

DRC NEWSLETTER JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021



Dear subscribers to the DRC Newsletter,

although we would very much like to leave behind all the difficulties of the past year, the necessary measures will continue to shape the higher education sector not only in the upcoming months but also in the future.

Similarly, reshaping of the DRC's activities will definitely be on the agenda for 2021 as we are pleased to welcome newly elected DRC Presidency on board. **Prof. Zdravko Kačič, Rector of the University of Maribor and the new DRC President, shared his first views on the development of the DRC network.**

We are also delighted to announce that the **DRC Vice-President Prof. Ivanka Popović**, Rector of the University of Belgrade, and **Prof. Damir Boras**, Rector of the University of Zagreb, are **among the candidates to join the European University Association (EUA) board.**

Finally, you should not miss the open call for nominations for the **Danubius Young Scientist Award 2021!** Are you aware of young researcher with extraordinary scientific achievements coming from your university? Then nominate him/her for the Award and support the future generations of scientists from the Danube Region.

You can find many other information in the first DRC newsletter of 2021. So enjoy reading and stay tuned!

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

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1. Introduction of the new DRC President Rector Prof. Zdravko Kačič

We are pleased to introduce you the new **DRC President, Prof. Dr. Zdravko Kačič**, Rector of the University of Maribor, Slovenia, as he shares **his first words** since he assumed the charge on the 1st of January. Let's discover more about our new President and his vision for the role of the DRC in the region!

Rector Kačič is currently a full professor at the **Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, University of Maribor** and head of the **Laboratory for Digital Signal Processing**. His bibliography includes 634 units, from which he authored or co-authored 97 articles published in scientific journals, 45 of them published in journals with impact factor. He is the author or co-author of 190 articles published in the proceedings of national or international scientific conferences.



Upon his appointment as rector of the University of Maribor, Prof. Dr. Zdravko Kačič emphasised that **"with its performance, the University has to justify the confidence of the broader society in fulfilling its mission"**.

Moreover, he strongly believes that **"universities have to re-assure their position in our dramatically changing global society and are the best solution for a knowledge-based and reason-driven handling of today's and future societal challenges"**. He also highlighted the DRC special role in that mission since **"an active contribution of DRC in the process of design and progress of the Danube**

*Strategy and strong involvement in the matters of the common European Higher Education and Research Area shall be continued and even enforced, especially **Danubius Young Scientist Award**, contributions to the discussions on the future of Europe, cooperation with neighbouring areas and other actual themes of the DRC. It is about our most multi-cultural, multi-national and also vulnerable Danube region to become a valuable and added-value region of united Europe that we all strive for".*

Read the **full version of the introduction** on the [DRC website!](#)

2. Rectors Prof. Ivanka Popović and Prof. Damir Boras, candidates for the EUA Board



We are happy to announce that **Prof. Ivanka Popović**, Rector of the University of

Belgrade and DRC Vice-President, and **Prof. Damir Boras**, Rector of the University of Zagreb, are candidates for the membership in the **European University Association (EUA) board**.

The **EUA** represents the "**Voice of European Universities**" and it is a network of over 800 Universities across Europe that works to ensure the development of the best practices in the field of education and research. It organises a wide range of events, projects and workshops to prompt the innovation of the traditional tools and implement the exchange of knowledge and experience in the sector. Moreover, the continuous interaction with European and International organizations aims to shape the European policies.

The DRC Presidency fully supports their candidacy both as unceasing supporters of higher education and the scientific community in the Danube Region as well as a long-term reliable partner of the DRC. The inclusion of two distinguished rectors coming from the DRC target region into the EUA structure would undoubtedly contribute to the even greater importance of Eastern and South-Eastern European universities within the network, as well as to the future more multifaceted internal development of the EUA itself.

3. Danubius Young Scientist Award 2021 | Call for nominations

Call for nominations

Danubius Young Scientist Award 2021

APPLY NOW!

www.idm.at



 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Education, Science
and Research

In 2021, for the eighth time, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research (BMBFW) and the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) honour young researchers with extraordinary achievements in their scientific activity and output in relation to the Danube Region with the

Danubius Young Scientist Award 2021

This award will be granted to **14 young scientists** - one from each country (citizenship is crucial) that is part of the **EU Strategy for the Danube Region** (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Romania and Ukraine).

The award will be **endowed with 1.350 EUR for each winner** of the Danubius Young Scientist Award.

It is expected that the award ceremony will take place **in October/November 2021**. The details will be announced in due time.

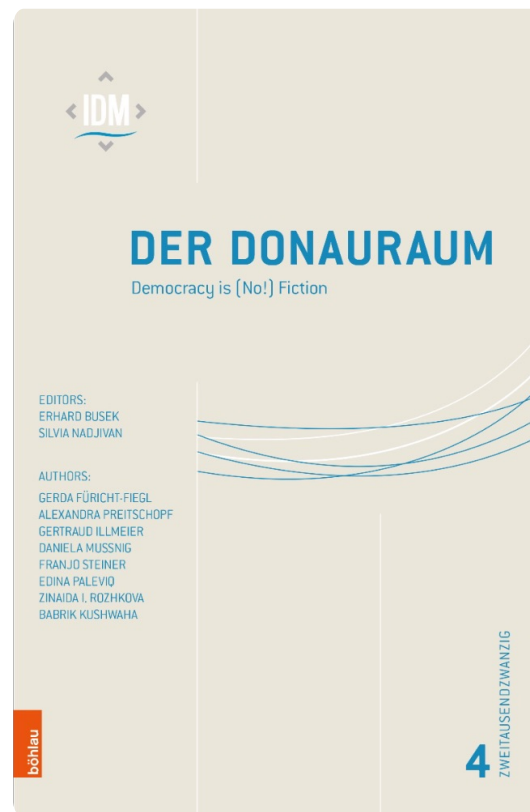
Moreover, thanks to the ongoing kind support by the JRC, the awardees will be

invited by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre to visit the **JRC in Ispra**, Italy in 2022.

The deadline for submitting nominations is **Friday, 30th April 2021 at 23:59**.

More information on the award criteria, submission of documents as well as selection process can be found on the [IDM website](#).

4. FIFUEM Project | Proceedings of the Kick-off conference



Democracy is (No!) Fiction

Der Donauraum 4/2020

With contributions from

Gerda Füricht-Fiegl
Gertraud Illmeier
Babrik Kushwaha
Daniela Mussnig
Edina Paleviq
Alexandra Preitschopf
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Franjo Steiner

The thematic issue of “Der Donauraum” is part of the Erasmus+, the Jean Monnet Project “**From Fictional to Functioning Democracy (FIFUDEM)**” that the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) is carrying out in cooperation with the Danube Rectors’ Conference (DRC).

Additionally, it is based on the **Kick-off Conference** “Democracy Is (No!) Fiction. Developing Concepts and Strategies for an Inclusive and Participatory Europe” that has taken place at the Haus der Europäischen Union in Vienna on January 13, 2020.

The conference brought up the problem of **fictional democracy** – a new form of facade democracy that produces illiberal fictions of democracy – and aimed at creating new visions for actively committed citizenship in a functioning democracy, embedded in a common and inclusive European Union.

To access ePrints of single articles, please visit the [website of the publishing house](#).

5. Democracy in Crisis? Challenges and opportunities for the Danube region



An advanced training seminar for primary and secondary teachers as well as for the interested public has been organized by IDM in cooperation with the Department of Geography and Regional Research of the University of Vienna and the University College for Teacher Education of Christian Churches Vienna/Krems (KPH).

The seminar is part of the Erasmus+, the Jean Monnet Project “**From Fictional to Functioning Democracy (FIFUDEM)**” that the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) is carrying out in cooperation with the DRC.

The online seminar is dedicated to the **origins of democracy** as well as current **illiberal tendencies**, **populisms** and **targeted disinformation**, all of which put this elementary form of politics to the test and demand new perspectives for **lived, participatory democracy** in the Danube region.

The recording of the seminar (in German) is available on the [IDM YouTube channel](#).

6. EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week - Youth dialogue



From 1 to 5 March 2021, DG REGIO will host the **2nd EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week (EU MRS Week)** that will take place digitally.

"Reconnect, Rethink, Recover" is the motto of the EU MRS Week gives a straightforward idea on the burning issues that will be tackled throughout the five days: to **Reconnect** MRS key implementers, stakeholders and representatives of EU institutions will be key, to **Rethink** the way to cooperate and prioritize MRS objectives in order to best **Recover** from the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 with concrete actions on the ground.

In particular, the session **"Youth Dialogue"** will take place on the **1st of March at 14:00-15:30 (CET)** and it will give young people the opportunity to express their

recommendations to policy makers and to make their voice heard on **what needs to change to tackle the challenges of their future**. Therefore, it will be the occasion to continue working on the objectives presented in the

Join the event on the official [webpage](#) of the **EU Macroregional** Strategy Week and take part to the dialogue using the hashtags **#EUMRSWeek #MacroRegions4U!**

7. Online workshop "Science for Policy in Regions and Cities"



As the European Commission's science and knowledge service, the **Joint Research Centre (JRC)** strives to promote a culture of **evidence-informed policymaking (EIPM)**, primarily at EU level, but also reaching out directly to EU Member States, regions and cities.

For this reason - in the second half of 2020 - they launched a series of virtual workshops about **"Strengthening and connecting eco-systems of science for policy in Europe"**. After a number of workshops focusing either on single elements of a system (e.g. Parliamentary advisory bodies, academies of

science...) or a single country, they are now moving to the level of **regions and cities**. Indeed, it is there that policies are ultimately implemented and sound scientific advice is equally crucial.

During the event, which will take place on **March 23 from 13.30 to 17.00 CET**, with the endorsement and support of the **Committee of the Regions**, they will endeavour to map the existing landscape in terms of EIPM instruments and tools, analyse the bottlenecks and obstacles to the uptake of evidence, and interactively propose possible solutions to these.

The workshop is all the more timely given the forthcoming continuation of the **“Science meets Regions” programme**, more details of which will be given during the workshop. In the introductory plenary, **MEP and ITRE committee member Andrea Maldonado** will present her reflections, along with **Committee of the Regions member and regional minister for economic development of Navarra, Mikel Irujo**. There will also be testimonials from regions and cities that participated in the pilot phase of Science meets Regions (2018-2020).

The full programme will be available soon. In the meanwhile, we invite you to already [register via this survey](#).

8. 2021 EUA Annual Conference



The **2021 EUA Annual Conference “Universities 2030: From vision to reality”** will take place online on **22-23 April**. Against the backdrop of the ongoing climate crisis, fundamental technological advances, labour market changes and the pressure Europe’s political systems are currently experiencing, an honest and ambitious debate is needed about the path universities must take to remain resilient and relevant.

"In EUA’s vision for this path, outlined in the publication **“Universities without walls – A vision for 2030”**, Europe’s universities are open learning communities engaged in the creation of a sustainable global society, as well as autonomous and accountable entities striving for continuous improvement. **Universities’ core missions – learning and teaching, research, innovation and contribution to culture – will play an instrumental role in universities’ efforts to realise this vision**".

In this perspective the 2021 EUA Annual Conference will feature sessions of various formats, including interactive audience participation, encouraging a rich exchange of experiences and good practices. The exclusive conference is open to EUA members as well as non-EUA members, details on fees and registration procedure are available on the [EUA website!](#)

Discover more about the **Annual Conference** programme [here!](#)

For registration click the button below!

Register now

9. Magna Charta Universitatum 2020



The **Observatory Magna Charta Universitatum** would like to remind to all **DRC member universities**, which still have not signed the new Magna Charta 2020 that there is still time to do so.

Over **900 universities** from 88 countries have signed the MCU since 1988, declaring their commitment to the values of institutional autonomy and academic freedom enshrined in that document. The service given by universities is founded on the **values** which guide them, and these have been found to be particularly helpful in these uncharted times. The **Magna Charta Universitatum** celebrates the deepest values of University traditions and encourages strong bonds among Universities. We can summarize the values as autonomy, academic freedom, internationalization, and inseparability of teaching and research.

The **Magna Charta Observatory**:

- provides assistance to signatory universities who want to be at the forefront of understanding and implementation of the fundamental values.
- reviews and reports when circumstances do not allow universities to operate autonomously.
- helps Countries to enable their universities to be more aware of the significance of fundamental values for the development of their higher education systems.
- assists key stakeholders when fundamental values, especially academic freedom, are not being upheld.

The **new Magna Charta Universitatum 2020** states that "*Universities acknowledge that individuals and communities, often due to inequitable circumstances, have difficulty gaining access to higher education or influencing the modes and matter of academic study.*"

In this perspective, the MUC urges that 'universities deliberately seek ways' to remedy that situation. In recent years the World Access to Higher Education Day has brought focus to access and equity issues with the aim of enabling more to be done to achieve greater access and equity.

This issue is the topic of the **webinar "Access and Equity"** organised by the **Observatory and WAHED** and which took place on the **23rd of February 2021**. In case you missed it **you can rewatch the webinar [HERE!](#)**

10. PASIFIC Fellowship Programme



The **PASIFIC Fellowship Programme** is a unique opportunity for researchers who want to pursue a research programme in a dynamic environment. It will enable scholars of all nationalities and across all scientific disciplines to establish their **scientific independence** and conduct **ground-breaking research**.

The 2-years-long fellowship will take place at the **Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS)**, which is one of the most prestigious research institutions in Poland. The selected participants will have the **freedom to choose their research area**, research supervisor, host institute as well as secondment organisations best suited for their research and career development.

The programme consist of a **monthly allowance of approx. €2,500 net**. Those, who decide to come to Poland together with their families, may be entitled to an additional family allowance. In addition, they will be granted a **research budget of up to €93,000 per project**.

Only 50 outstanding candidates will be selected for this years' edition. The **first call**, in which 35 PASIFIC fellows will be recruited, **will be open from the 15th of March 2021 to the 30th of June 2021**. Selected researchers will be informed about evaluation results after approx. six months. **They will be expected to come to Poland between January 2022 and March 2022**.

For further information regarding the conditions of participation and the selection criteria, check out the **Polish Academy of Sciences' [official website](#)**.

11. CASEE NEWSLETTER



The **“ICA Regional Network for Central and South Eastern Europe” (CASEE)** is a network of Central and South Eastern European Higher Education Institutions linking Life Science disciplines in the region ranging from natural resources, environment, food, agriculture, biotechnology and natural resources.

Besides fascinating updates and opportunities in the newsletter, CASEE prepared a COVID-19 corner informing about challenges at the educational institutions related to the current pandemic situation.

Check CASEE's Newsletter [here!](#)

12. 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



13. 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](#).



Danube Rectors' Conference i.v.z.w.

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