

DRC Annual Conference 2023

19-20 October 2023 | West University of Timisoara

Forty years of overcoming academic divisions: Importance of higher education for democracy and culture

Just as democracy spread from the streets of Timisoara to the whole of Romania in 1989, so the DRC founding member universities in 1983 strived to establish institutional contacts with universities behind the Iron Curtain operating under communist regimes. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Danube Rectors' Conference and the designation of the city of Timisoara as the European Capital of Culture for 2023, the representatives of DRC member universities gather at the West University of Timisoara to not only celebrate the important anniversary but also to discuss current burning issues related to higher education and research.

Building on the last four decades of inter-institutional cooperation and joint activities and projects, representatives of four founding universities look back on the history of the DRC, evaluate its position in the current European higher education structures and map out the future role of the network. In addition, the consequences of the Russian invasion on Ukrainian university facilities, their functioning in times of war, as well as war-induced academic migration will be explored during the conference. Finally, the DRC Initiative Fund project will be presented and its participants – doctoral students from DRC member universities – will meet with the winners of the Danubius Awards 2023, who will be officially presented during the award ceremony.

Day 1 | 18 October 2023**16:00 - 18:30 | Cultural Programme****Guided City Tour****Romanian Orthodox Cathedral***Ferdinand I Boulevard***18:30 | Informal Dinner****The Beer Factory***Ștefan cel Mare Street 28***Day 2 | 19 October 2023****West University of Timișoara***Vasile Pârvan Boulevard 4, Room A11***8:15 - 9:00 | Welcome Coffee****8:30 - 9:00 | Registration****9:00 - 9:30 | Welcome Speech****Ligia Deca**, Minister for Education, Romania (online)**Andrei Alexandru**, Secretary of State, Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitalization (online)**Marilen Gabriel Pirtea**, Rector of the West University of Timișoara**Friedrich Faulhammer**, DRC President and Rector of the University for Continuing Education Krems**Dominic Fritz**, Mayor of Timișoara**9:30 - 10:30 | Session I***Cruising foreign relations along the Danube: Romania and Austria***Emil Hurezeanu**, Romanian ambassador in Austria**Martin Eichinger**, Austrian diplomat, lawyer, former politician and ambassador (i.a. in Romania)**Moderation: Marilen Gabriel Pirtea**, Rector of the West University of Timișoara

10:30 - 11:30 | Session II

Forty years of cohesion through education: Towards sustainable and democratic European society

Ferenc Hudecz, Former Rector of the Eötvös Loránd University

Stefan Koch, Rector of the University of Linz

Andrea Lehner-Hartmann, Dean of the Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna

Michael Weber, Rector of the University of Ulm

Moderation: Friedrich Faulhammer, DRC President and Rector of the University for Continuing Education Krems

11:30 - 11:45 | Group Photo**11:45 - 12:00 | Coffee Break****12:00 - 13:00 | Session III**

Higher education in times of war: Consequences of forced academic mobility and integration

Iryna Izarova, Professor at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, currently guest researcher at the University for Continuing Education Krems

Constantin Iordachi, Professor at the Central European University, Vienna/Budapest

Michael Gaebel, Director of the Higher Education Policy Unit, European University Association (online)

Moderation: Ivanka Popović, Acting DRC Honorary President and Vice-President of the European University Association (EUA)

13:00 - 14:30 | Lunch

Zaza Resto Pub

Vasile Parvan Boulevard 9

14:30 - 15:30 | Session IV

Fostering research excellence of youth: DRC Initiative Fund

Zdravko Kačič, Rector of the University of Maribor

Dana Percec, Director of the Office of Doctoral Studies,
West University of Timisoara

Yulia Fetko, Associate Professor at the Uzhhorod National
University, Recipient of the DRC Initiative Fund (online)

Francesco Desiderio, Research Fellow at the Hungarian
University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (MATE),
Recipient of the DRC Initiative Fund

Moderation: Daniel David, DRC Vice-President and Rector
of the Babeș-Bolyai University

15:30 - 16:00 | Coffee Break**16:00 - 18:00 | Danubius Awards 2023 Ceremony (Hybrid)****19:00 | Formal Dinner****Sky Restaurant**

Coriolan Brediceanu Street 10

Day 3 | 20 October 2023**West University of Timișoara**

Vasile Pârvan Boulevard 4, Room A01

8:30 - 9:00 | Welcome Coffee**9:00 - 10:30 | General Assembly**
*(including Permanent Committee)***10:30 - 10:45 | Coffee Break****10:45 - 12:00 | General Assembly**
*(including Permanent Committee)***12:00 - 13:30 | Lunch****Zaza Resto Pub**

Vasile Parvan Boulevard 9

13:30 | Free Programme / Departures