

FUCE



In Brief **En Bref** **En Resumen**

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European Federation of Catholic Universities
Fédération des Universités Catholiques Européennes
Federación de Universidades Católicas de Europa

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Readers,

In my role as President of FUCE, I am guided by a profound awareness of the responsibility we share as an educational community: to serve as a model of adaptability in the complex times we are navigating.

I am inspired by a vision of the university rooted in its very origins: an open space, capable of engaging with society, with public life and with the world of work, a place where free and respectful encounter can flourish. In this context, we are called, as educators, to constantly renew our ability to connect with the students who inhabit our institutions every day.

The challenge before us is twofold: on the one hand, to respond promptly and effectively to the needs of new generations; on the other, to preserve the depth of reflection required by the complexity of our time.

It is within this horizon that the upcoming General Assembly, “Inspiring Catholic Universities in Challenging Times,” will take place in Zagreb. This will be a moment not only to seek inspiration as institutions, but also to become a source of inspiration for our students.

Our reflection will focus on three key and interconnected dimensions.

The first concerns **demographic change** and its impact on our universities, including the risk of declining enrolments. This calls for a rethinking

of our educational offerings: we must remain faithful to our core values while evolving to meet the expectations and aspirations of younger generations.

The second dimension addresses the **digital transformation**. Here, universities are challenged to rethink the very experience of knowledge: not encouraging a passive use of artificial intelligence, but fostering in students the ability to generate new ideas, cultivate critical thinking, and engage creatively with rapidly evolving technologies.

The third dimension focuses on the **resilience and fragility of young people** in today’s global context. In a world marked by uncertainty and conflict, sometimes directly affecting our institutions, academic freedom may be at risk, and the mental well-being of students becomes an urgent priority. Our commitment cannot be limited to listening: it must translate into concrete actions, strengthening solidarity among our academic communities and supporting the growth of resilient, engaged, and hopeful young people.

In this spirit, I look forward to meeting you in Zagreb, a particularly meaningful setting for our Assembly, where we will work together to identify concrete responses for the future of our universities.

Yours sincerely,
Prof. Elena Beccalli
FUCE President

In memory of Dr. Josep Antoni Rom Rodríguez (1964–2025)



Rector of the Ramon
Llull University

The International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU) deeply regrets the passing of Dr. Josep Antoni Rom Rodríguez, Rector of the Ramon Llull University, on November 8, 2025, at the age of 61.

Throughout his career—particularly within the Blanquerna Faculty of Communication and International Relations, which he helped to found—Dr. Rom Rodríguez embodied the mission of the Catholic university: to place research, education, and creativity at the service of the human person and the common good. His intellectual and spiritual commitment, nourished by a profound sense of dialogue and a sincere attachment to the university community, left a lasting mark on the URL.

As Rector, he combined academic rigor with humanism, fostering a vision of higher education rooted in cooperation, social responsibility, and faith in the transformative power of education.

The European Federation of Catholic Universities (FUCE) extends its heartfelt condolences to Dr. Rom Rodríguez's family, and to all the faculty members, students, and staff of Ramon Llull University.

We pay tribute to a scholar deeply devoted to the service of others and join in prayer with the university community that his life's work may continue to inspire future generations. In communion of prayer.

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20-22 MAY 2026

**General Assembly -
Catholic University
of Croatia, Zagreb:**

**INSPIRING CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITIES IN
CHALLENGING TIMES**

European Humanism in the Making of Peace: A Humanism Tested and Transformed

FUCE Summer School 2026

The 7th edition of the FUCE Summer School which will take place at the Catholic University of Lille from June 29th until July 3rd 2026, invites students and scholars to reflect on how peace can once again become a creative, moral, and cultural project for Europe.

Last year's Summer School, European Humanism and Populism, examined how populist movements challenge Europe's moral and democratic foundations. It revealed how fear, division, and identity politics corrode the shared values at the heart of the European humanist tradition. This year continues that conversation, shifting from crisis to construction: from understanding the forces that divide to exploring the practices that reconcile. The 2026 theme asks what kind of humanism is required not merely to preserve peace, but to make it. Peace is a continual act of imagination, solidarity, and hope.

Peace is not merely the absence of war. As the Schuman Declaration reminded Europe, "World

peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it." But the moral architecture of peace is again under strain. The "culture of peace" born after 1945 – rooted in human rights, cooperation, and shared prosperity – can no longer be taken for granted. The task now is not only to defend that culture but to remake it, integrating new perspectives from history, faith, art, and civil society.

The 2026 FUCE Summer School will therefore not only study peace but practise it: through encounter, artistic creation, dialogue, and shared hope. In bringing together students from the Federation's universities, FUCE affirms once more the mission at the heart of European higher education: to form communities of learning that become, in their very diversity, humanism in the making of peace.

The week consists of five interlinked academic courses, each addressing a key dimension of



European humanism's relationship with peace. Together they trace a journey from the roots of European consciousness to its civic expression in action. The programme combines lectures, workshops, cultural visits, and simulation exercises, culminating in collaborative creative work and public reflection.

The opening course on the contribution of history to European consciousness establishes the historical foundations of Europe's legal, moral, political identity. It considers how memory of conflict has shaped the continent's understanding of itself, from the devastation of the world wars to the emergence of the post-war peace project. Participants will explore the double legacy of European history: its capacity for both destruction and reconciliation.

Art and literature have long served as Europe's conscience, bearing witness to both suffering and renewal. The second course on literature, arts, translation and European identity examines how poetry, fiction, and the arts express the longing for peace and the pain of loss. Translation, both linguistic and cultural, becomes a metaphor for peace itself: the movement toward understanding the other. Students will analyse how the arts cultivate empathy and how cultural memory can be reimagined as a resource for reconciliation rather than resentment. Students will be asked to reflect and engage with their own narrative construction through creative writing on the theme of the week.

The third course on European enlightenment and Islamic heritage explores the intellectual and interreligious roots of European thought. The Enlightenment's faith in reason, dialogue, and universal dignity emerged not in isolation but in

conversation with Islamic philosophy and science. By revisiting this shared heritage, participants will consider how intercultural exchange shaped the modern idea of peace. The discussion will also address how contemporary Europe might recover this openness in dialogue with its Muslim citizens and neighbours, recognising peace as both an internal and external relationship.

The fourth course on European Social Humanism examines the political and social expressions of peace within the European tradition. It traces how liberal and republican ideas—of individual freedom, civic virtue, and the common good—have shaped Europe's search for a just social order. From post-war reconstruction to the development of the welfare state and the European Union, these traditions reveal peace as a political as well as a moral achievement. Drawing also on Fratelli Tutti and contemporary debates on solidarity, the course asks how social humanism can be renewed amid current divisions.

The final course on civic engagement in action focuses on practice. Through workshops and simulation games, participants will apply the insights of the week to real-world contexts—local, European, and global. The emphasis is on agency: how students, as future leaders and citizens, can act as artisans of peace. The Summer School concludes with the Performing Europe session, where participants present stories and collaborative projects that translate their learning into creative public expression.

The FUCE Summer School also offers two open lectures to the wider audience (with possibility to attend online): an opening lecture on Tuesday evening with an expert who will introduce the topic of this year's edition and a panel debate, MyEurope, on Wednesday evening, with some of the participants sharing their visions of and for Europe.

USEK at a glance

Founded in 1947, the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) is Lebanon's only private, non-profit university established by the monks of the Lebanese Maronite Order (OLM), operating under national and international academic standards.

Mission

Since its founding, USEK seeks, and in accordance with the Article 92 of the OLM Constitutions of the OLM (ed. 2012) and the social teaching of the Catholic Church on universities, to contribute to the development of all its students through quality educational programs and research in various fields of study.

By providing a high quality American-style education to its students, USEK intends to prepare future leaders for innovation, professional growth and life-long learning, in Lebanon, within the Middle East and throughout the world. USEK is committed to a faith-based educational development of its students rooted in the Catholic tradition whereby spiritual values and ethics as well as respect for cultural and religious pluralism are promoted.

History

- **1947** – OLM scholasticate founded (now Building A), teaching theology, philosophy, letters, and canon law.
- **1962** – It became USEK under Lebanon's higher education law.
- **1997** – Adopted North American credit system.
- **2000** – Opened Regional University Centers in Chekka, Rmeich, and Zahle.
- **2012-2017** – European institutional accreditation (evalag).
- **2016-2018** – ABET accreditation for nine computing and engineering programs.
- **2017** – Evalag accreditation for humanities and social sciences.
- **2019** – New academic structure; NAAB accreditation for Master's in Architecture; six-year accreditation for undergraduate Medical Education (tepdad).
- **2021** - Eligibility for Accreditation by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)
- **2023** - Candidacy for Accreditation by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)



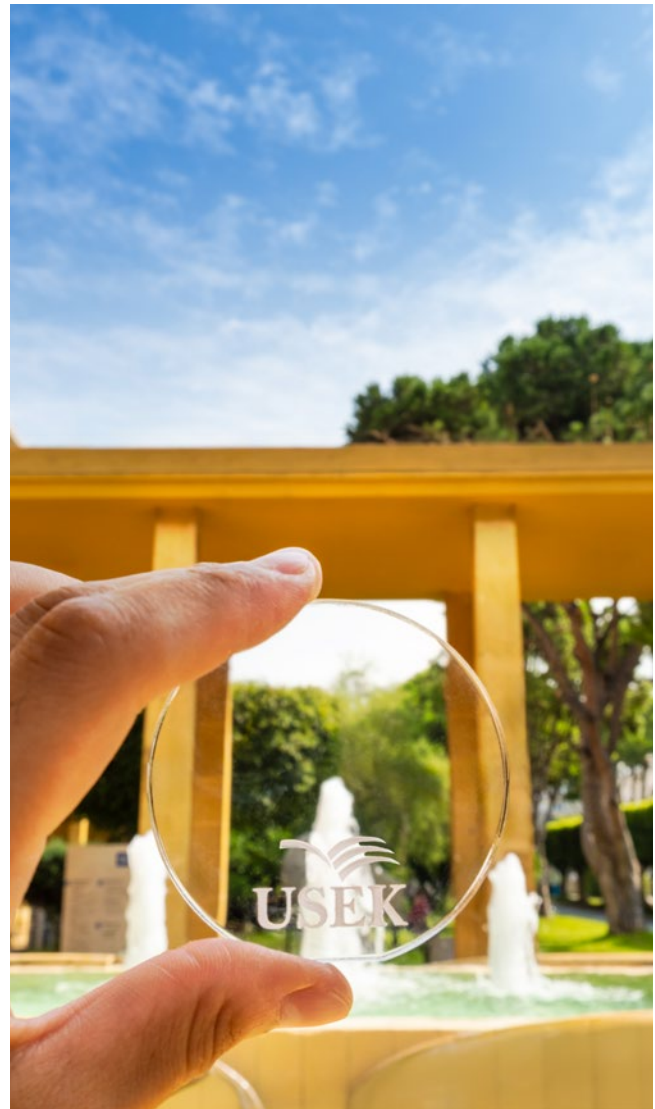
Academic Units

- Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS)
- School of Music and Performing Arts (Affiliated to the FAS)
- Pontifical School of Theology
- School of Architecture and Design
- School of Engineering
- School of Law and Political Sciences
- School of Medicine and Medical Sciences (SMMS)
- Higher Institute of Nursing Sciences (Affiliated to the SMMS)
- USEK Business School (UBS)

Accreditation and Excellence

USEK prioritizes teaching, research, campus life, and facilities, supports faculty development through its Center for Teaching Excellence, and has earned evalag accreditation and ABET recognition. The university has also obtained candidacy status for NECHE accreditation, indicating that it has achieved initial recognition and is actively progressing toward full accreditation.

For details on USEK's accreditations, visit: [USEK Accreditation](#).



BRIDGE: A Shared Educational Journey Between Ukrainian Catholic University and Latin America

War compels the world to divide into opposing camps. Yet the mission of Catholic universities is to cultivate responsible internationalization and solidarity through dialogue. This is the purpose of service of the Ukrainian Catholic University and its initiatives — among them, the BRIDGE project.

The BRIDGE project (Building Relationships and Intercultural Dynamics through Global Education with Latin America) stands as a distinctive example of academic solidarity and global partnership between Ukraine and Latin America. The initiative brings together Ukrainian Catholic University and five leading Catholic institutions in the region: Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (Brazil), Catholic University of Manizales (Colombia), Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, and Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina.

The project develops and delivers 15 innovative COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) courses, connecting students from Ukraine and Latin America in a shared academic space. These courses foster critical thinking, encourage meaningful intercultural dialogue, and deepen understanding of the historical, socio-economic, political, and broader societal contexts shaping both regions. Online collaboration becomes a space of genuine encounter, where students learn to listen attentively, ask thoughtful questions, and reflect beyond their own cultural perspectives.

At its core, BRIDGE strengthens cooperation among Catholic universities by promoting academic solidarity, shared values, and sustained institutional dialogue. Particular attention is given to sharing the Ukrainian experience of resilience, civic responsibility, and the role of faith-based institutions during wartime. This exchange creates opportunities for

mutual learning and reflection on the mission of Catholic higher education in times of crisis. The initiative also advances a model of responsible internationalization. It emphasizes that global engagement is not merely about knowledge exchange, but about responding thoughtfully to global challenges and asymmetries. Equally important is its commitment to worldview-oriented education, integrating intellectual formation with moral and spiritual reflection. By engaging fundamental questions of meaning, dignity, freedom, and responsibility, the project highlights the formative role of Catholic higher education in shaping not only competent professionals, but also persons capable of discernment and ethical leadership.

Courses such as *Religious Identity Across Borders: Colombia & Ukraine* received excellent feedback, demonstrating the value of exploring how Catholic identity is expressed across cultures. Another course, *Christianity in Films*, invites students to engage theological themes through cinematic narratives, fostering critical reflection on contemporary culture in light of Christian tradition.

Ultimately, BRIDGE is more than a set of courses; it is a living network of relationships grounded in trust, shared faith, and intellectual openness. By connecting classrooms across continents, the project nurtures a generation of leaders capable of dialogue, solidarity, and responsible action in a fragmented world. In doing so, it affirms that Catholic higher education, when rooted in communion and courage, can truly become a bridge of hope in times of uncertainty.



| UCU Global

BRIDGE

Building Relationships and Intercultural Dynamics
through Global Education



LATIN AMERICA
AND
UKRAINE



Welcome to the new university representatives

Dr. Carles Pérez Testor *Ramon Llull University*

Dr. Carles Pérez Testor, new Rector of Ramon Llull University.

Following the sudden passing of Dr. Josep Antoni Rom on November 7th 2025, Dr. Carles Pérez Testor has been appointed as Rector of Ramon Llull University (URL) for a four-year term, beginning on January 7th 2026.

Dr. Carles Pérez Testor, professor, psychiatrist and psychotherapist, has developed several teaching, research and administrative roles in URL during the last 34 years, including as director of the Vidal i Barraquer University Institute of Mental Health-URL, and as Vice-dean for Doctorates and Research and director of the Psychology Department at the Blanquerna Faculty of Psychology, Education and Sports Sciences-URL. Currently, he is the vice-president of REDIF (Réseau Européen des Instituts de Famille).



Prof. François Boëdec S.J. *Saint Joseph University of Beirut*

Prof. François Boëdec, S.J., Rector of Saint Joseph University of Beirut since January 5, 2026.

Prof. François Boëdec S.J. is the new Rector of Saint Joseph University of Beirut since January 5, 2026. A member of the Society of Jesus, a lawyer by training and holding a PhD in political science from *University Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne*, Prof. Boëdec has long been an attentive observer of the modern democratic debate issues as well as the evolution of international relations and the Middle East. He is especially recognized for his work on the political challenges related to the control of water resources in the Middle East. His career has been distinguished by high-level positions within the Jesuit higher education and the Society of Jesus. He has served as Rector of *Facultés Loyola Paris*, Provincial Superior of the Province of the Francophone Western Europe.

Prof. Boëdec maintained a longstanding, deep, and constant connection with Lebanon and USJ since the 1990s and is intimately familiar with the University's history, mission, and challenges.

Dr. Christophe Hadjur

Université Catholique de Lyon

L'Université Catholique de Lyon se dote d'un Vice-Rectorat Recherche, Entreprise et Innovation.

Depuis le 1er septembre, le Dr Christophe Hadjur a rejoint l'UCLy en tant que Vice-Recteur chargé de la Recherche, de l'Entreprise et de l'Innovation, marquant une étape clé dans la dynamique de développement de l'Université.

Avec cette nomination, l'UCLy réaffirme sa volonté de renforcer son rôle dans l'écosystème de la recherche et de l'innovation, en intensifiant les synergies avec les acteurs académiques, économiques et socio-économiques, en France comme à l'international.

Docteur en biochimie, Christophe Hadjur a déployé son expertise en innovation durable sur des postes exécutifs au sein de groupes internationaux tels l'Oréal ou Shiseido



Dr. Michael Shortall

St Patrick's College, Maynooth

St Patrick's College, Maynooth appoints new President.

Rev Dr Michael Shortall has been appointed as President of St Patrick's College, Maynooth. Michael studied politics and philosophy at University College, Dublin, later graduating with a Bachelor's in Divinity and was ordained to the priesthood in 1998. Serving as a curate in parishes in Dublin, Michael then obtained his Doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in 2006. Fr Michael has since served in a number of senior roles in the college, including Lecturer, Registrar, Dean of Theology, and Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

He holds numerous post graduate qualifications in education, leadership, and medical law, and is research fellow and occasional lecturer at different European universities.

Fr Michael remarked: "I am grateful for the trust placed in me. This community has shaped me for nearly twenty years, and my hope is simply to serve it well."



UCLouvain closes its 600th anniversary with a powerful vision for the future

Belgium



On 9 December 2025, exactly six centuries after its foundation, UCLouvain marked the closing of its 600th anniversary with an exceptional ceremony at the National Theatre of Wallonia-Brussels. Bringing together 700 members of the academic community and partners, the evening combined testimonies, artistic performances and reflections on the university's past, present and future. In a widely praised address, Rector Françoise Smets emphasized the essential role of universities in today's world, calling for institutions that are open, engaged and at the forefront of societal challenges. In a time marked by acceleration and fragmentation, she reaffirmed the university's mission to educate, conduct free research

and connect knowledge with society. More than a celebration of history, the event opened a new chapter, reaffirming UCLouvain's commitment to shaping a fairer, more sustainable future.



20 Years of Research Enhancing Catholic School Identity

Belgium



The Catholic University of Leuven celebrates 20 years of research on the identity of Catholic educational institutions and their people. [Enhancing Catholic School Identity \(ECSI\)](#), one of the leading international research

centers at the [Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies](#), has been conducting empirical theological research into Catholic educational communities as they reflect on their identity in contexts of increasing pluralization and secularization. Through the integration of empirical data and theological reflection, ECSI assists institutions in assessing and enhancing their Catholic identity in ways that are more dialogical, hermeneutical, and creatively faithful to the long arc of Catholic tradition. This global research initiative represents the most extensive data collection worldwide, having completed research in nearly 2500 Catholic institutions and collected data from more than 550,000 students, teachers, parents and school leaders. Research across Europe has to date included institutions in Belgium, France, Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Sweden.



UCSIA Summer School 2026

Belgium



The **UCSIA Summer School 2026**, titled *From Disciples to Followers: Questioning the Digital Experience of Religions Online*, invites PhD candidates and early-career postdoctoral researchers to apply for a fully funded, interdisciplinary summer programme in Antwerp (23–28 August 2026). As the final edition of UCSIA's three-year cycle on religion and politics, the summer school focuses on how digital technologies and online platforms reshape religious practices, publics, authority, and political imaginaries. The programme combines expert lectures, participant paper presentations, and individual mentoring, fostering critical dialogue across disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and law. Confirmed faculty members include socio-cultural anthropologist **Yasmin Moll** (University of Michigan) and sociologist **Alessandra**

Vitullo (Sapienza University of Rome), both leading scholars in the study of religion and digital media. **The application deadline is 20 April 2026.** More information and the full Call for Papers are available [here](#).



Innovation, cross-disciplinary approach, reputation and financial sustainability: UNamur unveils its strategic vision for 2029

Belgium



The University of Namur (UNamur) has presented its Unvers 2029 strategic plan, which extends and reinforces the guidelines set out in Unvers 2025. The five priority objectives are: to develop the university and assert its place in the academic landscape; to pursue digital transformation by integrating artificial intelligence in a responsible manner; to promote sustainable development in teaching, research and practices; to strengthen internationalisation; and to guarantee quality of life on campus. These objectives are structured around three key challenges: assertive positioning, financial sustainability and the commitment of the university community. Four levers for action have been defined: innovation, cross-disciplinary collaboration between entities, the institution's reputation and financial sustainability. "These form a virtuous circle. Innovation will fuel repu-

tation, which, like cross-disciplinary collaboration, will ensure financial sustainability, which is essential for investing in innovation,' emphasises Rector Annick Castiaux. 'It is more essential than ever to assert and develop our university project. We want to be a university that innovates, that is open to the world and that fully assumes its societal responsibilities."



Honorary Doctorate Awarded to Prof. Dr. Thomas Schwartz

Croatia



On Friday, 16 January 2026, the Croatian Catholic University awarded an honorary doctorate to Prof. Dr. Thomas Schwartz, Director of the Renovabis Foundation of the German Bishops' Conference. The distinction was granted in recognition of his exceptional contribution to scientific development, social responsibility, and his many years of dedication to education and higher education, particularly in Central and Southeastern Europe. The honorary degree was awarded following a decision of the University Senate on 14 October 2025 and was presented by the Rector, Prof. Dr. Željko Tanjić. In the laudation, Professor Schwartz's academic, pastoral, and social work was highlighted, along with his significant role in fostering solidarity, promoting the Church's social teaching, and strengthening interna-

tional cooperation among Catholic institutions. During the ceremony, Prof. Dr. Thomas Schwartz delivered a *lectio magistralis* entitled "Old Wine Retains Its Good Taste Even in New Wineskins."



L'Institut Catholique de Paris lance l'Institut Ozanam

France



L'Institut Catholique de Paris lance l'Institut Ozanam Dernier né de la filière de Science politique et Géopolitique de l'ICP, l'Institut Ozanam bénéficie d'un adossement à une recherche universitaire reconnue et l'apport d'établissements partenaires de premier plan, Saint-Jean de Passy et Stanislas. Il vise à former des esprits libres et exigeants au service du bien commun. Son originalité réside dans une approche transdisciplinaire associant méthodologie universitaire et pédagogie des classes préparatoires, enrichie par une ouverture aux Humanités, à la philosophie et aux questions éthiques. Des enseignements d'ouverture sont proposés : Sécurité-Défense, Géopolitique du patrimoine, maîtrise des langues. A l'issue de leur cursus, les étudiants obtiennent un double diplôme (diplôme d'Etat + DU). L'offre de formation comprend un bachelor Science politique, Géopolitique et

Humanités (Bac+3), proposé en lien avec la Licence Histoire Science politique ou la licence Sciences sociales, un magistère Émergences géopolitiques (Bac+5), adossé au master Histoire Crises, pouvoirs et sociétés, et enfin une préparation aux concours administratifs A+.



Promoting Francophonie through an Erasmus International Week in Lille

France



In line with its commitment to promoting Francophonie and academic mobility, the CLARIFE at the *Université Catholique de Lille* is organising an **Erasmus International Week dedicated to French as a Foreign Language (FLE)** from **29 June to 3 July 2026**, aimed at international professors and lecturers. Two programmes will run in parallel. The **“Learn French” programme** offers French language courses, intercultural workshops, a language certificate, and cultural activities in Lille. A second programme focuses on the

collaborative development of an educational game or teaching tool for FLE, encouraging pedagogical innovation and intercultural exchange among teachers. Both programmes offer opportunities to teach or give lectures upon request and contribute to strengthening Erasmus cooperation and Francophonie within the FUCE network.

Contact: clarife@univ-catholille.fr

The Humanities Programme at Université Catholique de Lille

France

Since 2020, the *Université Catholique de Lille* has offered its 43,000 students an open, **transdisciplinary programme accessible to all: the Humanities Programme**. Rooted in the Christian humanist tradition, this bilingual (French-English) pathway educates the whole person - cognitive, emotional, and spiritual. French and international students explore themes such as art and transcendence, sport and humanism, engage in structured debates, and receive training in ethics. From 2026, a new module will prepare students for international volunteering. The Humanities Programme also supports the development of Service-Learning across the University. Through the UN-

ISERVITATE network, students will soon be able to experience international engagement in service of the most vulnerable. The programme concludes with a final oral examination leading to a university diploma. Through the Humanities Programme, the *Université Catholique de Lille* educates 21st-century humanists, rooted in Gospel values and committed to the common good.

Contact: humanitesucl@univ-catholille.fr

New Community Engagement Center Launched at Sulkhvan-Saba Orbeliani University

Georgia



Sulkhvan-Saba Orbeliani University has launched a Community Engagement Center dedicated to bridging academia and local communities through innovative teaching and research initiatives. As service learning and community-engaged pedagogy remain relatively new concepts in Georgia's educational landscape, the center will play a pivotal role in raising awareness among students and encouraging active community participation. Key activities include organizing informational sessions, providing training for faculty members, and offering consultations to educators interested in integrating community engagement into their curricula. The center was established through the Erasmus+ KA2 CBHE project "Enhancing Capacities for Sustainable Community Engagement: Cases of Georgia and Sierra Leone – ENHANCE GSL." The university welcomes partnership opportunities in community engagement initiatives. Contact: www.sabauni.edu.ge | cec@sabauni.edu.ge



Professional Development and Inclusion: The Roma Conferences at Apor Vilmos Catholic College Hungary



Apor Vilmos Catholic College will hold its traditional Roma Conference on 26 March. For more than a decade, these conferences have been organized with the aim of promoting the social and educational integration of Roma communities, providing a stable professional forum for plenary lectures and interactive discussions that foster dialogue and reflection. In the early years, the conferences focused mainly on educational opportunities and pedagogical challenges related to the inclusion of Roma children and youth in schools, as well as the role the Church could play in this process. Gradually, the themes have broadened, and now include contributions from social work, family support, identity preservation, and the promotion of the values of Roma culture. The 2020s have seen increasing emphasis on the presentation of good

practices and cooperation between civil and church organizations. By consciously combining academic analysis with practical experience, the conferences have become nationally recognized professional gatherings.



A Year of Growth for St Patrick's College Maynooth Ireland



St Patrick's College Maynooth has had a busy year, characterised by strong student numbers in the pontifical university, increases in seminarian numbers, positive community engagement and exciting plans for future campus development. 2025 has been one of challenge and opportunity with real progress made. The university is at the advanced stages of becoming a Listed Awarding Body by the Irish Quality and Qualifications regulatory body, supporting better teaching and stronger academic programmes. Significant focus has been placed on improving the student experience. Faculty welcomed new international arrivals. The college is also planning for significant campus property development and the creation of a centralised learning hub. St Patrick's College, Maynooth continues to occupy a vital space: between the Church and the academy,

between tradition and innovation, between formation and mission, reflecting an institution with the strong sense of its past and a confidence in its future.



MIC Launches Strategic Plan 2030 Ireland



Mary Immaculate College has formally launched its new *Strategic Plan 2030, Pathways Lit, Futures Found* which sets out an ambitious vision for institutional transformation grounded in principles of care, social

responsibility, sustainability, and the dignity of every learner. The plan was unveiled during the President's Inaugural Address, which called the MIC community beyond maintenance toward imagination, relationality, and transformative educational purpose. The year also marked significant milestones for the College: MIC was named *Education Provider of the Year* at Ireland's Climate Change Leadership Awards; awarded its highest-ever number of PhDs in a single year (31); and celebrated major community engagement initiatives, including international partnerships in Cambodia focused on educational transformation. Together, these developments reflect MIC's distinctive Catholic mission in action - intellectually rigorous, socially engaged, and globally connected.



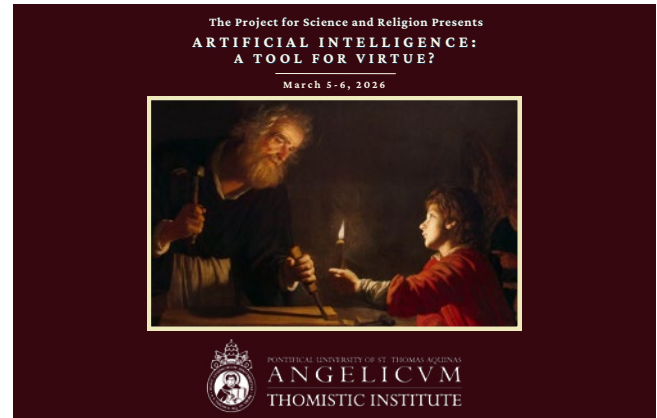


Is Artificial Intelligence a Tool for Virtue?

Italy

The Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome held a conference this month to ask, "[Is artificial intelligence a tool for virtue?](#)". This conference was organized by the Thomistic Institute at the Angelicum, which aims at promoting fruitful engagement with other philosophical and theological thoughts, as well as contemporary sciences, as it fosters theological research rooted in the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas. In this conference, a collection of international experts in technology, philosophy, and theology engaged in a focused conversation around two particular questions that recent AI development raises. First, they clarified what we understand about how these new AI systems work and their intended use. Second, they asked what it would look like for these AI systems to be designed and used in a way

that makes us better people? Can AI be used to help us grow in virtue?



Shaping the Future: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore's Strategic Plan 2026-2028

Italy

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore has developed its [2026–2028 Strategic Plan](#), outlining a shared and forward-looking vision developed through a participatory process involving the entire academic community. The plan aims to strengthen the University's identity **while responding to contemporary global challenges**, with a focus on the centrality of the person, the pursuit of the common good, and the integration of teaching, research, and third mission activities. Key priorities include enhancing international openness, fostering innovation in education and research, promoting **transdisciplinarity**, and increasing social impact initiatives. The strategy is structured around **five main pillars**: establishment of a School of Knowledge Integration; quality educational offer, in person and remotely; valorisation of research and researchers; internationalisation, accreditations and rankings;

fundraising inspired by identity principles. Together, these actions aim to position Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore as "the best university for the world, in the world," reinforcing its mission as a values-based, globally engaged institution.



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore



AI for Marketing and Communication

Italy

The new Master's degree programme in [AI for Marketing and Communication](#) at LUMSA University, fully taught in English, trains professionals ready to lead marketing and digital communication through the strategic use of artificial intelligence. This international, data-driven programme combines theory, labs and project work, with the support of industry experts, to develop innovative skills that are immediately applicable in the job market, also through internships, Erasmus+ mobility opportunities and collaborations with companies and startups.



LUMSA
UNIVERSITÀ





Pope Leo XIV Visits Pontifical Lateran University

Italy

On November 14, 2025, Pope Leo XIV visited the Pontifical Lateran University – the Pope’s University on a special title, for the inauguration of the 253rd academic year 2026/2027. In His address, the Holy Father commended the institution to be a prophetic sign of communion and fraternity, with a passionate and rigorous search for truth through dialogue and avoiding individualism. Present at the inauguration of the academic year were His Eminence Card, Baldassare Reina, the Grand Chancellor of the University, The Rector His Excellency, Mgrs. Alfonso V. Amarante, C.Ss.R. In addition to the students from all parts of the world, there were also a good number of dignitaries.



The Confession of the Council of Nicaea: History and Theology

Italy



The Pontifical Gregorian University and the University of Münster organized a two-part conference, entitled "The Confession of the Council of Nicaea: History and Theology." The first part took place in Rome (February 27–March 1, 2025) and hosted eminent Nicaean scholars from the fields of theology, philosophy, philology, and history. The second part was held in Münster (October 15–17, 2025) and focused on the question of the Council's significance for the relationship between Christianity and Judaism, and between Christianity and Islam. "What makes the difference between before and after Nicaea is what has remained since then: the truth of faith has been brought into a common form," commented Fr Philipp G. Renczes S.J. (Faculty of Theology, Pontifical Gregorian University).

«Even today this Council is an invitation to all Churches and ecclesial communities to proceed on the path towards visible unity» recalled Fr. Mark Lewis S.J., Rector of the Gregorian.



La Coupe du Cœur : des étudiantes unies pour le Children Cancer Center

Lebanon



Fidèle à sa mission éducative et humaine, qui va au-delà de la transmission des savoirs académiques, l'Université Sainte Famille – Batroun, Liban (USF) s'engage à promouvoir, auprès des jeunes, les valeurs de solidarité, de compassion et de responsabilité sociale. Sur le campus de l'USF, de jeunes étudiantes ont posé un geste fort, inspiré par l'empathie, afin d'exprimer leur soutien aux enfants engagés dans le combat contre le cancer. Au cours du mois de décembre, cette mobilisation s'est concrétisée par une collecte de fonds destinée à contribuer aux soins, à soulager la souffrance et à offrir une véritable chance de vie à ces petits héros. À chaque étudiante donatrice, à chaque jeune fille ayant offert une part de sa couronne : merci. Votre engagement ne change pas seulement des apparences; il change des vies.



NDU Earns Prestigious IFT-HERB Accreditation for Food Safety Program, First in the Levant

Lebanon



Notre Dame University–Louaize (NDU) announces that its Bachelor of Science in Food Safety and Quality Management has received official approval from the Institute of Food Technologists Higher Education Review Board (IFT-HERB), a leading international authority in food science education. The recognition confirms that the program fully meets Undergraduate Education Standards for Degrees in Food Science and is approved for the 2026–2031 cycle. This milestone places NDU at the forefront of regional excellence, as the program becomes the first IFT-HERB-approved degree in the Levant and the second in the Middle East. The approval reflects the program’s strong scien-

tific foundation, qualified faculty, industry-aligned laboratories, well-defined learning outcomes, and competency-based curriculum design. Students enrolled in IFT-HERB-approved programs are also eligible to apply for Feeding Tomorrow scholarships, expanding their academic and professional opportunities. This achievement reinforces NDU’s commitment to quality, innovation, and global standards in food science and applied health education.

The Power of Hope: Let Your Mind and Heart Bloom

Lebanon



[Antonine University \(UA\)](#) presents an innovative initiative in the Lebanese academic context, through the fifth edition of the **Wellness and Mental Health Week: “The Power of Hope: Let your Mind and Heart Bloom”**. Scheduled for 23–28 March 2026, the week features over 25 free sessions, delivered by national and international experts to the UA and external community, based on the [UA wellness wheel](#). In the Lebanese uncertain context, Hope plays a critical role in mental health and as Pope Francis affirms "Education is always an act of hope." It is not just a passive desire but an active force; one that fuels resilience and motivates action. Pope Leo XIV in his visit to Lebanon in 2025 stated to the youth: “Perhaps you regret inheriting a world torn apart by wars... Yet, there is hope within you—a gift that we adults seem to have lost.

There is still time to plan, dream, and do good". To learn more, check our website ua.edu.lb



A Historic Beginning: USEK’s First Inauguration Day

Lebanon



For the first time in its history, the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) hosted an Inauguration Day, a landmark event that marked the beginning of the President’s tenure and set the tone for the University’s future. On October 15, distinguished guests, faculty members, students, partners, and friends gathered for a celebration that blended heritage with innovation. More than a ceremony, Inauguration Day reaffirmed USEK’s values, vision, and community spirit, while unveiling Fr. Prof. Joseph Moukarzel’s strategic roadmap for the years ahead. This milestone bridged the past, present, and future, charting a path that aimed to continue inspiring generations to come.



'Communion' as a Key Theme in the University's New Strategy

The Netherlands

On 21 November 2025, Professor Carmody Grey delivered her inaugural lecture at Radboud University. Grey has been appointed as a professor in Integral Ecology at the Laudato Si' Institute within the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies.



For this institute, the 2015 encyclical Laudato Si' by Pope Francis serves as a key source of inspiration. The recording of Grey's lecture, entitled 'Practice of Communion', can be accessed [here](#). Grey's appeal for a deeper sense of communion, rooted in Laudato Si', has also been integrated into Radboud University's process of strategic renewal. Grey served as a sparring partner for the university's Strategy Committee. Her vision on communion within science and society, along with her emphasis on an integral approach, was warmly received. The latter even serves as the Leitmotif of the university's new strategic plan 'Connected for Impact (2026-2031)'. In this strategy, connectedness and the tradition of Catholic emancipation are highlighted as central themes.

Jesuit Museion

Poland



Within the premises of the Ignatianum University in Kraków, the Jesuit Museion has been established as a unique institution combining the functions of a museum and a scholarly and educational center. It offers a modern, narrative presentation of the history, art, and spirituality of the Jesuits, contributing to the dynamic development of monastic museums in Kraków. Its mission is to present the tangible and intangible heritage of the Jesuits of Kraków and Lesser Poland, while encouraging reflection on the culture of memory and the preservation of tradition. The name museion refers to the ancient institution that united worship, learning, and intellectual exchange. To mark the museum's opening, the temporary exhibition "In splendore Dei Gloria" was presented, highlighting the richness of Jesuit heritage and their contribution to science, culture, and religion. Developed over years of research,

the exhibition brings together art, history, and spirituality in a contemporary form.



Ignatian Carol

Poland

Ten years ago, the Ignatian Carol was performed for the first time, inaugurating a unique tradition at the Ignatianum University in Krakow. Over the past decade, the project has brought together students, staff, alumni, and friends of the university, building a community around music and the Christmas message.

This year's carol, "Mary's Carol", is an intimate story of care, hope, and inner strength, conveyed without pathos, in silence and simplicity. The jubilee edition encourages attentiveness to the quiet presence of people around us who may be silently struggling with their own challenges. Its creation involved the Ignatianum Choir, uniting university staff and students. Christmas

carols, deeply rooted in Polish tradition and sung both in churches and during family gatherings, foster joy and a sense of togetherness. The jubilee music video, along with a special playlist of all previous carols, forms a fitting culmination of this decade-long tradition. The Christmas carol playlist can be found at this link: [Koleśda Ignacjańska - YouTube](#).

A milestone moment for Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw *Poland*



UKSW

UNIWERSYTET KARDYNAŁA
STEFANA WYSZYŃSKIEGO
W WARSZAWIE

The University has acquired additional development land, enabling a significant expansion of its Wóycickiego campus in Warsaw. This accelerates the creation of a modern, integrated academic campus—one of the most functional in the city. The investment goes beyond new teaching buildings and research facilities. It is a strategic step to strengthen research quality, expand laboratory capacity, improve students' learning conditions, and foster interdisciplinary collaboration. The expanded campus will also enhance UKSW's attractiveness for international partners, researchers, and students, supporting further internationalisation and reinforcing UKSW's position within the European academic community.



A new chapter in the history of UPJPII *Poland*



Uniwersytet Papieski
Jana Pawła II
w Krakowie

At the end of 2025, the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow completed the construction of a new building. The building will be a space for community building and dialogue. As highlighted by the university's rector, Rev. Prof. Robert Tyrąła *"This campus was not created just to look beautiful, but to be vibrant with life – with the presence of people, learning and meetings"*. Dreams of creating a campus date back to the beginning of this century. In 2002, during his pilgrimage to Poland, Pope John Paul II blessed the land for the campus buildings and famously said: *"Here I bless you, also in this new place"*. The Polish pope is the patron saint of the university and holds a special place in the hearts of the academic community. This is symbolised by his statue standing in the square in front of the building.



UCP Launches Longevity Leadership Center *Portugal*



Universidade Católica Portuguesa has just launched the Center on Longevity Leadership, a new interdisciplinary platform dedicated to supporting leaders and organizations in addressing the challenges and opportunities arising from global demographic transformation. Integrated within the Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics, the Center seeks to help companies and institutions develop leadership and innovation models suited to populations with increasing life expectancy. It brings together academic research, advanced executive education, social impact projects, and community-based initiatives, offering an integrated vision of talent, markets, and society. The Center's governance structure is anchored in Steering Committees dedicated to the core pillars of

Talent, Market, and Society, and is overseen by a Global Steering Committee.

https://www.ucp.pt/homepage?set_language=en



UCP Leads in Entrepreneurship Portugal

Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP) has been recognised as the most entrepreneurial university in Portugal, according to the 2025 Redstone University Startup Index. The ranking places UCP first nationally and in the European top 20% , among 360 universities in the category of European institutions with annual



budgets between €100 million and €500 million. According to the study, UCP averages 8.2 startups per €100 million of university budget and has generated 11 startups founded by alumni or originating from Católica's spin-offs. Based on current performance, the report estimates that over the next decade the university could contribute to the creation of 5,271 new jobs, generate a potential €2.2 billion contribution to Gross Domestic Product, and produce three unicorn companies. "UCP's commitment to the future has always involved fostering an entrepreneurial spirit across all areas of activity. Transformation requires courage. This recognition demonstrates the effectiveness of decades of strategic positioning," said UCP President Isabel Capelo Gil.

https://www.ucp.pt/homepage?set_language=en

Dr. Carlo Gallucci, Ramon Llull University Vice-rector, becomes a member of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore Board of Trustees Spain



Dr. Carlo Gallucci, Vice-rector for International Relations and Students of Ramon Llull University (URL), has become a member of the Board of Trustees of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, which has renewed its members for the 2026-2029 period. Both universities are founding members of SACRU (Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities), which includes 9 universities from around the world. "We are sure that his appointment will serve to further strengthen the good collaboration that already exists between the two universities", has expressed Dr. Gallucci, also a member of the FUCE and FIUC boards.



CEU in Forbes "Best Reputation 2026" Spain



As Spain's largest private Catholic educational group—comprising over 25 centers, including 4 universities, schools, and professional institutes—**CEU features in Forbes Spain's "Best Reputation 2026" list**, acknowledging our solid corporate narrative. We reinforce our



leadership through brand renewal, territorial expansion, and facilities like the clinical simulation hospital. Our deep social commitment includes over **€24 million in scholarships** (a nearly 30% increase) and initiatives for entrepreneurship and disability inclusion. **Mental health** is a priority, highlighted by initiatives like #YoSoyTuParaguas ("I Am Your Umbrella"), a campaign fostering peer support and well-being. In innovation, **CEU holds prestigious accreditations** like WSCUC (certifying institutional quality in the USA) and WFME (global medical education standards), alongside **AI alliances**. Addressing current debates, we defend **Christian principles, transparency, and academic rigor**. We remain committed to global academic excellence, innovation, and social impact."

UCV and International Partners Launch an Innovative Nursing Project in Sudan *Spain*



The Catholic University of Valencia (UCV), the Mainel Foundation, and the Comboni College of Science and Technology (CCST) in Port Sudan have consolidated an international alliance to strengthen nursing education in Sudan, where the armed conflict has severely weakened the healthcare system. At a meeting held at UCV headquarters, representatives of the three institutions presented the project “Net-Care: Innovation in Nursing and Palliative Care,” selected under the 2025 Partnerships Call of the Valencian Regional Government (Generalitat Valenciana). The aim is to reinforce health training capacities in a war context, especially in end-of-life care and the support of patients and their families. The initiative, scheduled to run for 14 months starting in April 2026, will combine virtual and distance learning with technical consultancy. It

will include clinical simulation programs for teaching staff and support for the management of the local palliative care clinic. More information [here](#)



UCU Promotes Global Cooperation *Ukraine*



In a world marked by crisis and war, the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) remains faithful to its Christian mission by upholding human dignity, witnessing to truth, and fostering peace through encounter. Even amid Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine, UCU practices responsible internationalization as an act of solidarity and communion. We invite the Federation of Catholic Universities in Europe and our partners to join this dialogue, grounded in the shared values of Catholic higher education: the common good, justice, hospitality, and care for those who suffer. This invitation is embodied in several initiatives. Through the [BRIDGE project](#) (Building Relationships and Intercultural Dynamics through Global Education with Latin America) – a large-scale COIL initiative – UCU deepens long-term partnerships with Catholic universities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Peru. Together, we form learning communities that foster intercultural understanding and educate students to act with responsibility and compassion. Another cornerstone is the [UCU Staff Week in Wrocław \(Poland\)](#) 2026, dedicated this year to *Mis-*

sion-Driven Internationalization: Building Responsible Global Engagement. We welcome our partners to co-create values-based cooperation: exchange experience, reflect on the challenges higher education faces during crises, and develop joint projects that serve our societies. Complementing these efforts, the [Global Talks](#) series 2026 offers an open international platform for dialogue on war, migration, ecology, theology, and contemporary social challenges.

