



Students and lecturers from 15 universities in the FUCE network gathered in the medieval Italian town of Gubbio in July to learn about, discuss and question the ideas and experiences that give shape to the continent of Europe (see page 4).

FUCE STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH LEBANESE UNIVERSITIES

At the beginning of this New Year and new decade, I send warm greetings to all 59 members of the European Federation of Catholic Universities. In particular, as President of FUCE, I would like to express our Federation's concern for the **Catholic Universities of Lebanon**, which are experiencing so much political and economic turmoil in recent times. All FUCE's members are anxious about the situation in Lebanon and the wider Middle East. We stand in solidarity with you and are praying for a peaceful and just resolution to the many complex crises engulfing your region.

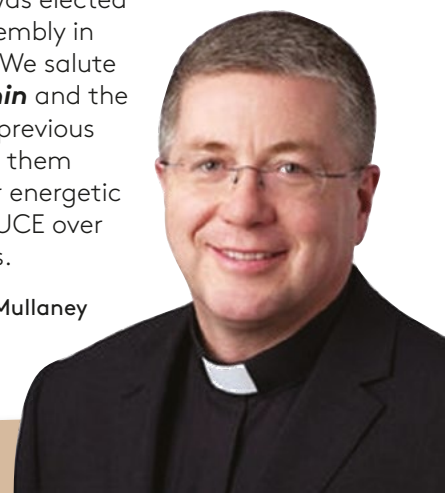
Although our world seems more uncertain each day, a supernatural Hope given by God's Spirit moves us in our respective countries, societies and catholic higher education institutions, to share and spread that Hope even more during 2020.

During 2019, we welcomed three new Spanish Catholic Universities into the FUCE network: **Universidad San Dámaso**, **Universidad Francisco de Vitoria**, and **Universidad Loyola Andalucía**. These relatively young universities bring new vitality and richness to FUCE and I look forward to visiting these institutions in the coming year.

New Board

2019 marked a period of transition for FUCE. A new Board with myself as its President was elected at a General Assembly in Antwerp in May. We salute **Dr Thierry Magnin** and the members of the previous Board and thank them sincerely for their energetic stewardship of FUCE over the past six years.

Rev. Prof. Michael Mullaney
President FUCE





The new board elected at the last General Assembly. From left: Prof. Gennaro Iasevoli, R. P. Michel Jalakh, Prof. Sophia Opatska, Prof. Michael Mullaney, Prof. Thérèse Lebrun, P. Nuno da Silva Gonçalves S.J., P. Grégory Woimbee

The new board is a diverse body with a rich mix of experience, nationalities and expertise (see details below). We held our first meeting at Lyon Catholic University on 24-26 October 2019, during which we reflected on our strategy for the coming three years; awarded student exchange grants for 2020; reviewed and evaluated the **“European Humanism in the Making”** summer school and received a progress report on the Pluriel programme.

Gathering in Gubbio

Last summer, I visited Gubbio to meet with staff and students from around Europe participating in the first **“European Humanism in the Making”** summer school (see pages 4-5). There was a palpable spirit of engagement, curiosity, fun and learning between all the teachers and students present. New international friendships were forged, diverse cultures were encountered and different ways of thinking explored during the programme. I wish to express FUCE’s thanks to LUMSA who are generously hosting this project. The summer school will reconvene between **6-10 July 2020** and students who successfully complete this year’s programme will be awarded three credits from LUMSA.

General Assembly 2020

Some advance notice: FUCE’s next General Assembly, which will be held in **Budapest from 14-16 May 2020**, will explore the theme of **“European and Lebanese Catholic Universities and the Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence”**. The keynote speakers - Thierry Magnin and Paolo Benanti - have both written extensively on this important topic.

We also plan to facilitate a structured networking session during the General Assembly to provide member universities with the opportunity to showcase their particular areas of research and learning, with a view to members developing new partnerships with other institutions.

Members’ Opinions Matter

During 2020, your new Board will reflect on how FUCE can be of further service to our 59 member institutions. Our mandate over the coming three years will be guided by the findings of our **first ever membership survey**. I hope that all members will devote some time to completing this survey so that FUCE can serve you even better in the future.

With renewed good wishes for 2020.

Rev. Prof. Michael Mullaney

President, St. Patrick’s College, Maynooth, Ireland

The board is composed of the following people:

Prof. Gennaro IASEVOLI

Vice Rector for Research and Internationalization de la University LUMSA of Rome

R. P. Michel JALAKH

Recteur de l’Université Antonine

Prof. Sophia OPATSKA

Vice Rector Academic Affairs de la Ukrainian Catholic University

Rev. Prof. Michael MULLANEY

President of St Patrick’s College of Maynooth

Prof. Thérèse LEBRUN

Président-recteur délégué de l’Université Catholique de Lille

P. Nuno da Silva GONÇALVES S.J.

Recteur de la Pontificia Università Gregoriana

P. Grégory WOIMBEE

Vice-Recteur à l’Institut Catholique de Toulouse

SAVE THE DATE

FUCE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 14-16 MAY 2020 BUDAPEST



GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020 AGENDA

Thursday 14 May

- **18h00** : Address by Cardinal Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, and Primate of Hungary
- **20h00** Networking Dinner

Friday 15 May

- **9h15 to 10h00** : Membership Survey Feedback - what members expect from the Federation
- **10h00 - 12h30** : Working session "European and Lebanese catholic universities facing Artificial Intelligence"
- **12h30 - 14h00** : Lunch
- **14h00 - 16h00** : Networking Session - Getting to know your fellow members better and discussing opportunities for new partnerships
- **16h15 - 18h00** : Walking tour of Budapest
- **19h30** : President's Dinner

Saturday 16 May

- **9h00 - 12h00** : General Assembly continues
- **12h00 - 13h00** : Lunch
- **13h00** : Meeting ends

FUCE CAN HELP YOUR UNIVERSITY TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES

"What has FUCE ever done for us", is an often unspoken question. Now member universities have an opportunity to provide feedback in a confidential questionnaire which is being launched this month. FUCE's first ever Membership Survey is seeking feedback on the services the Federation is currently providing to its members so as to gain a deeper understanding of what support members would most value from FUCE into the future.

"We would like to hear from members how FUCE can better develop our common network through its various activities," says survey co-ordinator Professor Sophia Opatska, Vice Rector Academic Affairs, at the Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv.

The survey invites leadership teams as well as administrative and faculty staff in FUCE's 59 universities to address 15 questions. It will take around 20 minutes to complete and the results and findings will be used to inform the newly appointed FUCE board as to where their resources and energy should be focussed in the coming years.

The closing date for completed survey questionnaires is the **29 February 2020**. The results of the survey and actions that arise from its findings, will be presented at FUCE's General Assembly in Budapest 14-16 May 2020.





Students had classes in the mornings, attended workshops in the afternoons and engaged in public lectures in the evenings.

EUROPE'S CORE VALUES: DEMOCRACY, DIGNITY, FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

The first FUCE Summer School on **'European Humanism in the Making'** took place in July 2019. It was hosted by LUMSA University on their campus in Gubbio, near Perugia in Italy.

The six day summer school was attended by 22 (mainly) bachelor students in law and psychology, theology and philosophy, political and economic sciences, social and cultural sciences, geography and education.

The participants came from 15 FUCE universities in ten different countries, as diverse as Georgia, Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland and Lebanon.

When Pope Francis received the European Union's highest award – the Charlemagne Prize – in 2016, he called on Europe to revitalise its core values of dignity,

freedom, equality and democracy, among others.

"Europe will be able to confront the problems associated with immigration only if it is capable of clearly asserting its own cultural identity," Pope Francis said.

The summer school's objective was to identify the roots and development of the European project. This involved a questioning of historical contexts, cultural heritage, the role of science and religion, citizenship, institution building and social arrangements from a wider comparative and international perspective.

Questions which were addressed included: How to create a shared European narrative? How European is Europe? What values, whose values? How to institutionalise the European narrative and identity? What kind of social contract and what form of citizenship will serve Europe best for the future?

Students at the 2019 summer school described it as an enriching experience, which allowed them to envisage Europe from various disciplinary perspectives. It also provided the opportunity to confront and deepen ideas and develop personal thoughts:

“The course helped me discover a part of myself I did not know.”

“I came to understand Europe as a broad many-faceted concept and I started to conceive of it as a whole.”

“I learned that we need to think about actual situations from a philosophical point of view and make values central to our decisions.”

“It was a great experience, both intellectually and emotionally: a real feeling of humanism in the making”

Gubbio is a beautiful medieval town.

The European Humanism in the Making steering group comprises professors from five universities within the FUCE network:

- **Sarah Durelle-Marc** of the Law Faculty of the Catholic University of Lille (course I);
- **Peter Hanenberg** of the Research Center for Communication and Culture at the School of Human Sciences of the Catholic University of Portugal in Lisbon (course II);
- **Ali Mostfa** of the Center for the Study of Cultures and Religions of the Catholic University of Lyon (course III);
- **Michael Shortall** of the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical University St Patrick's College Maynooth in Ireland (course IV)
- **Patricia Santos Rodriguez** of the Law Faculty of the University CEU San Pablo in Madrid (course V).

Their five modules were structured in two parts :

PART I – Historical and Cultural Roots: Implications for Europe Today

- I. Contribution of History to European Consciousness
- II. Literature, the Arts, Translation and European Identity
- III. Religion and Science and the Challenges of Humanism in Europe

Courses I, II and III form an essential basis for understanding how facts and fiction shape a mental geography with real impact in the world and how this legacy needs to be reclaimed and critically reinterpreted for the future.

PART II – Social and Political Construction : Implications for the Future of Europe

- IV. European Social Humanism
- V. Democracy and Civic Engagement : Beyond Differences

Courses IV and V focus on the social and political dimensions of Europe, inviting a constructive reflection about the European model we want to build.

**European Humanism in the Making
2020 Summer School, 6-10 July.**

Deadline for applications
1 February 2020. www.fuce.eu

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ADVENTUROUS STUDENTS

The Federation of Catholic Universities of Europe & Lebanon (FUCE) is offering scholarships to students from member universities based in Albania, Georgia, Lebanon, Ukraine and Pontifical Universities recognised by the Vatican. Nine scholarships, which each last for a semester will be awarded in 2020. Applicants must be studying a course which is linked to Ethics, Theology, Philosophy or another discipline somehow integrating the social teaching of the Church.

Each student is awarded 600€ per month to cover living and travel expenses in their host country. While they remain enrolled in their home institutions, they are considered as students in mobility (similar to ERASMUS students) by their host university. This means there are no extra fees or charges for library access etc. It remains the responsibility of the sending institution to award full recognition of the studies done by the student at their host institution.

Information relating to FUCE's 2020 scholarship programme will be published on www.fuce.eu in early February.



Yasmina Massabni, Lebanon

"I know this exchange has impacted my life - the experience has been a huge chance for me."

Yasmina Massabni, a 3rd year psychology student at Saint Joseph University of Beirut spent a semester at the Institut Catholique de Toulouse.

"Seeing life from another perspective and studying different points of view are the main benefits of spending a semester abroad. My experience in Toulouse has been amazing. My host university is small, which made integration easier.

I made friends quickly, with French students and many others from around the world.

Since arriving I've had the chance to really discover Toulouse, which is also known as the 'Pink City'. The people here are really nice and life is very active and cultural.

I've also visited other cities like Bordeaux and Montpellier. I really appreciate how easy it is to travel in Europe, to be able to experience so many things. And it's not only about discovering new cities, it's also easy to experience art, culture and special activities. All these things, some of which are not really possible back in Lebanon, fulfill my life at this moment and make me happy."



Iaroslav Kuzyshyn, Ukraine

"I am so grateful to FUCE for sponsoring this programme which has contributed significantly to my intellectual and personal growth."



Nazi Taktakishvili, Georgia

"Not only has it improved my professional knowledge, it has also been helpful in defining my future career."

Nazi Taktakishvili is a BA student of International Relations at Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University (SabaUni) in Tbilisi, Georgia. She received a FUCE scholarship to spend a semester in the faculty of Christian Philosophy at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland.

"I feel very lucky to have spent a semester in Warsaw. Getting actively involved in university activities, accepting new challenges, integrating with other foreign students in a multicultural environment has been a great experience."

Iaroslav Kuzyshyn from the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv is studying at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

"My chosen subject: "Hearing the Bible from Three Different Keys" allows me to study and compare central biblical texts from three different perspectives - exegetical, rabbinic and patristic.

The three professors whose lectures I attend are each renowned experts in their own field. This program provides access to the library of the Gregorian University which is world famous for its rich theological resources. Moreover, my studies take place in an international environment - many of the other students hail from different continents and churches - each bringing with them their own exceptional experiences and culture.

During my residence in Rome, I have also improved my knowledge of both English and Italian."

Universities wishing to have students considered for FUCE's Scholarship Programme, should send completed applications for a maximum of three pre-selected candidates to the Secretary of FUCE by 30 April 2020 at the latest.



ISLAM AND OTHERNESS TO BE EXPLORED AT PLURIEL CONGRESS IN LEBANON

An International Congress of the PLURIEL network will be held on 14-15 April 2020 in Saint Joseph University of Beirut. The theme for the congress will be “Islam and Otherness”.

In the global context of identity tensions, migratory flows, depreciation of the image of the Muslim world and its association to Daesh and al-Qaeda’s terrorist attacks, research is being carried out on the capacity of Islam to maintain a constructive and peaceful relationship with the ‘other’, both within the Muslim world and with other religions and cultures.

True acceptance of otherness in a globalised and pluralistic world is a measure of the capacity of religious, philosophical or political thought to fit in and assume the contemporary societal dynamics inherent to globalisation.

This 3rd International Congress of PLURIEL on “Islam and Otherness” will focus on how Islam can be considered a ‘resource’ in order to approach the other in a globalised world. Three different approaches will be examined at the Beirut congress; geopolitical, dialogical, and citizenship.

Following the congress, two additional days of workshops and visits are proposed for 16-17 April 2020, for those participants and students who wish to deepen their knowledge of inter-religious dialogue and enjoy a longer visit to Lebanon.

For more information on PLURIEL and the ***Islam and Otherness Congress*** please visit: www.pluriel.fuce.eu

PLURIEL is a virtual electronic platform for Islamic researchers which fosters interactions between academics, social actors and economic organisations.

PLURIEL members focus their research on areas such as Islamic studies, political and social sciences, law and theology

An international and multi-disciplinary network, it is made up of 15 thematic groups and 150 researchers from across Europe, the Mediterranean and North America.

Initiated by the FUCE in 2014, PLURIEL is now supported by the International Federation of Catholic Universities.

European Federation of Catholic Universities
Fédération des Universités Catholiques Européennes
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