

2022 Coimbra Group Annual Meeting

A most memorable edition!

8-10 June 2022, University of Padua

Almost 300 delegates from Coimbra Group (CG) Universities came together at the University of Padua for the 2022 Coimbra Group Annual Conference & General Assembly, the first large in-person gathering of our network in more than two years, 8-10 June. Under the title «Universa Universis»: Academic Freedom in a Transforming World, the event was part of the yearlong calendar of celebrations for the [800th anniversary](#) of the University of Padua. You will find a photo gallery of the event at the bottom of [this page](#).



The official [programme](#) started at the modern Beato Pellegrino Complex, with a full morning dedicated to the [twelve thematic Working Groups](#), where delegates from CG Universities discussed joint activities, developed new projects and consolidated priorities for their future workplans for 2022-2025.

In the afternoon, activities resumed with different alternatives:

- Some Working Groups gathered to explore possible synergies between their respective projects and initiatives: Education Innovation + Equality & Diversity and Development Cooperation + Latin America;
- The [UNISAFE](#) project seminar on Security and safety of HEIs students and staff moving abroad: this all-Coimbra Group Erasmus+ consortium (KA203 – Strategic Partnerships for higher education) addresses the issues of safety, security and wellbeing of international mobility participants and has created effective security procedures, practical tools and training opportunities to ensure safety and security of students and staff during an international mobility period;
- The session on “Innovating in Joint Degrees: experiences, challenges, opportunities” provided space to discuss the latest EU policy developments in this area presented by Tine Delva, Deputy Head of Unit for Higher Education at the European Commission (DG EAC).

The day was only completed after the meeting between the Executive Board and the Working Group Chairs and Vice-Chairs, to fine tune strategies and activities and to reflect on the important role they play in the activities of the Coimbra Group.

Public Conference «Universa Universis»: Academic Freedom in a Transforming World



Thursday 9 June started with the Coimbra Group Annual Conference, this year dedicated to the theme “Universa Universis: Academic Freedom in a Transforming World”. The conference was broadcast live and the recording is now available on the [Coimbra Group YouTube channel](#).

The first session, “800 years of Academic Freedom: lessons from the past to shape the future” was introduced by a video message from Member of the European Parliament Christian Ehler, followed by an interesting discussion moderated by Telmo Pievani (Rector’s delegate, University of Padova), with speakers Milena Králíčková (Rector, Charles University in Prague), László Borhy (Rector, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest), Joanna Drake (Deputy Director-General at DG Research and Innovation, European Commission) and Gian Maria Greco (Board Member of the Marie Curie Alumni Association).

The second part of the Public Conference included the viewpoints from the Alliances of European Universities. The Chair of the Executive Board (EB) Ludovic Thilly moderated the session, with speakers from all the European University Alliances which include Coimbra Group members, around the topics of strengthening international cooperation, academic values, societal responsibility and community impact (see presentations [here](#)).

The speakers for this second session were:

- Dorothy Kelly, University of Granada, representing Arqus
- Raul Ramos Lobo, University of Barcelona, representing CHARM-EU
- Johnny Laursen, Aarhus University, representing Circle U.
- Jukka Kola, University of Turku, representing EC2U
- Cisca Wijmenga, University of Groningen, representing ENLIGHT
- Beatrix Busse, University of Cologne, representing EUniWell
- Stanislaw Kistryn, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, representing Una Europa
- Lenka Rovná, Charles University, representing 4EU+

In the afternoon, the Rectors’ Advisory Group (composed of seven CG Rectors) met with the EB at the Archivio Antico of the University of Padova where they reflected in particular on the future strategic priorities of the association. This meeting was followed by the Closed Rector’s Meeting, where the discussion revolved around the [Coimbra Group 2021-22 Policy Highlights](#) and the reform of research assessment. Michael Arentoft, Deputy Head of the Open Science Unit at the Directorate-General for Research & Innovation of the European Commission, outlined the latest developments and future steps of the current EU reform process. A discussion followed on the spirit of the reform and the concrete implications for universities when signing the future EU agreement and joining the corresponding coalition to be launched this autumn.

General Assembly

As usual, the programme of this annual event ended with the General Assembly on Friday morning, where the EB Chair Ludovic Thilly presented the annual report, which also includes the CG Office report presented by Director Emmanuelle Gardan. The Chair of the Administrative and Financial Committee Markus Gelhoet (University of Göttingen) and treasurer Luca Verzichelli (EB, University of Sienna) explained the budget and accounts. The General Assembly ratified the finances and approved revised statutes for the association.

Also during this session, the Chairs/Vice-Chairs of all 12 Working Groups presented their [main highlights and priorities](#) for the next three years and the General Assembly formally approved the Working Groups work plans. Dorota Malec (Jagiellonian University in Krakow) and Efrem Yildiz Sadak (University of Salamanca) were re-elected for a second mandate at the Coimbra Group Executive Board. Rector Margareth Hagen (University of Bergen) was appointed new member of the Rectors’ Advisory Group.

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Coimbra Group Three Minute Thesis competition Final

The Aula Magna hosted the 2022 edition of the [Coimbra Group Three Minute Thesis \(3MT\) competition](#)

Omeed Neghabat, PhD candidate at Aarhus University won the first prize with a presentation called “Looking at the human heart from the inside out”.

Effy Ntemou, from the University of Groningen, ended up first runner-up, and Ignacio Abadía Tercedor, from the University of Granada, was the second runner-up.

You can learn more about the candidates, jury and technical guidelines [here](#), and you can also review the final on our [YouTube channel](#).



The Arenberg-Coimbra Group Prize for Erasmus Students



The 2022 Arenberg-Coimbra Group Prize for Erasmus students was officially awarded to Marie Bakken (University of Bergen, Erasmus+ exchange at the University of Salamanca) during the General Assembly.

Our generous sponsor the Duke of Arenberg and the 2022 laureate Marie Bakken had sent video messages. You can find the streaming and also more information about this award and the Selection Committee's Recommendation for 2022 on the [dedicated webpage](#).

2023 Coimbra Group Annual Meeting: save the date!

The University of Cologne will be the host of the 2023 edition of the Coimbra Group Annual Meeting, 31 May - 2 June 2023. The presentation and invitation were made by Rector Axel Freimuth and Vice-Rector for Teaching and Learning and EB member Beatrix Busse. The main topic will be on EU-Africa relationships. Watch the invitation video [here](#).

