



MCO Anniversary Conference Universities and Re-Construction of Cities: the Role of Research and Education

Report

Monday, 23rd October

Pre-conference session

Introduction to the Higher Education landscape and current issues in Poland and Ukraine

Welcoming words

The pre-conference day started with the welcoming words of Elżbieta Żądzińska, Rector of the University of Lodz, and David J. Lock, Secretary General of the Magna Charta Observatory.

Prof. Żądzińska expressed her pleasure to welcome participants of the MCO Anniversary in Poland for the first time. She mentioned that University of Lodz was one of the 11 Polish universities that signed original version of Magna Charta Universitatum in 1988. The world of 2023 is different - but the values that guide academia should remain unchanged. These are the Magna Charta`s greatest strengths – universality and atemporality, resistance to trends and political preferences. Another reason why Magna Charta has attracted nearly 1000 universities worldwide is that its values have very practical axiological dimensions. Universities are communities that coexist and integrate with society.

Madame Rector stressed that the Eastern neighbour of Poland, Ukraine, has been at war with the Russian aggressor. Ukrainian cities and Ukrainian universities will require reconstruction. The University of Lodz from the first day of full-scale war had hosted in its dormitories over 600 Ukrainians.

Academia is unpolitical but is not immune and never indifferent. Armed conflicts, natural disasters, climate changes adverse demographic and economic effects are among the topics of the Conference. All of us uphold, implement, and advance the key values of Magna Charta.

Prof. Żądzińska ended her speech with the words, that such values as independence, seamless coexistence of teaching and research as well as tolerance and openness to dialogue will not only reverberate many times over the days of the Conference but these values have already become the guiding principles in the daily operation of all universities.

Mr. Lock started his welcome speech by thanking Madame Rector and the University of Lodz for hosting the Conference and providing a venue that was perfect for its theme. The Secretary General paid tribute to all the colleagues from the University of Lodz and members of the steering group for the Conference who had facilitated the event.

The Secretary General mentioned that a new element of MCU 2020 is the statement of universities' responsibilities to society. The evidence of this statement had been demonstrated by the universities of Poland over the last 18 months, particularly towards Ukraine. All the participants of the Conference will have the opportunity to hear at first hand from Ukrainian and Polish colleagues about cases showing how their universities serve society.

Mr. Lock announced that during this year's conference participants will be celebrating student successes. Five winners of the MCO's first essay competition will be presented with awards. They will be reading their essays in a session that will be broadcast from Lodz to the world. One more step in strengthening cooperation with students will be the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Global Student Forum. The Secretary General made a brief presentation of the activities planned during the next three days, among which are networking, World Café Sessions and signing of MCU 2020.

He invited all participants to make an input to defining the future work and priorities of the Magna Charta Observatory during the World Café discussion on its Strategy for 2025 - 2030.

Regional perspectives on universities serving societies, challenges and responses

The session was chaired by **Professor Łukasz Bogucki**, Vice-Rector of the University of Lodz. Its purpose was to introduce the Higher Education landscape and current issues in Poland and Ukraine.

The first speaker of the panel **Professor Arkadiusz Mężyk**, President of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP), started his presentation online by thanking the organisers for the invitation to the Conference. Prof. Mężyk pointed out that modern cities are complex organisms depopulating, and struggling with urban and social problems. He presented the case of the Polish city Katowice which has undergone a transformation over the past decades from a city associated with heavy industry, air pollution and environmental problems to a centre of culture, science, education, business, and technologies, which was awarded the title of 'European City of Science 2024'. According to Prof. Mężyk, this was possible through the synergy of local authorities with the science and academic consortium formed by the city and

seven public universities. The City of Lodz has also achieved a successful transformation.

Prof. Arkadiusz Mężyk reported that in the present academic year more than 1.2 million students had started their studies in more than 350 Polish HEIs, among them over 100,000 foreigners with the largest group coming from Ukraine. Considering the geopolitical situation in the world and the social responsibility of science, he stressed that the main task of academic institutions was to foster a sense of life and sense of security through a very good education, popularization of reliable knowledge and scientific achievements, integration of the academic community and involvement of community members in activities to enhance the security as a common good. Universities must inspire, encourage, and attract people. They are the driving forces behind the transformation of the region especially in the conditions of war. Having this in mind, Prof. Mężyk mentioned that cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian universities should be aimed at the development of academic centres of reconstruction and European integration of Ukraine. Such integration of Ukraine into the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area are fully supported by CRASP through the development of friendly relationship between Polish and Ukrainian HEIs and National Rectors' conferences.

Prof. Arkadiusz Mężyk listed the main directions of cooperation such as the inclusion of the Union of Rectors of Ukrainian HEIs into the European University Association, the accession of Ukrainian universities to international organisations, increasing the participation of Ukraine in the Erasmus+ Programme for reconstruction of damaged infrastructure and restoration of academic activities.

Prof. Mężyk stressed that the omnipresent sense of danger to life during the war has affected the mental health of young people. Also, he reported that last year more than 48,000 Ukrainian students studied at Polish universities. The support of refugees by universities, among which are students, doctoral students and employees, cost approximately 4 million Euro. On March 2022 as a response to war in Ukraine the Network of Coordinators for Assistance to Ukraine was established by CRASP. It united 229 representatives of entities, universities, institutes of Polish Academy of Science, ministries, Government, agencies etc.

Professor Mężyk concluded by expressing the strong support and wiliness of Polish universities to be involved in the process of European integration of Ukraine.

Professor Petro Kulikov, President of the Union of Rectors of Universities of Ukraine, started his speech by expressing overall support for the words of Prof. Mężyk. Prof. Kulikov and addressed the following theses during his speech.

Firstly, there is a need to determine the role of universities in the post-war reconstruction of Ukrainian cities through a complex of historical, cultural, demographic, geographical and economic factors. The role of universities in modern cities is to provide opportunities for the continuous development of and for people.

Secondly, Prof. Kulikov stressed that the development of education and the city during and after the war is an extremely difficult issue. European countries had gone through this path of recovery after the Second World War. The issue of educational logistics comes to the forefront of the post-war reconstruction of Ukrainian cities as well as forming the university centres of Ukraine and their integration to the European higher education area. The implementation of these priorities is possible in the cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, business, local communities in accordance with the Strategy of the post-war recovery of Ukraine, which was formed by the Government.

Thirdly, Prof. Kulikov pointed out that the role of universities in post-war reconstruction consists of the formation of high-quality human capital based on the resource potential of every citizen. The role of a modern university is to support public initiatives and make important decisions for the local communities. An important element of improving university governance is the establishment of cooperation between universities and employers through the creation of supervisory boards. The orientation of universities and society towards the development of socially responsible business is the basis of formation of a high-quality urban environment.

Fourthly, an important area of cooperation between communities and universities is the development of Lifelong Learning. It is a crucial element of human potential development in the conditions of catastrophic decline of population caused by the war in Ukraine.

Prof. Kulikov concluded by stressing that Ukraine now is on its way to European economic, educational and scientific space and fully supports the principles outlined in the updated version of MCU.

Mr. Mychailo Wynnyckyj, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, focused his speech mainly on three aspects: official facts and figures and key reforms, damages and HEI`s relocations caused by Russian aggression, and spheres of cooperation with international partners. There were currently 267 higher education institutions in Ukraine. The number had decreased by about 30% since 2014. It was caused both by demographic crisis and optimization or modernization of the university network in Ukraine. Ukraine has a large educational community and over 1.25 million students. About 120,000 of them were outside of Ukraine at the moment.

Mr. Wynnyckyj listed key reforms in higher education in Ukraine over the last 10 years that helped Ukraine to integrate fully with the European Higher Education Area: ECTS, PhD reform, widening of university autonomy and a new quality assurance system.

Since the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, 2638 schools have been damaged, 437 of them have been completely destroyed. Sixty HEIs have been damaged and 6 have been completely destroyed. Mr. Wynnyckyj saw 2 main war-related challenges for higher education. These were the relocation of students and staff and financial issues on a system level. State funding for higher

education was reduced by 40% in 2023, which has made Ukrainian higher education institutions unsustainable.

Mr. Deputy Minister expressed his gratitude for the early and rapid relief efforts of international partners, particularly from the European University Association and from the United Kingdom. He mentioned successful programs such as the Twinning program by Cormack Consultancy Group, Erasmus+, individual support from partner universities, access to scientific bases and educational platforms, Ukrainian studies centres, and visiting professorship. Mr. Wynnyckyj said that Ukraine is very grateful that Russian higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies have been removed from European organisations. He stressed that it is an important not only as a symbolic gesture of support, but also because the Russian higher education system is not about creating certain values and world views. Democratic values of a civilized world are not inherent in Russia.

Addressing more than 130 university leaders from 37 countries all around the world but mostly from Europe, and many others online, Mr. Wynnyckyj repeated how grateful he was for the extraordinary support given by European universities – especially those in Poland, – to students, academics, and university staff from Ukraine since the full-scale invasion.

From the perspective of the Ministry there were large regional differences in the educational landscape of Ukraine during the war and occupation or liberation of territories. State Mariupol University was destroyed completely, and it has been relocated to Kyiv. Kherson University in Southern Ukraine has been occupied then liberated but damaged again recently and relocated to Ivano-Frankivsk in Western Ukraine. Some others – such as Lviv, Vinnytsia, Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk universities in Western Ukraine – were continuing offline learning with the interruption of the educational process during an alarm signal about missile attacks. In the East, North and South of Ukraine the educational process is primarily conducted online because of constant rocket attacks. There is mixed format in Central Ukraine. In the West largely offline learning has continued.

At the end of his presentation, Mr. Deputy Minister highlighted how Ukrainian institutions can partner with European friends for the medium- and long-term. This could be done in particular by supporting joint degree programmes and collaborative online international learning, as opposed to supporting more students leaving Ukraine. Mr. Wynnyckyj called on Western universities to stem the brain drain over Ukrainian borders by refocusing support on study and research programmes in Ukraine and funding Ukraine-based postgraduate programmes and non-residential fellowships. He pointed out that Ukraine requires infrastructure and capacity building by means of joint research projects with international partners. So that Ukrainian researchers can continue their research in Ukraine.

Twinning is extremely important for Ukrainian HEIs as well as the support for university autonomy. The Ministry had certain initiatives aimed at increasing the flexibility of learning programs and modernizing the university network.

"We have a war to win and a country to rebuild and we need our best brains here," the Deputy Minister said at the end.

Mr. Adam Pustelnik, Deputy Mayor of Łódź, started his speech with the statement that the answer of Polish society, among which are ordinary citizens, businesses, companies and universities, to the Russian invasion of Ukraine was very quick and conscious. Poland, like Ukraine and the people of Central and Eastern Europe, shared the same historic and political perspective. Russia's tendencies affected these countries historically in many aspects.

Having this in mind, Mr. Pustelnik said that usually when wars and crisis started it was the State that coordinated the support. But it was the reaction of the Polish people to the full-scale war in Ukraine in 2022 which was unique. It was the spontaneous answer from the society. There were some projects that became the biggest and the most prominent worldwide. Mr. Deputy Mayor cited the example of one of the biggest pharma companies in Poland – Pelion Healthcare Group, which is based in Lodz. Together with leading humanitarian organisations from California this pharma company created the most massive and unique support program in Poland called "Health4Ukraine".

Mr. Pustelnik also gave the example of the answer to the war by the Polish State helping Ukrainians to feel safe and giving them access to a social security system, the same as Polish citizens have. He listed the main elements that Poland and the Polish people have provided as an answer to the war in neighbouring Ukraine. Among them were the healthcare system, social security system, housing, child care and implementing policies to make Ukrainian people feel part of the community. The biggest challenge was for Polish schools and teachers to accept thousands of Ukrainian refugees. Mr. Deputy Mayor stressed that without any additional funding or special tools, even spontaneously, by the extraordinary effort of teachers in kindergartens, schools and universities, Polish society managed to implement a cycle of solutions to eliminate barriers including language education for Ukrainians. Mr. Pustelnik expressed his special gratitude to UNICEF and Swiss donors which contributed to Polish educational system very generously.

The Deputy Mayor pointed out that the extraordinary role in the process of providing support to Ukrainian sisters and brothers goes directly to Polish people, who demonstrated motivation and mobilization in their desire to help those who were suffering from war.

Mr. Pustelnik concluded his speech by expressing his confidence that Ukraine will win the war. He stressed that Ukraine needs human potential to recover the country. He also expressed his gratitude to all the participants who visited Lodz during the Conference. "If a city does not manage to include in the community people from various counties, continents, cultures, it will never succeed... What is the city? If it is just a system of streets and buildings it will not attract people to live in it. The multicultural structure and being a magnet for people from all over the world was the reason why the city of Lodz succeeded and why it became the second fastest growing city of the world after Chicago in the 19th century... I

hope that soon all the people of Ukraine will have the opportunity to go back to their homes safely and be part of the rebuilding process. Those who decide to choose Poland as their place to live will feel at home but only on your conditions and with your home in Ukraine being open to you safely”, the Deputy Mayor said.

Mr. Vitalii Bilyi, Counsellor of the Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of Poland, read a letter on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Vasyl Zvarych, Ambassador of Ukraine to the Republic of Poland.

Mr. Counsellor started his speech by expressing gratitude to the City of Lodz for the support and great solidarity with Ukraine. Then he read the letter.

“It brings me [Mr. Ambassador] great satisfaction to witness the University of Lodz hosting such a significant international event, with a dedicated focus on the world`s leading universities uniting to extend their support to Ukraine, particularly in its path towards reconstruction following the devastating impact of the Russian war of aggression.

More than 140 countries and millions of people around the world are supporting Ukraine. We are grateful to everyone who helps our country in its darkest time.

Since the start of their invasion, the Russians have fired approximately 3000 missiles at Ukrainian cities... and destroyed more than 120 000 civilian infrastructure facilities, including power plants, gas pipelines, schools, kindergartens and numerous residential buildings.

Russian troops have committed more than 550 war crimes against cultural heritage sites in Ukraine...

The recovery of Ukraine is to become the largest economic project in Europe of our time... The world has been showing unprecedented solidarity with Ukraine... Ukrainians will always remember this outstanding empathy and humanity... Please keep on helping us maintain and develop Ukraine`s intellectual strength, assisting Ukrainian students and academics...

Your bonds with Ukrainian universities and your joint academic work could be an efficient tool to implement EU standards not only in Ukraine`s education... but also in many other areas, including the process of rebuilding Ukraine as a strong, European state, which in turn is a necessary factor in building new security architecture for our region”.

See the full text of Ambassador`s letter as separate item below

Students` perspectives

Ms. Polina Hombalevska, President of Ukrainian Association of Students, in her speech mentioned three main challenges for higher education of Ukraine over the last decade: 2014 - the Revolution of Dignity and occupation of Eastern

Ukraine and Crimea by Russia, 2019 - the Covid-19 pandemic and 24th of February 2022 - full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. She pointed out that during the war higher education institutions have become humanitarian and evacuation centres and young people and students have become a consolidated and powerful force in society.

Ms. Hombalevska presented the Ukrainian Association of Students (UAS) as the national student union of Ukraine which has been protecting students' rights since its establishment in 1999, uniting more than 150 student unions in all regions of Ukraine with 25 regional subdivisions. Since 2007 UAS has been a member of the European Student Union (ESU). She highlighted the main areas of UAS activities, among which were the following: protection of student rights; student self-governance development; involvement in the development of the higher education quality assurance system; representation of the interests of its members and the whole student community.

Ms. Hombalevska presented some successful cases of UAS activities. One of them was the amendment to the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" about student self-governance, which was a unique achievement of student self-governance in expanding the rights of students. Another case was the establishment of the National Association of Student Experts on the Quality of Higher Education to ensure the participation of students in the quality assurance system of higher education.

As Ms. Hombalevska mentioned, the full-scale war brought significant changes to the focus of student unions' initiatives. With the support of the Austrian and Swiss national student unions UAS began to provide assistance and financial support to students who had fled the occupied regions and areas where hostilities were taking place.

Ms. Hombalevska referred to one more unique student project - "DigiUni", whose aim was to create a single digital educational ecosystem in Ukraine that will provide continuous, high-quality, inclusive, and transparent education, regardless of the location of participants. Another initiative was the international students exchange project "Dialogue of Students Unity: Ukraine and Poland". One of the most important projects, which started a few months after the full-scale invasion, was the informational and fundraising campaign "Stud Help". "Chance for one to save millions" was the tagline of this project. It aimed to teach students and academic staff to provide the first aid. Together with a group of volunteer medics UAS is providing the tactical emergency medical aid courses on the base of HEIs.

Ms. Hombalevska concluded her speech by appealing to the audience: "Almost 9 years of Russian occupation and more than 600 days after the full-scale invasion, our army continues to fight on the front line. On our common path to victory, in the future process of reconstruction and avoiding such terroristic wars, universities must continue to fulfil their role. We believe that this role includes state-building and ideology formation. This role is about growing students into active and conscious citizens of their countries. We strongly believe

that the role of universities is to change the society and our universities have all the instruments for doing that”.

Find more information at: <https://www.studhelp.org/>

Mr. Maksym Svysenko, Board member of Ukrainian Students League (USL), focused his speech mainly on two main aspects: current activities of USL and perspectives and priorities for the immediate future. At the beginning of his speech, he mentioned that the Ukrainian Students League was the youngest but the largest active student organisation in Ukraine. It was created in 2020 *by* students *for* students to develop and fully support the student community, as well as movements and projects that affect the life of youth in Ukraine. The main mission of USL was to unite Ukrainian students to protect their rights, develop the current higher education system and shape the values of the Ukrainian civil society.

The League has united 67 of the most respected universities of Ukraine and 22 youth NGOs; representing more than 420 000 students in total.

Mr. Svysenko listed the directions of USL activities, among which were included science conferences and sports competitions, meetings with state authorities, including representatives of Ministry of Education and Sciences of Ukraine, student discounts, internships for students at private businesses and government agencies etc. From the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Students League had supplied humanitarian goods to internally displaced persons (IDPs), hospitals, and the Armed Forces of Ukraine, to hard-to-reach areas and areas of hostilities. USL had also provided shelters and free accommodations for more than 5000 IDPs. With the support of international donors and local authorities the most modern Centre for long-term accommodation of IDPs in Ukraine in the building of a university dormitory has been built. USL has also successfully organised 6 charity festivals in Lviv, Dnipro and Kyiv. The money raised at the festivals has been used for the humanitarian needs of Ukrainians affected by the war.

The second part of Mr. Svysenko`s speech was focused on the priorities for the next years. The first direction was the implementation of projects to help Ukrainians abroad. Under the project “Ukrainian Students Worldwide” Ukrainian students’ communities in 16 European Union countries have already been created. The second direction was to improve the cooperation with temporarily displaced universities in Ukraine and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to implement changes to current legislation and the strategy for the development of the higher education system. The third direction was to involve students in the programs of post-war reconstruction of Ukraine. For example, a team from the Ukrainian Students League together with experts and local government created the Strategy of reconstruction of Bucha [city in the Kyiv Region that was occupied and destroyed by Russian occupiers during March 2022. It was liberated in April 2022 by the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Numerous war crimes against civilians were committed by Russian soldiers there - comment from the rapporteur]. And one more

direction is to launch the project with student-veterans to integrate them into society and the student community.

Find more information at: <https://www.usl.org.ua/en/projects>

Prof. Łukasz Bogucki closed the pre-conference session mentioning that it was full of multiple and motivating perspectives on Poland and Ukraine, both regionally and internationally, both from academia, government, diplomacy, and students.

Magna Charta Observatory: serving signatory universities

The session was chaired by **Mr. David Lock**, Secretary General of the Magna Charta Observatory. During the session speakers presented the MCO activities and its research initiatives.

Mr. Lock focused his speech on a review of what the Observatory has achieved in 2023 and the development of the MCO's strategy to 2030. In the first part of the speech, he referred to the Academic Freedom Index reports that showed improvements in a few countries such as Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, it found academic freedom to be in retreat for over 50% of the world's population, including countries such as Hungary and Turkey, which was a matter of concern.

Mr. Secretary General reported that over the last year signatory universities have been most generous with their support for universities in Ukraine and thanked them. He also expressed great appreciation to the University of Lodz for the warm welcome and generous support for the 2023 Anniversary in Poland.

In the last year translations of MCU 2020 into Ukrainian, Polish and Catalan had kindly been prepared by colleagues in signatory universities.

Then Mr. Lock presented an innovation of this year. The first MCO essay competition for students had been organised in collaboration with the Global Student Forum (GSF) and the European Students' Union (ESU). This had attracted 97 entries from 24 countries. The essay question was 'How might students exercise more influence in enabling their universities to make a more effective contribution to society?'. It was judged by a globally diverse balanced panel of students and staff and men and women. The five winners were given expenses paid participation in the Anniversary Conference where they will read and discuss their entries on 24th October in a live-streamed session and they will be recognised in the signing ceremony on 25 October together with judges. Moreover, nominees of two student organisations (GSF and ESU) are in membership of the MCO Council.

Mr. Secretary General reported that during the year the MCO had launched its research project named "The Responsive and Responsible University". Nineteen proposals had been received. Eight of them were selected of which six participated in the first research workshop. MCO Ambassadors are also fully

engaged in supporting research projects. Mr. Lock expressed his gratitude to them for all that they add to the MCO's capacity to assist signatory universities.

Also, Mr. Lock mentioned that during this year the MCO continued to organise webinars and to collaborate with global and regional bodies including IAU, EUA, Scholars at Risk, the Association of Arab Universities (AARU), the Global Consortium and student bodies GSF and ESU. The MCO had accepted invitations to participate in relevant global or regional symposia from EPOKA University, Albania and the AARU General Assembly, Tunisia.

Mr. Secretary General started the second part of his speech with an observation about the MCO's transformation from a focus on promoting the MCU document and underlining its aspirational role, to focusing much more on *how* the fundamental values are put into practice in universities and *how* it enables universities to have greater impact and make a greater contribution to society. Nearly 1000 universities from 94 countries have now signed the first, second or both MCUs.

Taking into account the above-mentioned activities, Mr. Lock reported that the MCO Strategy adopted by the Council for the period 2020 – 2025 was progressing well. Now a priority for the MCO Council is to prepare a strategy that will address the question of how the MCO can best help universities in the period to 2030. For the first time the MCO Council will invite the input of MCU signatories in developing the new strategy.

On behalf of MCO Mr. Lock expressed his gratitude to the University of Bologna for their financial and other support and to those universities which had made voluntary donations to support MCO's work. He mentioned that Magna Charta Observatory is currently one of the few associations that does not charge a joining fee or a membership subscription, so that all can benefit, irrespective of their means. Mr. Lock asked universities to be as generous as they can be when MCO seeks their help financially.

Mr. Secretary General concluded his speech by welcoming the appointment of Julia Berruezo as the research assistant of MCO, appreciating the Administrator and thanking its ambassadors, the members of the Governing Council and its committees for all that they do for the Observatory in a voluntary capacity, and by thanking all the signatories for all that they have done and will do to enable universities to play an even greater role in society in these turbulent times and in the future.

Professor Giga Zedania, Chair of the MCO's Research Committee, a member of its Governing Council and a professor of philosophy at Ilia State University in Tbilisi, started his speech by reminding people that in 2020 the updated version of MCU combined the traditional principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy with a university contract with civil society as well as the principle of university responsibility. When establishing the Research Committee it was decided that the theme of 'responsiveness and responsibility' would be the main focus.

According to Prof. Zedania, in Europe people started to use the language of responsibility only about 150 years ago. The indispensable word became familiar in modern European languages around 1850s. There was an understanding of somebody being responsible for something before it but in a very different sense. Prof. Zedania mentioned that under the old paradigm if something broke somebody was to be found to blame for that. It was an old concept of responsibility.

The new revolutionary sense of responsibility comes from the understanding of it as self-responsibility. This understanding is based on the idea of autonomy. He said that this sense of the term looks the most relevant in the context of university life. "Universities take responsibility for the problems, challenges, disasters for which they are not to be blamed.

Prof. Zedania stressed, that each of the six selected universities for the MCO research project had reflected on their own institutional experience of societal engagement in preparing their project proposal. Three case studies deal with the response of universities from three different countries to the crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. None of these universities was responsible for the invasion. But they were compelled to respond to the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the war. Prof. Zedania pointed out that the Research Committee is most interested in what can be learned from such responses, which can modify not only the third mission of universities, but the overall mission of higher education.

Prof. Zedania concluded that it is not easy for universities to respond consciously and deliberately to societal challenges. Difficulties are not only internal but there are some real forces outside the institutions, which do not want universities to get involved to engage with society.

At the end of his speech Prof. Zedania thanked all involved in the MCO efforts to think and rethink the issues of academic responsibility and invited everyone to participate in the activities undertaken by the Research Committee.

Ms. Julia Berruezo, MCO Research Assistant, started her presentation with the quote from MCU 2020: "Universities acknowledge that they have a responsibility to engage with and respond to the aspirations and challenges of the world and to the communities they serve, to benefit humanity and contribute to sustainability", that was the starting point for the research project.

Ms. Berruezo stressed that the 21st century has seen many natural and man-made disasters, and universities have rethought their role and their capability to engage and respond to these challenges.

She focused on the three activities of the Research Committee. The first one is the research project "the Responsive and Responsible University". The second one is the creation of a text repository, and the third comprises other initiatives. The general objectives of the research project are to increase awareness; to enhance understanding in the area; to develop frameworks and guidelines; to disseminate research findings; to encourage and facilitate research initiatives.

The idea of the project among others is to create a new link between universities and the MCO and with partner universities. Universities still face some challenges to put MCU principles into practice in their teaching, learning activities and research strategies. The mission of the MCO is to help these universities and to encourage their initiatives.

The universities involved in the project are:

- Vasyl` Stus Donetsk National University (Ukraine) focused on personnel motivation at the displaced universities;
- Wroclaw Medical University (Poland) focused on the problems of Ukrainian refugees in the context of war;
- University of Tetova (North Macedonia) focused on campaign against violence and bullying among students;
- Technical University of Dublin (Ireland) focused on making university more inclusive and engaged with the society;
- American International University (Bangladesh) focused on empowering women and building living areas to support communities;
- Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania) with the project focused on supporting community engagement.

Ms. Berruezo introduced the next initiative of the Research Committee. It was the Magna Charta Observatory`s Repository, the purpose of which is to preserve, disseminate, organise and store textual and audio files in topics related to the work of the MCO, namely university autonomy and academic freedom, HE responsiveness and responsibility, produced both within the scope of the organisation and outside. She invited all universities to collaborate with this project. It will be an open-access repository with the idea to share knowledge, to make it available, to support and engage universities, researchers, and students. The repository will include papers, conference proceedings, theses, videos, case studies in different languages. Signatories were invited to supply materials. Uploading will be done by the MCO research team. Quality of materials will be prioritised over volume. The sense of the repository`s logo is growing and stimulating the change.

More information can. Be found at: <https://www.magna-charta.org/activities-and-projects/mco-research-project>

Mr. David Lock closed the pre-conference session and invited all the participants to join a networking reception.

A recording of the Pre-conference session can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_1JfnXkxGK8

Read more at University World News:

From principle to practice: Magna Charta proves its worth
<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20230908101430567>

Renewal of cities: What role for Magna Charta universities?

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20231006141055992>

Ukraine seeks international support to stem brain drain

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20231028073035837>

The Secretary General's report can be found at: <https://www.magna-charta.org/agenda/universities-and-re-construction-of-cities-the-role-of-research-and-education>

Tuesday, 24th October

Conference

Universities and Re-Construction of Cities: The Role of Research and Education

The Conference started with welcoming words of Prof. Elżbieta Żądzińska, Rector of the University of Lodz, and introduction to the Conference theme by Dr. Patrick Deane, President of the Magna Charta Observatory's Governing Council, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Queens University in Canada, and Chair of the Conference.

Prof. Elżbieta Żądzińska warmly welcomed participants of the Conference. She was pleased that the discussions of the distinguished guests were taking place in the City of Lodz on its 600th anniversary.

Dr. Patrick Deane started his speech by sharing his view that the pre-conference session was very engaging, focusing on Ukraine and Poland and indicating the things to come in today's deliberations. Having this in mind, he mentioned that the Magna Charta Observatory's strategy envisaged a growing internationalization, growing reach beyond Europe and Bologna, where the Magna Charta has been rooted. There had been a trend of moving beyond the original site, where the MCU was signed, to other places in the world, bringing a consideration of the mission of universities into different locales. Dr. Deane mentioned that there had been a shift from MCU 1988, which was a declaration of principles that should underly universities' activities, to MCU 2020, which reaffirms all values articulated in 1988 document but also mentions the responsibilities of universities. It was a shift from abstract values that should underpin universities to the relevance of these values in historical, geographical, and political locations.

In his speech Dr. Deane referred to the Conference in Bologna last year, when one of the Ukrainian delegates stood up and said: "If we do our work well and correctly as educators there will be no need for war and there will be no need for violence". He stressed that "at all levels we must cherish that notion that education is the most salient defence of humanity against destructive and anti-social tendencies". Continuing his speech Dr. Deane said that "as educators we strive to vaccinate humanity against itself and its own tendencies and there is no guarantee of success. It is one of the reasons why it is so important to reaffirm the values of the Magna Charta annually and to ponder the relevance of those values both in the modern world and in the historical circumstances." All of these things brought the Magna Charta Observatory to select the topic of this Conference.

According to Mr. President, educators and universities are always thought to be agents of social construction. But in the current situation it is more relevant to speak about reconstruction of both cities and communities caused by hostilities, natural disasters, global warming etc.

Dr. Deane concluded his speech by raising a question about the MCO`s future strategy and inviting all the participants to take an active role in thinking about the future of the Observatory and its role, about the personal and corporate responsibilities and university`s answers to the current challenges for the world.

Dr. Deane introduced the three keynote themes and speakers:

a) The Contribution of Research

Ed Brinksma, President of the Executive Board, Erasmus University of Rotterdam, President of the UNIC European University of Post-industrial cities.

b) The Contribution of Education

Elfithri Rahmah, Chief of Section, Capacity Development, and Water Family Coordination (CDW) – Online The role of Research and Education in Addressing Water Security: UNESCO Contribution within the IHP IX (2022-2029).

c) Reconstruction following situations of Conflict

Brendan O'Malley, Editor of University World News, perspectives formed over many years from visiting conflict zones (such as Afghanistan, Thailand, Kosovo, Philippines, Palestine/Israel, Northern Ireland and Cyprus) and researching and writing on the issue, including for the Education Under Attack studies for UNESCO, etc on learning perspectives.

Prof. Ed Brinksma started his speech on **the contribution of research** by underlining the importance of the Conference topic not only from the point of reconstruction of cities but also the transformation of regions.

He shared his background and briefly presented the history of the Erasmus University of Rotterdam, which originated with the School of Economics in 1913 as a direct initiative by the people running the port of Rotterdam. At that time port cities realized that they needed more scientifically educated people to develop the economy and improve the well-being of people. Rotterdam like Coventry in the UK was completely destroyed in the Second World War and had to rebuild itself. The university contributed greatly to the local economy and the development of the port.

He mentioned that as well as the Erasmus University of Rotterdam, universities such as Hamburg University of Technology and the University of Twente were created both as reactions to the destruction caused by the Second World War and the resetting of the global economic system. All of these universities were concerned with the rejuvenation of the local economy. They were large employers in their environments and enterprising. Entrepreneurial universities tended to be innovative.

During his speech Prof. Brinksma highlighted the global challenges that have impact on cities: climate and sustainability, inequality and health, geopolitical stability and security. Societies had become more diverse because of migration, problems of integration and polarization. Larger cities have intersectional problems. He stressed that it is important for researchers to involve communities and their particular context (as an example, the port in Rotterdam or crimes in neighbourhoods as very important contexts) in the research.

Prof. Brinksma focused on regional collaboration, including collaboration between universities, as a crucial thing for the successful transformation of cities. "If you want to have a real and holistic approach through the challenges for the cities, regions, countries, the world, you need to have the full spectrum of disciplines at your disposal". A good example is a collaboration between the Erasmus University of Rotterdam, the Delft University of Technology, and the Erasmus Medical Centre.

One of the most powerful joint initiatives is "Resilient Delta". Rotterdam is the city of water, which is vital for the Port but at the same time a source of challenges. It presents an intersectoral problem connected to education, health, social divide and migration. The transition into the "green" port for the largest port of Europe, which Rotterdam is, is not just a technological question but a question of management as well. The role of universities is to prepare people who can lead this transition and to implement a new format of the research.

Prof. Brinksma announced that the Erasmus University of Rotterdam does not only work in a local space but on an international level with the aim of generalizing and comparing to share the best practices. That is why the UNIC Alliance (European University of Cities and Post-Industrial Transition) has been created as an initiative of 10 European universities. It is not only a network of universities but the network of cities. The concept of engaged research has been produced by the UNIC. The examples of realizing this concept in practice are the "Quintuple helix" and "City Labs".

Prof. Brinksma concluded his speech by stressing that cities and universities should be partners and living labs for studying. But they should be very careful to involve their local populations. People have their own understanding of problems, and they want to participate on an equal level. Universities are not always seen as natural partners. "For the reconstruction or transformation of the city or region you need local networking to get the integral approach. We need European and international networking for the scaling of this... I am very grateful for the role that the Observatory plays in this context... We need this organisation in the future to have the right discussions and to preserve our autonomy and our role in the society", Prof. Brinksma ended.

Dr. Elfithri Rahmah presented **the role of research and education in addressing water security** and especially UNESCO's contribution within the IHP (Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme) -XI (2022-2029). She started with underlining that the main challenge for water is how to put the understanding of water in the minds of people. She also focused on some

challenges for water in research and education: limited political will, language limitation, expansion of the use of new technologies and limited funding. UNESCO supports countries in water education and capacity development for improving water management.

IHP is the only Intergovernmental Cooperation Programme of the United Nations System dedicated to water research, water resources management and education and capacity development. Focusing on international cooperation, it started in 1975. The principle of education and training was one of the key themes. Since 2022 the main focus has been on water education in the Fourth industrial revolution including sustainability. The priority areas for IHP-XI are scientific research and innovation, water education, the data-knowledge gap, integrated water resources management and water governance. In order to implement key activities various working groups have been established. The UNESCO Water "Family" includes 30 water Centres, including one in Poland and one of the UNESCO water-related chairs is at the University of Lodz. The UNESCO Water "Family" has launched 16 flagship initiatives, addressing specific issues related to water.

Dr. Rahmah underlined that one of the most important outputs of these research initiatives was the strengthening of international scientific cooperation to address unsolved problems in hydrology, improving scientific understanding of hydrological cycles across river basins and aquifers. One more important input was ecohydrology research and innovation at UNESCO-designated sites conducted and shared by the scientific community. It was led by Poland.

During her speech Dr. Rahmah presented a specific subprogram related to water education. Under this program researchers are developing new indicators on water education and methodology for a global indicator in the context of 2030 agenda for sustainable development, focusing on the youth engagement to activities. There is the lack of both teachers and professional skills to teach water education on a high level. UNESCO is going to fill this gap by implementing those specific initiatives with the engagement such countries as Gabon, Uruguay and Italy. Dr. Rahmah invited countries to join the process of developing new global indicators for water education.

Dr. Rahmah stressed that the sixth UN sustainable development goal (SDG) is clean water and sanitation, which is unlikely to be achieved without SDG 4 devoted to quality education. There is a growing demand for education and capacity development for all stakeholders (institutions and human) in the field of water security.

At the end of her presentation Dr. Rahmah mentioned that in June 2023 the Kahovka Dam, a crucial hydroelectric plant on Dnipro River (Ukraine), was destroyed by Russian shelling, leading to a severe ecological crisis and evacuation of thousands of Ukrainians. It became one of the most awful catastrophes for water systems. UNESCO has been working with Ukraine and specific liaison officers to address the long-term impacts of the Kahovka Dam destruction on water resources management options. It contains a number of

research and education activities to support Ukraine in dealing with economic, social and environmental challenges caused by the destruction. She announced that the UNESCO Water "Family" received funding from the government of France to distribute water tests and portable water laboratory kits to schools and local communities in Ukraine.

Find more information at: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/water-security/hydrology/programmes>

Mr. Brendan O'Malley made a presentation on the topic **"From conflict to reconstruction. Making education institutions contributors to peace"**. At the beginning he mentioned that conflict can take many forms, and damage to infrastructure is only one of many impacts. "Students drop out, teachers leave, families flee the area, education may be closed down indefinitely, and education investment shelved for years. There is fear, despondency and psycho-social trauma affecting many individuals, sometimes for years. Beyond that, the deep, bitter divisions in society are entrenched by war", said Mr. O'Malley.

He stressed that "without real peace, anything you rebuild can be destroyed again, whether immediately if conflict is still simmering, or later as conflict resurfaces". Mr. O'Malley, as a consultant for UNESCO and later for a coalition of UN and other international NGOs, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), was a researcher for the *Education under Attack* report, which was a regular global report on targeted military and political violence against education institutions, students, teachers, academics and other personnel.

Mr. O'Malley mentioned that "Universities are the key providers of higher education and so are concerned about how and why they are being targeted. But attacks on schools also matter to them, since not only do the schools provide their pipeline of potential students but universities train schoolteachers and education researchers who help to shape education policy and practice". He focused on two main aspects of reconstruction after conflict for universities. Firstly, the reconstruction of their own facilities and educational communities. Secondly, their role in the reconstruction of society around them and the establishment of lasting peace.

Almost one-third of all attacks on education in 2022 took place in just three countries: Ukraine, Myanmar, and Burkina Faso, with the war in Ukraine accounting for the majority. In higher education the methods of attack include all the physical attacks and threats to life as well as curbs on academic freedom and university autonomy. "Authoritarian governments will frequently enforce a restricted curriculum, banning certain subjects from being taught and banning certain topics from being researched or certain findings being published", Mr. O'Malley stressed.

Then he addressed two approaches in the context of reducing the impact of attack and enabling education to contribute fully to peace and development. The first is to improve protection and resilience in the face of attacks. The second is to think about whether education itself is contributing to conflict and how to turn

that around so that education becomes a driver for peace. According to Mr. O'Malley it is possible to prevent attacks or conflict in different practical ways, including defense and deterrence, but building lasting peace is possible only by addressing the motives and causes of violence, which usually involves addressing deeply held grievances such as systemically unequal or unfair treatment.

Mr. O'Malley asked the audience of the Conference to evaluate with an open mind whether and how institutions might be contributing to conflict themselves. There are certain key factors that must be addressed by policy-makers and education authorities and institutions to prevent education contributing to conflict. This may require extra investment in education and adaptation of education content and methods of teaching and learning to promote peace, mutual respect and understanding, human rights and responsible citizenship. International research can help encourage intercultural dialogue and understanding.

Mr. O'Malley concluded with the statement that all the above-mentioned measures "require universities to work in partnership with communities to raise awareness, set peacebuilding agendas and develop capacities for societal change".

Find more information at: <https://eua2022.protectingeducation.org/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oX48_vyn0c&t=16s

After the presentations Dr. Deane invited the participants to discuss their topic. He started by asking Mr. O'Malley when and whether universities should make statements on the geopolitical questions. Mr. O'Malley answered that this was a subject featured in the University World News recent article on how universities should react, for example, on Hamas's attacks. Some universities said that they did not feel it was their role to take a position in conflicts. "When things happen in conflicts they can change very quickly. So it is often unwise to make a bold statement very quickly... But universities would like to have a possibility to debate the issues freely basing on academic freedom".

Prof. Oksana Zamora (Sumy State University, Ukraine) added a comment to Mr. O'Malley's speech. "It is sad that we have such a long list of challenges and such a short list of resilience measures in the conflicts... The situation in Ukraine showed that the measures for resilience can be wider, based on voluntary help. So, the resilience is built both internally and externally". She stressed that the case of Ukraine showed that signing agreements with Russians in order to stop shelling educational institutions and to make peaceful zones had not worked in practice since 2014.

Prof. Zedania asked Prof. Brinksma to explain what Quintuple Helix meant. He also addressed to Mr. O'Malley the statement that sometimes Universities conflict with their communities spreading the alien values. But it could be seen as one of the function of universities. Prof. Zedania asked what Mr. O'Malley thought about this.

Prof. Brinksma explained the environmental context, that should be considered by the government, educational institutions, citizens, and industry. Mr. O'Malley started by addressing to Prof. Zamora. He said that the measure he mentioned had worked in some contexts and countries, like Nepal, Afghanistan, for example. Negotiations with armed groups can take place but it very much depends on the context. It does not work in cases when destruction of the civilian infrastructure is an aim of terrorists against the international law. Then Mr. O'Malley expressed his support to the statement of Prof. Zedania. The minority cultures in some countries feel the injustice that does not affect the majority culture. It is important to know to what extent the alien values of minority are treated as alien.

Dr. Deane asked Dr. Rahmah about the means of cooperation between UNESCO chairs and universities on water education. Dr. Rahmah said that some of the 76 UNESCO chairs are located at universities like the University of Lodz. There are also working groups on cross-sectoral cooperation at universities, which deal with ecohydrology and water quality. She invited all countries to collaboration in the sphere of water education and research.

The last comment for further discussion was from Mr. Hassan, director of Işık University (Turkey). He stressed that the concept of post-industrial cities is a very large one from two aspect: reconstruction, from the one hand, and transformation, from the other hand, which is a more general subject. The Işık University has contributed to the transformation of the environment in Istanbul, whose population is more than 20 million people. This transformation was caused by demolishing both buildings and identities for the sake of gentrification of the city. Prof. Brinksma responded to this comment by mentioning that transformation can be very local and specific. Universities in this process can take the role of civic universities, engaging with the environment and making changes. Some point of transformation can continue for decades like in the case of port cities. "The world is very rich with different levels of aggregation", Prof. Brinksma concluded.

After the refreshment break the next panel session **"Case studies of universities which have actually contributed to re-construction in different situations/locations E.g. natural disasters, pandemics, etc"** started. The purpose of the session was to share evidence of universities contributing to reconstruction of different types and in different ways to inspire ideas. It was moderated by Dr. Ivan Pacheco, MCO ambassador and Research Fellow, Boston College, USA.

Dr. Ivan Pacheco invited everyone to get involved in the discussion, to take notes and to prepare questions and comments. He introduced the panellists for the session:

1. Gian Luca Morini, University of Bologna, Italy. Case from Europe – To focus on post-floods reconstruction in Emilia-Romagna.

2. John C. Austin, Former President, Michigan State Board of Education. Case from USA – To focus on the reconstruction of the region of the Rust Belt that experienced industrial decline starting in the 1950s.
3. Pornchai Mongkhonvanit, President, Siam University, Thailand. Case from Asia – To focus on attention paid to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr. Pacheco mentioned that these are people from three continents. But it is not just a geographical presentation: three different types of settings are presented; natural disaster, economic downturn, and a general view on the sustainable development of the region.

Prof. Gian Luca Morini focused on the actions of the University of Bologna (UNIBO) and especially the Engineering School of Forlì on the flooding event that occurred in Emilia Romagna in May 2023. He demonstrated how negative events could accelerate the transfer of knowledge from the labs to the market.

Devastating flooding impacted wide areas of the region of Emilia-Romagna in May 2023 due to three separate heavy rainfall events on the 2nd, 10th, and 16th of May. Over twenty rivers and streams had broken their banks, causing flooding in 37 municipalities (Bologna, Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena, and Rimini). Authorities also reported hundreds of landslides. More than 60 000 people were evacuated and 622 roads have been closed.

Prof. Morini described how the University of Bologna immediately activated its department of geology and undertook a series of preliminary works to clean the slope of vegetation and to implement a plastic sheet to prevent a saturation of the slope in case of rains. The specialists also designed sensors for a continuous monitoring system with the aim of studying the evolution of the landslide which was close to houses. The Centre for International Cooperation in Long Pipe Experiments (CICLoPE) is a research laboratory which allows the worldwide best space and time resolved measurements in turbulent pipe flows. The main objective of CICLoPE, and in particular of the Long Pipe, the large-scale tunnel installed, is to study high Reynolds numbers turbulent flows.

Prof. Morini pointed out that the new site of the Cesena Campus was very close to the Savio river and experienced a flooding of the lower level. The cost of this intervention for the University of Bologna was 100 000 Euro. Also, all the basement floors of the Engineering school site of Forlì were flooded and the cost of intervention was 200 000 Euro. Restoration work is underway to be able to restart the heating systems when the winter season starts.

Having all these facts in mind, the University of Bologna activated a series of actions in order to help the region. Prof. Morini focused mainly on four types of actions: staff-dedicated actions, research-dedicated actions, student-dedicated actions and society-addressed actions.

Firstly, emergency teleworking and satellite stations were activated with the aim of reducing the need for travel for all the staff affected by the flooding. A “vacation bank” among staff members (for UNIBO employees to donate vacation to the UNIBO employees involved in flooding) was activated. Compensation for

damages suffered on movable and immovable property up to a maximum of 10k€ per employee was proposed. Psychological support services intensified their activities.

Secondly, there was cooperation between UNIBO research teams and regional industries for the development of innovative devices able to limit the climate change.

Thirdly, fee exemption 2022-23 (paid by the Ministry of University) and fee exemption 2023-24 (paid by UNIBO) were proposed for students, as well as extraordinary exam and graduation sessions. Thesis awards dedicated to the climate change topic were implemented.

Fourthly, partnerships were formed with external organisations for co-financing building interventions on UNIBO buildings and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems were launched with the agreement of the commissioning structure for scientific support. The group of experts (UNIBO researchers) launched activities for advising municipalities on: landslides, agriculture, hydraulics and hydrology, communications.

Prof. Morini presented the successful case of cooperation with external partners in the event of emergencies. It was a case of the Engineering School of Forlì and two external partners, which offered to sponsor the replacement of the old damaged components. The innovative aspect is that 2 heat pumps using Propane will be tested under real working conditions over the next two years.

Prof. Morini concluded his presentation with the statement that "The experience of UNIBO shows how severe events can be transformed into opportunities if it becomes possible to involve external partners who are interested to develop, with the help of research teams, a new generation of "climate friendly" devices (by means of which the probability of these kind of events can be strongly reduced). Universities can use their building stock as an "open lab" to test "innovative" devices".

Mr. John C. Austin started his presentation by appreciating the spirit and orientation of the Conference. He mentioned that University of Michigan was founded in 1819. Even though much younger universities have been central to the economic growth of the region, as well as helping people in their industrial heartlands cope with dramatic economic restructuring. Universities are a central fulcrum for local, regional and national regeneration, economic, cultural and spiritual renewal, including after disastrous and destructive events. "All our countries and many communities in the US have experienced the collapse of their defining industry...Midwest (Great Lakes Region of the USA), the North of England, North of France, Donbas Region in Ukraine", he said.

Mr. Austin continued his speech with a brief presentation of the university's history in USA. Colleges and universities were established early on our East Coast – Harvard, William and Mary - to train the elites, as well as the doctors, clergy, and other professionals. "Over time, one of the great enablers of American society as well as its economic growth and might—was the great

democratization of education—and spread of learning institutions across the country”. Great public universities in the early 1800s and land grant universities during the civil war were created including the University of Michigan, Penn State, Ohio State University and the University of Iowa. These were built purposefully to advance commerce, agriculture, and industry and to provide higher education to the masses, not just the elites. Massive public investment continued after the Second World War. The federal government poured millions into basic and applied research and development in health and computing, leading directly to innovations from the internet, to GPS and new miracle drugs. Bills for veterans and high-quality low-cost higher education for all gave the US the best educated citizens in the world.

Mr. Austin stressed that “technical skills, engineers, computer scientists as well as critical thinkers, those who can work with people unlike themselves, communicators, those who can adapt to change and the broad liberal arts are perhaps the most important skills in an economy of constant change... Today’s economic currency is talent; and talent likes to be, live and work in environments, like University and college towns, not just because of the shared work, but also is arts, culture, interesting people and things to do”.

He pointed out that in those areas where communities collapsed and old industries restructured, automated, moved or died, universities are the most powerful building block of a regenerated economy and community. Then Mr. Austin gave the examples of industrial regions, which found renewed economic hope and opportunity. Among them are Pittsburgh (US), Lowell Massachusetts (US), South Bend (US), Ruhr (Germany), Manchester (UK).

Mr. Austin concluded with the inspiring statement: “Even if you care about the economy, the State cannot and should not direct, what disciplines [in universities] are valuable, and what type of education will be rewarded. Let genius flourish and find its realization and both the individual and society will be enriched and rewarded”.

Dr. Pornchai Mongkhonvanit presented the case from Asia focusing on the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs). He started by underlining the fact that communities worldwide need universities more than ever before. Universities should make themselves relevant in order to promote the wellbeing of the people facing environmental degradation, geopolitical problems, problems with peace and security.

Dr. Mongkhonvanit mentioned that Asia accounts for three quarters of the world’s population and resources. Three out of top-five global economies (Japan, China, and India) are in Asia. According to his research, half of the world’s carbon dioxide and methane emission are made by Asia. “Together we share the same planet, and we should find the answers to the challenges together”, Dr. Mongkhonvanit said.

He identified ACD (the Asian Cooperation Dialogue) University Network and AUPF (Asian University Presidents Forum) as organisations which are dealing with universities and sustainable development in Asia. ACD tries to create a network

representing all the countries in Asia and includes universities under the auspices of the governments of those countries. The AUPF was started by China and the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies.

Dr. Mongkhonvanit highlighted the particular problem which Bangkok is facing. Every year the level of the sea is rising and the land area is declining. Citizens are trying to develop new technologies for protecting the land. Universities and researchers are fighting against land erosion and climate crises together with the communities. Siam University has declared a strategy to become 'Carbon neutral' by 2045. 'Non-emission' vehicles are already used on the university campus. Dr. Mongkhonvanit presented the initiative of the Siam University and community to turn dangerous parts of the city, for example, under the bridge, into healthy and safe spaces. Siam University worked with the District Authority to develop the area under the flyover to develop a "pocket garden" and artistic zone. This activity among others is aimed at encouraging the community involvement. Another initiative is a creation of a "Time bank" for the better wellbeing and quality of life and the preparation for an aging society. The promotion of tourism is the subject of cooperation between universities and society. The Governor of Bangkok also takes part in these activities.

Dr. Mongkhonvanit stressed, that interaction between university and community is always multidisciplinary. Trust is a crucial element. "Universities should not mandate people but listen to them". He concluded by asking the question "What should we do if we want to see universities as useful institutions?" He answered that "We need to build a network for working together and for fostering and scaling up cooperation on a global level...All of us should make universities to be the hope of the people".

Dr. Ivan Pacheco thanked the panellists for the informative and inspiring presentations.

Then **Mr. David Lock**, MCO Secretary General of the Magna Charta Observatory, made a briefing for the afternoon and invited everyone to participate in the World Café Session.

A recording of the session on 24th of October can be viewed at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kD6RMpmIRpo>

World Café Sessions

World Café Topics and partners

Separate reports have been prepared on World Café tables which can be accessed by clicking the links at the bottom of the summary reports below.

A report of the sessions can be read here: <https://www.magna-charta.org/agenda/universities-and-re-construction-of-cities-the-role-of-research-and-education>

1. Student Perspectives on engaging with society and reconstruction:

- Student essay competition winners presented and discussed their essays on student involvement in universities serving society;
- Global Students' Forum - student involvement in reconstruction
- Students engaging with society as part of their programmes (Session led by GSF and ESU)

Host: Peter Kwasi Kodjie, Secretary General, All-Africa Students' Union

Rapporteur: Julia Berruezo, Research Assistant, Magna Charta Observatory.

A recording of the World Café Session 'Student Perspectives on engaging with society and reconstruction of cities' can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdCmC0X0Lig>

2. European Universities and the creation of a truly European innovative ecosystem of post-industrial cities

Host: Peter Scholten, Professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam - UNIC

Rapporteur: Ivan Pacheco, Research Fellow, Centre for International Higher Education. Boston College, USA.

3. Building back sustainably: University engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals for research and teaching for reconstruction

Host: Hilligje van't Land, Secretary General, International Association of Universities

Rapporteur: Martine Rahier, member of the MCO Governing Council (Session with IAU).

4. Building Equity and Fairness into reconstruction activities (with special reference to Gender)

Host: Cristina Demaria, Vice-Rector Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna, Italy

5. Including Values in leadership training for staff and students

Hosts: Martina Darmanin, Member of the MCO Governing Council & Professor John Davies, MCO Ambassador

Rapporteur: Sebastian Berger, GSF

6. Magna Charta Observatory – have your say on its future strategy

Host: Patrick Deane, President of the MCO Governing Council

Rapporteur: David Lock, Secretary General, Magna Charta Observatory.

7. Living your Values: the MCO's Living Values Project

Host: Mandla Makhanya, Worclaw Medical University, Poland and representative(s) from pilot sites

Rapporteur: Caroline Parker, MCO Ambassador.

8. University and realization of social function: Life-Long Learning and interaction with local authorities, business and civil society.

Host: Tetiana Oriekhova, Dean, Vasyl` Stus Donetsk National University

Rapporteur: Anna Osmolovska, Deputy Director, Educational Academy "UAdvise", Ukraine

9. The role of digitally enhanced education in enhancing the resilience of a HEI and a university community

Host: Oksana Zamora, PhD, associate professor, International Economic Relations Department, Sumy State University

Rapporteur: Marcelo Knobel, Member of the MCO Governing Council.

10. Supporting students: experience of Polish universities

Hosts: Marcin Palys – Member of the MCO Governing Council & Kevin

Lewicki - President of the Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland

Rapporteur: Giga Zedania, Member of the MCO Governing Council.

Read more at University World News:

Make education institutions contributors to peace, not war

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20231103081431835>

Magna Charta urges post-industrial cities to pull together

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=2023110308212388>

Wednesday, 25th October

Ceremony for the signature of the Magna Charta Universitatum MCU2020

Mr. David Lock, the Secretary General of the Magna Charta Observatory, announced that this event is the Magna Charta Observatory's most significant ceremony. It was being held in Poland for the first time at the University of Lodz. The ceremony included the signing to mark the accession of 35 universities. The Magna Charta Universitatum was first signed in 1988 by 388 rectors of universities gathered in Bologna to mark ninth centenary of the Alma Mater Studiorum.

The Secretary General invited the academic procession to enter the hall.

Madame Rector, **Prof. Elżbieta Żądzińska** addressed the Assembly. Prof. Żądzińska expressed her confidence that the University of Lodz was the right place to celebrate the values which are "the reliable moral compass in a dynamically changing and challenging world". In 2021 the University of Lodz adopted its new Strategy for 2021-2030 and introduced a new set of values but still these still included the values of: courage, curiosity, commitment, collaboration, and respect. "I believe that our collective efforts contribute to building strong modern universities through their vocation and preparing for the future", she concluded.

Prof. Giovanni Molari, Rector of the Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna and President of the Magna Charta Observatory, extended a warm welcome to the participants. He mentioned, that the MCO Conference confirmed the enduring commitment of universities worldwide to the principles and values set out in the Magna Charta. The aim of the creation of the MCU was to reflect the evolving landscape of higher education, to guide and inspire the collective missions of universities, growing into a global alliance.

Prof. Molari stressed that extraordinary problems such as conflicts, international instability, the pandemic, climate changes, floods and migration need extraordinary solutions from the signatories of the Magna Charta. According to Prof. Molari, it contains not only theoretical academic reflection but also the positive impacts that universities can help society to achieve. It is crucial for universities to feel the gap between knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination, to embrace their civic role and responsibilities. The MCO conference provides a platform for engaging these issues. It is a tool for making academic values living values and hub of cultural exchange. Hosting the Magna Charta Observatory, the University of Bologna is deeply committed to academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and social engagement. It supports MCO's work both in spirit and through the financial contributions. "May signing universities keep on working together, supporting and trusting each other in the

promotion of shared values, in a constant and constructive dialogue”, Prof. Molari said. He concluded by thanking the University of Lodz, Polish rectors and academic communities for hosting the Conference and for the general support for colleagues and students in critical times and by welcoming all signing institutions.

Mr. Herman Van Rompuy, Former President of the European Council, Doctor Honoris Causa of the University of Lodz and Honorary Professor of the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, gave a speech entitled 'Europe at a crossroads. Also a challenge for our universities'. He started by asking a question as to what kind of world we lived in and what role can, and should, universities play in it?

Mr. Rompuy highlighted that uncertainty in general has been heightened since the 2008 financial crisis by a succession of events that went by the collective name of 'permanent crisis'. After 2008, the eurozone came under threat followed by an economic recession; then there was the refugee influx of 2015-2016, the terrorist attacks in the same period, the pandemic that dragged on for three years, the invasion of Ukraine, high inflation fuelled by looming energy shortages, climate disasters, the Israeli-Hamas war and so on. Each time the causes were different.

Mr. Rompuy pointed out that the war in Ukraine has an impact on the world order beyond Ukraine in many ways. “Ukraine is a game-changing country for Europe and for the West, for better or for worse depending on the war’s outcome. Ukraine’s integration into the European Union and NATO someday would constitute a power shift that could rival the fall of the Berlin Wall and German unification”, he continued. The war in Ukraine has given a stronger voice to a number of Central and Eastern European countries.

According to Mr. Rompuy, the world is multi-polar but there is also a global bi-polar systemic rivalry between two global actors in the economic and military spheres [USA and China], that will not disappear rapidly.

The digital revolution is changing people themselves and their 'way of life'. The EU is also an example of how history can be changed. “There is now a queue of countries that are candidate members of the Union totalling about 65 million people, as many as the UK today”, Mr. Rompuy stressed.

He continued with the statement that “in history, wars end on the battlefield not at the negotiating table. After the end of the war in Ukraine, we need to work on restoring global trust - especially between China, the US and the EU, knowing very well that the pre-invasion time is not coming back. The EU itself, for whom the war was a total surprise, has become much less naive... We must continue to work for an open world despite the difficulties”.

Then Mr. Rompuy focused on the strong features of the European Union in the sphere of scientific research. The best known is the Horizon Europe programme, which is the largest scientific program in the world. At the same time he pointed out that the EU lacks big companies in the new technologies. According to Mr.

Rompuy, security and climate now regarded as being more important than the traditional economic agenda. More than ever political courage is needed. However, responsibility must be taken in civil society as well.

Mr. Rompuy continued by underlining that “universities have a big role to play in the re-vitalisation of our society, in economic innovation, in moral rebuilding, in strengthening democratic consciousness. Revolutions begin with pen and ink. The same is true for evolutions”. He pointed out how it is important to build the balance between the global, the European and the local; between the protection of freedoms and the need for security; between individuality and openness when it comes to multiculturalism; between the individual and the various layers of communities in a society; between generosity and stability in migration. This search for balance responds to the desire of most people for harmony, for justice and progress. “Democracy is a conversation”, he said.

Mr. Rompuy concluded with the thought that “in the global war on values lies an irreplaceable role of universities in the critical times we live in... Universities should be expert in humanity... Intellectuals and universities have once more a big role to play”.

Then the Rector of the University of Lodz, the Rector of the Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna and the President of the Magna Charta Observatory and President of the Magna Charta Observatory Council welcomed 35 universities from 12 countries who signed the MCU2020 during the ceremony.

Prof. Maciej Żukowski, Rector of the Poznań University of Economics and Business, addressed the gathering on behalf of new signatories. He thanked the Magna Charta Observatory for protecting and promoting the fundamental values and University rights established in the MCU. He expressed appreciation to the host – the University of Lodz. Prof. Żukowski mentioned that universities have acknowledged their responsibilities to strengthen the role of academia in saving the planet and promoting health and wellbeing around the world, as well as democracy and freedom. He expressed his pride that the Conference took place in Poland, a country that over the last three decades has gone through an extremely successful economic, political, and societal transformation with a large contribution from Polish universities through research and education.

Prof. Żukowski pointed out that the City of Lodz is a perfect example of the deep transformation of Poland led by universities. He expressed the strong belief that “a similarly successful transformation will be experienced by Ukrainians after their victory in the war started by Russia. Ukraine is fighting also for us showing a deep commitment to our common values and paying the highest price for this. It is our responsibility to support Ukraine; both now and during the reconstruction”.

He concluded by mentioning the parliamentary elections in Poland, during which the majority of voters, including the Polish students, have clearly demonstrated their commitment to the values of democracy, openness, respect to other people and truth. "It was an optimistic signal for all of us", he ended.

Signature of Memorandum of Understanding with the Global Student Forum.

Mr. David Lock said that for many years the Magna Charta Observatory has welcomed students as members of its governing body. They were playing a valuable role in the MCOs' Living Values work. This year the MCOs' Governing Council considered and approved a request from the Global Student Forum (GSF) to enter into a formal memorandum of understanding to outline collective strategic priorities.

Mr. Sebastian Berger, Executive Director of the GSF together with **Dr. Patrick Deane**, President of the Magna Charta Observatory Council, signed the agreement. The student members of the MCO's Governing Council Ms. Martina Darmanin and Mr. Peter Kwasi Kodjie witnessed the signing.

Mr. Sebastian Berger addressed the assembly on behalf of 200 national and regional student unions from 127 countries united by GSF and expressed gratitude to MCO for the ongoing partnership and trust and recognition of the student movement. He underlined the importance of the efforts of the entire academic community in standing firmly behind the freedom of expression, institutional autonomy, and academic freedoms. "We are united by these values and proud to take this alliance to a new level", he concluded.

Presentation of Certificates to winners of MCO Student essay competition.

Mr. David Lock mentioned that this year for the first time MCO had organised an essay competition for students. The essay title was "How might students exercise more influence in enabling their universities to make a more effective contribution to society". Five winning students were invited to Lodz and participated in the conference proceedings.

The success of students was recognized by presenting them with a certificate.

The winners are:

Ernesto Fabbri, Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna, Italy

Pamela Eyre Victoria Lira, University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines

Jayson Pasaol, Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences
Wroclaw, Poland

Diana Stefanova-Slobodiana, Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical
University, Ukraine

Christina Williams, Norman Manley Law School, Jamaica

Presentation of Certificates to judges of MCO Student essay competition.

Mr. David Lock mentioned that every judge of the MCO student essay competition had had to read and grade 40 essays - in excess of 80,000 words. The Magna Charta Observatory expressed its appreciation of the judges by presenting them with a certificate.

Members of the judging panel:

Caroline Sundberg (Chair) Brussels representative - Lärosäten Syd/ EU Policy Officer at Lund University and former Member of the Governing Council of the Magna Charta Observatory.

Cristina Demaria, Rector's delegate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion of Alma Mater Studiorum – The University of Bologna and Member of the Governing Council of the Magna Charta Observatory.

Peter Kwasi Kodjie, Secretary General All-Africa Students Union (AASU), Ghana, and Member of the Governing Council of the Magna Charta Observatory.

Marcelo Knobel, former Rector of the University of Campinas (Unicamp), in Brazil and Member of the Governing Council of the Magna Charta Observatory.

Catharine Stimpson, Professor and Dean Emerita of the Graduate School of Arts and Science, New York University, USA, and Member of the Governing Council of the Magna Charta Observatory.

Concluding remarks

Dr. Patrick Deane, President of the Magna Charta Observatory Council, thanked everyone for a moving ceremony and the University of Lodz for the extraordinary days of the Conference. He pointed out that it was important to end the Conference with a ceremony. It is a tribute to the wisdom of the founders of the Magna Charta and the authors of the original document of 1988. The ceremony unites people of different cultures, languages, nationalities and celebrates the values which can be extraordinarily difficult to uphold depending on where academics work. "The ceremony does testify to a broad consensus about the value of the work... We all do believe that the values that universities stand for and the notion that increasing understanding, truth and collaboration around the world is a key to addressing the challenges we face", he said.

Prof. Elżbieta Żądzińska, Rector of the University of Lodz, stressed that "Magna Charta may be a code for a professional conduct for universities as well as a set of guidelines in which academics work and live by helping us to overcome crisis. Madame Rector thanked all the participants who travelled to Lodz to discuss the challenges and beliefs that all universities share. She

expressed the words of appreciation to the authorities, public figures, diplomats, rectors and presidents for attending the Conference, and administrative staff for making this event a reality. At the end Prof. Żądzińska invited the participants for performance of the University of Lodz`s choir.

Report by Dr Anna Osmolovska
Conference Rapporteur

A recording of the Ceremony can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnGq93jMDgo>

Read more at:



<https://www.uni.lodz.pl/en/employees-zone/news/details/magna-charta-universitatum-2023-at-the-university-of-lodz-start-of-the-conference>

<https://www.uni.lodz.pl/en/news/details/trzy-dni-magna-charta-universitatum-na-ul-36-nowych-sygnatariuszy-126-uczestnikow-z-36-panstw>



<https://www.kpi.kharkov.ua/eng/2023/11/03/rector-of-the-ntu-kharkiv-polytechnic-institute-yevgen-sokol-signed-the-magna-charta-universitatum/>

Collegium Civitas

<https://civitas.edu.pl/en/our-university/news/magna-charta-universitatum-signing-ceremony-in-poland>



<https://udpu.edu.ua/en/news/participation-in-the-magna-charta-observatory-conference>



<https://kdpu.edu.ua/en/university/news/22999-attention-for-applicants-in-2023-additional-admission.html>



<https://ug.edu.pl/news/en/5959/ug-signed-declaration-freedom-and-autonomy-universities-magna-charta-universitatum>



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OF ECONOMICS
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<https://ue.poznan.pl/en/news/pueb-rector-signed-magna-charta-universitatum/>



<https://erasmusplus.org.ua/en/news/the-magna-charta-universitatum-conference-universities-and-re-construction-of-cities-the-role-of-research-and-education-23-25-10-2023-lodz/>