



Welcome by Eva Åkesson, Vice-Chancellor, Uppsala University

Dear Magna Charta Council members, Signatories, Colleagues, Friends

Welcome to Uppsala University

We have gathered here for the first ever Magna Charta conference outside Bologna.

Of course it is a great honour that we have been chosen to host this conference. And we believe the reason we were chosen is because Uppsala and Bologna University are related.

I would like to say that we are siblings. We are brought up with ethics as our father and integrity as our mother. Now we call ourselves Alma Mater, but as Bologna University is the older of us I think we at Uppsala should call ourselves **Sororcula Almae Matris** in relation. Sororcula is, as I'm sure you know, latin for "little sister".

Actually all of us are related. When we adopted the principles of Magna Charta we took on a great responsibility. We promised to honour the ideas stated in the document and by doing so we created a bond and gave a promise to ourselves and to future generations – to the children of the Alma Mater. We are related, but live our own independent lives. We have our own ideas and integrity. We share views but we are distinct. Just like strong members of one family.

With time we have come to appreciate that the family is growing bigger and stronger. We know that we should work together to make a better future.

When Uppsala University was founded in 1477 one of the reasons was to keep Swedes in the country. The young men who studied at the time all left Sweden and quite many never came back. Today we would have called the situation brain drain.

Most Swedish students in this era travelled to universities in northern Europe. Some went to Paris and maybe some of them even came to Bologna.

One person who went to Bologna a little later – in 1988 – is Martin H:son Holmdal, our Vice Chancellor emeritus, who was one of the signatories of the Magna Charta Universitatis

In his memoirs he tells us how the chairman Carmine Romanzi wanted to make the celebrations of the 900th birthday of Bologna into a special occasion for all Italian and European universities. One of the symposia he mentions had the name The University in the World Today where some of the grounds for collaboration were discussed.

I am very happy to see Martin H:son Holmdal here today.

Now as we commemorate the 26th anniversary of the Magna Charta the relevance of the document is greater than ever. 776 universities from 81 countries have signed so far. This is promising for the future and we hope that many more will join us. The family is growing.

Cheers, Salute, and Skål!