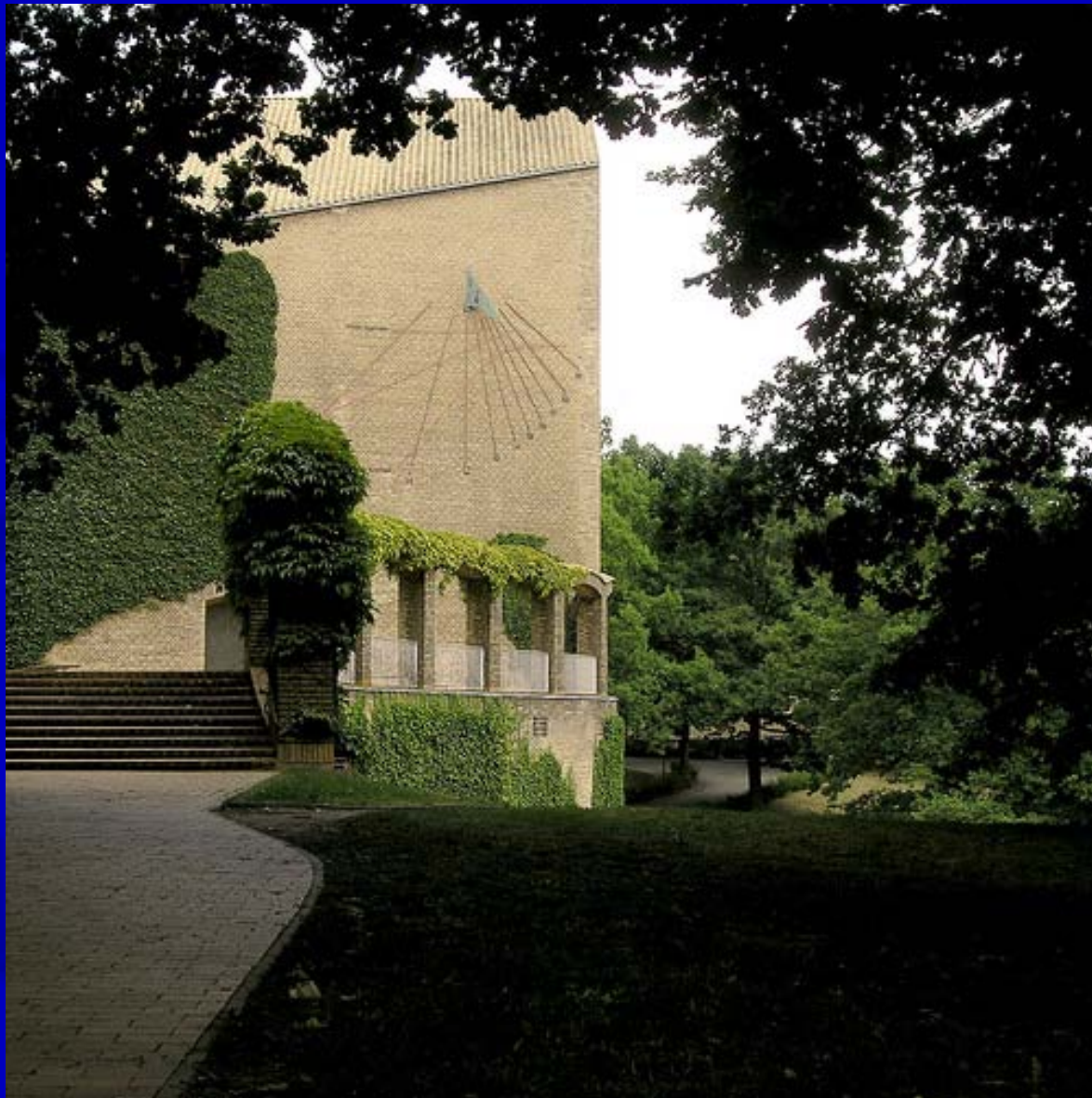
Turku



Uppsala



Tartu



Aarhus



Fruggo 2004

Groningen



Heidelberg



Goettingen



Jena



Graz



Salamanca



Granada



Barcelona



Padova



Pavia

Recent Coimbra Group activities

- **Position papers on:**
 - European Institute of Technology (2006)
 - Doctoral Studies (2007)
 - Research in Europe (2007) [Reply to the Green paper of the European Commission]
 - European Higher Education after Bologna 2010 (2009)
- **CG Summer School on Transferable Skills** (Bergen, Norway, summer 2007)
- **Annual Scholarship programmes**
 - Latin America
 - Eastern Neighbouring Countries
 - ACP-countries

Recent Coimbra Group activities

- Annual CG Conferences devoted to “hot” topics
 - Ranking of universities [2006 Tartu]
 - Doctoral Studies [2007 Turku/Abo]
 - Technology Transfer [2008 Jena]
 - Human Rights [2009 Genève]
- Web portals
 - Erasmus Mundus master programmes in which CG universities are participating
 - Open doctoral positions and/or doctoral schools at CG universities
- Meeting at study field level (for benchmarking purposes)
 - Meeting of Deans of Science (2009)
 - Meeting of Deans of Economics/Management (2009)

Recent EU funded projects

- "raising employers' awareness of the Bologna Process"
- virtual mobility
- e-learning
- academic contacts with high quality North-American universities
- academic reform in Moroccan universities
- academic collaboration with African universities

These are projects the CG Office is coordinating or participating in
Apart from these: many EU-funded projects among CG universities

Mobility and internationalization

Bachelor and master level:

- **Strong participation in Erasmus programme**
20 % of European Erasmus students spend time at CG university
- **Strong participation in Erasmus Mundus programmes**
CG universities present in almost half of the approved programmes
CG website offers information
- **Strong support for new Bologna mobility goal of 20 %**
20 % of all HE students should participate in international mobility
CG universities plan to define and closely monitor international mobility
- **Drastic increase in English Language (master) programmes**

Mobility and internationalization

Researcher's level:

- **CG Scholarship programmes**
for young researchers LA, NEC, ACP
to support young researchers who otherwise would not have opportunities to go the universities of the quality and standing of the CG
- **CG Doctoral Programmes Portal**
provides information about more than half of the CG Universities and funding opportunities for scholars
- **Doctoral Schools**
The Doctoral Studies and Research Task Force is working on a survey of doctoral schools
- **Summer Schools on transferable skills**
- **Exchange of experience on Technology Transfer**

Mobility and internationalization

Faculty level:

- Deans' meetings provide platform to exchange experience
 - benchmarking of learning outcomes
 - setting up joint programmes (solving legal problems with joint degrees)
- Deans' meetings hopefully will lead to more teacher mobility

Coimbra Group Position Paper on Doctoral Studies (2007)

1. High quality doctoral training can only be provided in high quality research environments, such as research universities with strong credentials in academic research, where it is possible for doctoral students to be members of research groups, benefit from research schools and a critical mass of researchers.
2. There should be only one doctoral degree. The quality requirements defined for candidates, doctoral training, supervision committees, theses and the defence should be the same for all doctoral students regardless of their research orientation.

3. The admittance level required for doctoral programmes must always be at a high internationally recognised academic level. While a preceding master degree is often the standard model, universities can define other admittance levels.
4. Full-time doctoral programmes are normally of 4 years' duration.
5. The doctoral thesis should be submitted for oral defence. At least one of the examiners on the evaluation committee should be from outside the university, and preferably from another country.
6. Only universities can award doctoral degrees.

Coimbra Group Position Paper on EU green paper on research

CG Critical about two of the *a priori* assumptions in Green Paper:

- Europe should have strong legally established specialized networks of institutions
- Europe should have strong centrally coordinated research programmes and priorities

“Europe should have strong legally constituted specialized networks of institutions”

CG Reply:

- Danger that such networks will capture funding streams and freeze structures and behaviour that are currently dynamic
- Contrary to temporary character of bottom-up research collaboration
- Contrary to flexible interdisciplinarity
- Research universities are the ideal dynamic surroundings for diverse disciplines working in close proximity

“Europe should have strong centrally coordinated research programmes and priorities”

CG Reply:

- Europe should (in principle) not set research priorities but facilitate research:
 - by removing obstacles to mobility,
 - by establishing a European patent,
 - by increasing ERC funding for basic research,
 - by providing expensive infrastructure,
- National/regional rather than European level should be responsible for priorities in research, innovation, commercialization in relation to its own perceived needs

Coimbra Group Position Paper on Bologna past 2010

1. Need for a shift in attention from structures to contents
Ministers of Education are encouraged to take concrete measures to ensure that the degrees within the Bologna structure are based on internationally comparable learning outcomes.
Alternative learning paths have to lead to certificates with titles that differ from those of the standard Bologna cycles.
2. Need for more transparency in institutional diversity.
Multidimensional classification needed away from academic arms race.
3. Need for genuine support to mobility.
4. More attention for societal role of universities, which is more than technology transfer.

Coimbra Group Office (Brussels)



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