

DRC NEWSLETTER  
NOVEMBER  
2020



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Dear subscribers to the DRC Newsletter,

The past month has been difficult and has brought further restrictions in our daily as well as academic lives. We think it is important to highlight the need for being **resilient** and to **adapt to the ever-changing conditions** surrounding us. We are going to get through this together!

In this regard, the Danube Rectors' Conference reaffirms its commitment to support you in every possible way and will continue to work using the **newly established technical equipment** in order to bring you the latest initiatives and up-to-date information about DRC member universities regarding **education, research and innovation** in the Danube Region.

In the current issue of the newsletter we are presenting to you the results of the **DRC General Assembly 2020** including the election of the **new presidency** and the **two**

**new member universities.** Moreover, we are going to unveil the **winners** of the 2020 edition of the **Danubius Awards!**

Enjoy reading and remember, feedback and comments are always [welcome!](#)

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## 1. DRC GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

We would like to thank all representatives of DRC member universities who attended

the **DRC General Assembly 2020** on Friday, **6th of November 2020** via ZOOM. This event brought many announcements and we are happy to share with the subscribers of our newsletter the **most important updates**.

### Agenda of the DRC General Assembly 2020

1. Opening
2. Approval of the Agenda of the DRC General Assembly 2020
3. Approval of the Minutes of the DRC General Assembly 2019
4. Annual report on DRC activities 2020
5. Annual report of the DRC Secretariat 2020
6. DRC Summer School 2020
7. Report on the DRC financial situation in 2020
8. DRC Membership issues
  - Application of the University of Banja Luka
  - Application of the Deggendorf University of Applied Sciences
9. Election of the new DRC Presidency
10. DRC Action Plan for 2021
11. DRC Financial Budget for 2021
12. Any other business
13. Closing

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## 2. NEW DRC PRESIDENCY ELECTED

During the General Assembly 2020, the new DRC Presidency has been elected, and in this regard we are pleased to announce that **Prof. dr. Zdravko Kačič. Rector of the University of Maribor** in Slovenia, will be the next DRC President for the period 2021-2022.

At the same time, the Assembly appointed the new DRC Vice-Presidents **Mag. Friedrich Faulhammer, Rector of the Danube University Krems, Austria** and **Ivanka Popovic, Rector of the University of Belgrade, Serbia**.



*Prof. Dr. Zdravko Kačič,  
Rector of the University of  
Maribor, Slovenia*



*Mag. Friedrich  
Faulhammer,  
Rector of the Danube  
University of Krems,  
Austria*



*Ivanka Popović, PhD,  
Rector of the  
University of  
Belgrade, Serbia*

**We congratulate our newly elected members of DRC presidency and we are confident that DRC network will benefit from their expertise and experience and that these will highly contribute to the ongoing successful mission of the DRC.**

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### **3. NEW DRC MEMBERS**



During the DRC General Assembly 2020 the two universities were approved to become a new DRC members.

***We are pleased to announce and welcome onboard our new DRC members the University of Banja Luka and the Deggendorf Institute of Technology!***

**Let's get to know something about our members!**

1) The **University of Banja Luka** situated in the city of Banja Luka is the second largest University in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was founded in 1975 when it comprehended the four prestigious faculties of Electrical Engineering, Technology, Economics and Law. Throughout its history this University has been characterised by a strong international dimension and it has a long tradition of inter-university cooperation. Today it counts 17 faculties and over 20,000 students.

2) The **Deggendorf Institute of Technology** is one of the most successful new university in Bavaria. It was founded in 1994 in the city of Deggendorf and it's surrounded by the Bavarian Forest National Park. The institute currently welcomes 8,000 students in their courses focused on Business, Engineering, Digitisation and Healthcare. Moreover, they offer courses in English in the fields of Engineering and Business. The already internationalised Institute cooperate with over 100 Universities all over the world.

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#### 4. DRC President Popovic at EUA Meeting



The **Danube Rectors' Conference**, represented by its President, **Prof. Ivanka Popovic**, participated in the **Meeting of European Higher Education Associations**, organized by the **EUA**, on November 26, 2020.

The meeting, chaired by EUA President Prof. Michael Murphy, brought together representatives of the AURORA Universities Network, CESAER, Coimbra Group, European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA), The European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA), The League of European Research Universities (LERU), The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities, the Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA), UNILION, the Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN) and the Rectors' Forum of South East Europe & the Western Balkans.

The on-line meeting covered several topics. Most of the discussion was devoted to the **development of a EUA vision for future universities**. There was also an exchange of views on the new ERA. In these complex times for universities, there was an interesting discussion on the **possibilities of how universities could strengthen their advocacy as a sector**. Finally, the **challenges faced by universities during the pandemic** were also highlighted. All of the participants agreed that the regular exchange of information, as well as coordination regarding policy, benefit the broader academic community and enable the better expression of university needs to government bodies at the European and national level.

## 5. "ARTIST IN RESIDENCE" SCHOLARSHIP ELIAS CANETTI 2020



Every year the **Danube Rectors' Conference** and the **International Elias Canetti Society** award **the Sharing the Future: Artist Residence Scholarship** to the most creative and original artist whose ideas can represent an impulse for a discussion towards **"a common Europe and a common Future"**.

The winner has the possibility to work artistically at the Canetti House for a month and "produce his own art" giving light to his creative project.

This year's **"Artists in Residence"** scholarships winner is the croatian performer **Sara Reinar** from Zagreb. Her artistic project revolves around the creation of a **"soundtrack for Bulgaria's young writers"** and it involves an original combination of musicians, dancers, poets and writers performing



in the same stage. Her idea to combine the performative arts with themes like immigration and EU integration resulted successfully and she also gained the possibility to record her performance in Ruse.



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## 6. DANUBIUS AWARDS 2020 CEREMONY





 Federal Ministry  
Republic of Austria  
Education, Science  
and Research



The Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research (BMBFW) and the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) honoured the scientists of the Danube Region for their commitment to their scientific work during the **Danubius Awards 2020 Virtual Ceremony** which took place on **6th of November 2020**.

The scope of the **Danubius Awards** has always been to give visibility and recognition to the scientists community of the Danube Region. In the framework of the European Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) they represent a chance to highlight the potential of the region in the area of sciences and research. By doing so, it is possible to increase the opportunity for exchange and networking among the scientists, some fundamental aspects for the younger researchers.

The awards include three different categories: the **"Danubius Award"** awarded to scientists for their remarkable work in the field of science and research; the **"Danubius Mid-Career Award"** for researchers and academic personalities between 5 and 15 years after their last role. Finally the **"Danubius Young Scientist Award"** destined to the most promising young researchers in all areas of sciences.

The awardees of this year are:

### **Danubius Award 2020**

Prof. Andrei Pippidi,  
University of Bucharest,  
Romania

### **Danubius Mid-Career Award 2020**

Ass. Prof.  
Daniela Dolenec,  
University of Zagreb,  
Croatia

### **Danubius Young Scientist Awards 2020**

**Austria:** Laura Wiesböck

**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Mitar Simić

**Bulgaria:** Diyana Kinaneva

**Croatia:** Ivan Rubini

**Czech Republic:** Jiří Černý

**Germany:** Nils Ostermeier

**Hungary:** Laura Jurecska

**Republic of Moldova:** Lilia Anghel

**Montenegro:** Bojan Baća

**Romania:** Romulus-Dumitru Costache

**Serbia:** Teodora Jovanović

**Slovakia:** Ivana Kozelová

**Slovenia:** Simon Malmenvall

**Ukraine:** Oleksii Laguta



More information on the Award Ceremony can be found on the [IDM website](https://www.idm.at).



## 7. IDM Democracy Talks

The Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) has launched a series called "IDM Democracy Talks" in the course of IDM and DRC Jean Monnet project **"FIFUDEM - From Fictional to Functioning Democracy. Developing Concepts and Strategies for an Inclusive and Participatory Europe"**.

The project focuses on the analyse and identification of the causes of illberal and fictional democracy and it aims to develop effective strategies to strengthen our democracies.

In the first session of **"IDM Democracy Talks"** the discussion is about **participation** and **representation** as two fundamental elements and principles of democracy. Democracy requires citizens' participation for its functionality and legitimacy just as citizens must be appropriately represented by elected decision-makers and their policies. However, various factors such as migration, political apathy or immanent system critique regarding nepotism and state capture have led to the fact that existing governments do not entirely represent the local population of a city or country.

The second session of **"IDM Democracy Talks"** explores the citizens' possibility to express civil society protest for its functionality and legitimacy just as civil society organizations must be safe to exercise these rights. However, various developments such as the uprisings in Belarus or the German PEGIDA protests show, that there are many different forms of protest today. This session will be taking a closer look on the paradox between protest being able to strengthen democratic values but also weakening them.

Here you can find the links to the **IDM Democracy Talks!**



## 8. Polish-Austrian-Italian Trialogue: Future of Universities



The **Polish Academy of Sciences – Scientific Centre** in Vienna in cooperation with **Accademia Polacca Roma** and **Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM)**, will host a webinar in the framework of the project **"Future of Universities"** partnered with the **Danube Rectors' Conference**, the [Instytut Allerhanda](#) and the [Klub Jagielloński](#)

The webinar will analyse the COVID-19 emergency from three different perspectives: **Polish**, **Austrian** and **Italian**. Speakers will talk about the influence of worldwide pandemic on higher education, consequences of online learning for students and teachers and possible scenarios for the future of universities in a globally competitive market.

The event will take place on **Wednesday, 2 December 2020, 17:00**

#### Speakers

- **Prof. Dobrochna Bach-Golecka**, University of Warsaw
- **Prof. Roland Bernhard**, University of Vienna
- **Prof. Dr.Dr.h.c. Heinz W. Engl**, Rector of the University of Vienna
- **Prof. Arkadiusz Radwan**, Director of Polish Academy of Sciences - Scientific Centre in Vienna
- **Prof. Luciano Saso**, Vice-Rector of Sapienza University and President of UNICA
- **Prof. Łukasz Sułkowski**, Jagiellonian University
- **Prof. Grzegorz Wrochna**, Deputy Minister of Science and Education, Republic of Poland

Moderator:

**Dr Marcin Kędzierski**, Cracow University of Economics

[Register here](#)

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#### 9. JRC | New call for Open Access to the JRC Nanobiotechnology Laboratory



We are glad to announce the [launch of a call to access the Nanobiotechnology Laboratory](#) at the Joint Research Centre ([JRC](#)) of the European Commission in [Ispra](#).

The JRC facilitates the access to the Nanobiotechnology Laboratory by waiving the access costs and in particular by providing travel and subsistence to users visiting the JRC from institutions from [countries eligible](#) for the [Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation Action](#).

The [Nanobiotechnology Laboratory](#) features state-of-the-art equipped facilities designed to foster interdisciplinary studies. A special emphasis lies on characterisation of nanomaterials, micro(nano)plastics, nanomedicines, advanced materials and their interactions with biological systems, as well as on the detection, identification and characterisation of nanomaterials in food and consumer products.



Priority topics of the [call](#):

- Nanomaterial characterisation including their interactions with biological systems (culture media, proteins, etc.)
- Detection of nanomaterials and nano(micro)plastics in complex matrices

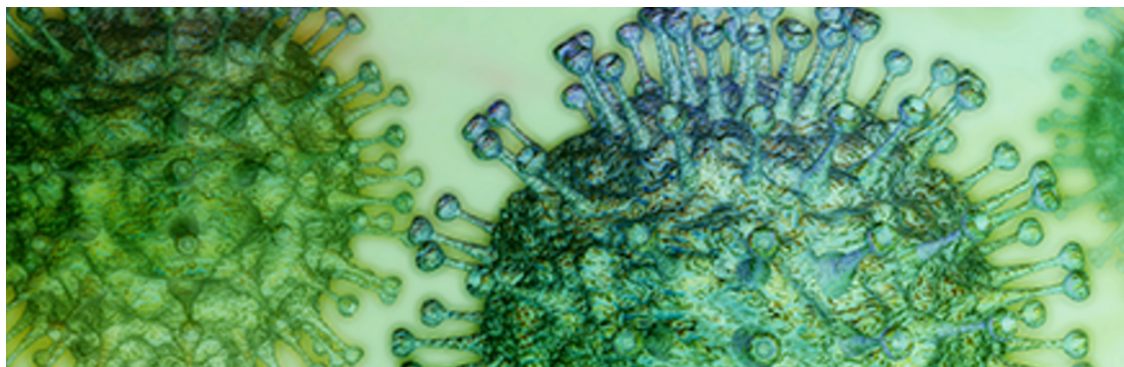
- Surface chemical analysis of macro and nanomaterials. Surface modification and nano-fabrication
- Biomolecular interaction studies, characterisation of antibodies and antigens, bio-interfaces characterisation
- Advanced material characterisation for non-bio-applications (energy, transport, circular economy, environment etc.).

You can find all relevant information here:

- [Call](#)
- [JRC Nanobiotechnology Laboratory: video and 360° Virtual Tour](#)
- [Open Access of the JRC Research Infrastructures](#)

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## 10. COVID-19 Measures at the Universities



We are recovering from difficult times we experienced in the past months. Although the intensity of COVID-19 is waning in Europe, we need to learn from our experiences and be prepared for potential second wave of the virus.

We also express our gratitude to all our member universities and their students as



well as to all other educational institutions in the region for showing immense solidarity throughout the crisis. In the future, the universities should continue to be the driving force for innovation and research in the region and beyond, and thus contribute to contain the fallout of the corona crises both in health and socio-economic terms.

Currently the economies are opening up, however, the universities are yet to operate normally. The introduction of different forms of **distance learning** was an unprecedented and in many ways challenging situation for most universities in the region. In order to use the gained experiences efficiently we need to exchange the lessons learned regarding the distance learning.

Therefore, we decided to explore how university associations such as DRC could contribute to alleviating the impact of government measures on universities, whereas **our focus primarily referred to various forms of the distance learning (E-learning)**. The collected information on the possibilities of the distance contact could consequently also be used during our DRC Annual conference taking place in November this year.

For more details on how some DRC member universities are coping with the current challenging situation, click [here](#). Also DRC President and Rector of the University of Belgrade **Ivanka Popović** has, amongst others, addressed the measures introduced at the University of Belgrade following the government regulations. To watch the IDMonSite discussion with Ivanka Popović, click [here](#).

**We would like to ask you to share your ideas and recommendations for our activity during these times of crisis and to share with us your experience, know-how and good practices in order to face the current situation.**

Please contact us via our e-mail address [info@drc-danube.org](mailto:info@drc-danube.org)

We wish you every success in coping with the emergency measures and take care of yourself!

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#### 11. EUA webinar - "University leaders discuss the Rome Communiqué of the Bologna Process: visions and feedback for the future"



The EUA has launched a series of webinars in occasion of the beginning of the Bologna Conference which started on November the 19th. These webinars faced some interesting topics such as the Universities policies and practices within the European Higher Education Area and their education mission.

The final webinar will take place on **Tuesday, 1 December, 14.00 – 15.00 CET**, and University leaders will discuss the **Bologna Process Ministerial Communiqué: feedback and visions for the future.**

- **Michael Gaebel**, Director for Higher Education Policy, EUA
- **Josep Garrell**, rector, Ramon Llull University, Spain, and EUA Board member
- **Gohar Hovhannisyan**, Chairperson, European Students' Union (ESU)

- **Marcin Palys**, former rector, University of Warsaw, Poland, and EUA Board member
- Moderator: **Michael Murphy**, President, EUA

An invitation email to register for this webinar will be sent to EUA members.

For any questions, please contact [events@eua.eu](mailto:events@eua.eu).

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## 12. Online event "Smart UAS in Smart Regions: increasing the strategic cooperation between Professional Higher Education and regions in Europe"

**EURASHE**, the **European Association of Institutions in Higher Education**, strongly supports the inclusion of Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in the development and implementation of regional S3s. Currently **UAS actively works in order to contribute to the competitiveness and innovation capacity of their regions** with the scope to develop a shared vision in order to implement the action plan and to evaluate the results.



**EURASHE** launched a series of webinars focused on a different European country or region to show some examples of successful collaboration of higher education institutions. The online events “**Smart UAS in Smart Regions: increasing the strategic cooperation between Professional Higher Education and regions in Europe**”, organised with the independent group of experts [Friends of Smart](#)

[Specialisation](#), will provide a platform to discuss a strengthened role for professional higher education institutions in the design and implementation of regional S3s.

Upcoming webinars are:

- **Basque Country – Wednesday 2 December 2020, 15:00-16:30 CET on Zoom**

[Register here](#)

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### 13. DRC Facebook Page



We are trying to improve the circulation of information within our network.  
We kindly ask you to also connect with us via [Facebook](#) and visit the [DRC webpage](#).

Thank you very much and best regards from Vienna

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#### 14. EUA Affiliate Status and EUA Newsletter

We are continuously strengthening and expanding our network. Since November 2015, the DRC is affiliate member of the [European University Association](#).

If you are interested in their news and activities, please follow the [link](#).

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Email



Website



Facebook

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