

CHARLES UNIVERSITY
PRAGUE



*The Prague Castle glows at dusk.
Photo by Mistervlad*

Global Forum on Higher Education 2025

RENEWAL OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC MISSION

3-4 JUNE 2025

SPONSORED BY

Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITIES

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES BUREAU



OAS

More rights
for more people

GLOBAL FORUM ON HIGHER EDUCATION 2025: RENEWAL OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC MISSION

MEETING LOCATION

MAIN SESSIONS

CHARLES UNIVERSITY RECTORATE
ENTRANCE: CELETNÁ 20, 110 00, PRAGUE
BLUE AUDITORIUM

INTERACTIVE PARALLEL WORKSHOPS

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
ENTRANCE: CELETNÁ 13, PRAGUE
ROOMS C202, C203, C204, C205

LOCAL HOSTS



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
YOUTH AND SPORTS



**Charles
University**



FACULTY
OF EDUCATION
Charles University

SPONSORED BY

Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITIES

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES BUREAU



INTERNATIONAL
CONSORTIUM
FOR
HIGHER EDUCATION, CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AND DEMOCRACY



OAS

More rights
for more people

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS



Netter Center
for Community Partnerships
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



GLOBAL FORUM ON HIGHER EDUCATION 2025: RENEWAL OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC MISSION

AGENDA AT A GLANCE

TUESDAY, 3 JUNE 2025

- 8:00 - 8:30** Registration and Welcome Coffee [LOCATION: Charles U Rectorate, Celetná 20]
- 8:30 - 9:30** Opening Remarks [Blue Auditorium]
- 9:30 - 9:50** Keynote on “Envisioning the Future of Democratic Engagement in Higher Education”
- 9:50 - 11:00** Opening Plenary: Global Perspectives on Higher Education’s Role in Democracy
- 11:00 - 11:15** Coffee Break [Green Auditorium]
- 11:15 - 12:30** Plenary Session: Reclaiming Higher Education’s Public Purpose – The Role of Students and Youth
- 12:30 - 1:00** Side event: Presentation of the Report on the Threats to Academic Freedom
- 12:30 - 2:00** Lunch Break - Restaurants on Campus
- 2:00 - 3:30** Interactive Parallel Workshops [LOCATION: Faculty of Education, Celetná 13]
- Workshop 1: Design Thinking for Democratic Engagement [Room C202]
 - Workshop 2: Academic Freedom and Responsibility in a Changing World [Room C205]
 - Workshop 3: Higher Education & Public Authorities: Navigating Partnerships in Times of Crisis [Rooms C203 & C204]
- 3:30 - 3:45** Coffee Break
- 3:45 - 5:00** Plenary Session: Democratizing Knowledge – The Role of Faculty, Researchers, and the Public
- 5:00 - 5:30** Closing of Day One
- 5:30 - 6:30** Musical Performance by Charles University Faculty of Education & Networking Reception [Aula Magna (Great Hall)]

WEDNESDAY, 4 JUNE 2025

- 9:00 - 10:15** Plenary Session: Universities as Civic Anchors – Local and Regional Perspectives [Charles U Rectorate, Celetná 20, Blue Auditorium]
- 10:15 - 10:35** Coffee Break
- 10:35 - 10:45** Remarks from the Director General: "Mobilising Higher Education for Solidarity: A European Perspective"
- 10:45 - 11:30** Synthesis Session: Rapporteur Reports and Emerging Insights
- 11:30 - 12:30** Summative Policy Panel: Higher Education & Democracy – Where Do We Go from Here?
- 12:30 - 1:00** Closing of the Conference



[VIEW SPEAKER BIOS](#)



[VIEW FULL PROGRAMME](#)

FORUM CONCEPT

Democracy is in crisis throughout the world, with political developments threatening the principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Higher education, science, and the pursuit of knowledge are similarly faced with significant challenges at this time. More than ever, colleges and universities have a crucial role to play in the development and preservation of democratic societies. This moment calls for higher education to actively embrace its civic and democratic purposes, as well as stand for and exemplify democratic values including diversity, inclusivity, tolerance, equity, and open inquiry.

The “Global Forum on Higher Education 2025: Renewal of the Democratic and Civic Mission”—hosted by Charles University in Prague in partnership with The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic—marks the eighth installment of a collaborative effort between the Council of Europe and the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility, and Democracy. This invitational meeting also marks the second gathering hosted by a larger cooperation—the Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education—which includes the Council, the International Consortium, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the International Association of Universities (IAU).

The overall focus of the 2025 Global Forum on Higher Education is on the threats to democracy—which includes attacks on higher education’s democratic and civic work and mission—and higher education's role in combatting those threats.

The attacks on academic freedom, higher education as a public good, human rights, and democracy itself have accelerated at an alarming rate.

It is more important than ever that the global higher education community—including institutional leaders, faculty, students, public authorities/ government partners, and civil society—come together.

GUIDING QUESTIONS & FRAMEWORK

The 2025 Global Forum's particular focus is on bringing voices from diverse regions around the world together for sharing information, understanding, and collaborative solutions to what *specifically* can be done to renew higher education's civic and democratic mission in order to preserve, strengthen, and advance democracy during this time of growing autocracy and authoritarianism.

The Forum's overall discussion is being framed around these four questions:

- What is the nature of the current threats to democracy and higher education's democratic work?
- What are the causes (including higher education's failure to sufficiently stand for its democratic mission)?
- What AND how can higher education do to change the current situation and effectively combat the threats to democracy?
- What AND how can the Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education and its constituent partners (the Council of Europe; IAU; International Consortium; OAS) do to effectively combat the threats to democracy and help renew higher education's democratic mission?

We anticipate responses to these questions will have both regional utility and global resonance. The General Rapporteur's Report coming out of the conference will help capture the key themes and recommended best practices and policies, as well as possible steps forward and future action, including ongoing dialogue, webinars, and meetings.

A set of principles will also be produced as one of the outcomes of the Forum to help guide our future collective work as well as the work of the many partners participating in the Global Forum to effectively renew higher education's commitment to strengthening democracy on campus, in the wider society, and indeed throughout the world.

FULL PROGRAMME

DAY 1 - TUESDAY, 3 JUNE 2025

Charles University Rectorate

Entrance: Celetná 20, 110 00, Prague

8:00 - 8:30 Registration and Welcome Coffee

8:30 - 9:30 Opening Remarks - Blue Auditorium

Opening remarks by host institutions and key partner organisations on the theme “Why does higher education’s democratic and civic mission matter now more than ever?”

- **Matjaž Gruden**, Director for Democracy, Council of Europe
- **Mikuláš Bek**, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic
- **Radka Wildová**, Director General for Higher Education, Science and Research in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Czech Republic
- **Milena Králíčková**, Rector, Charles University
- **Antonín Jančařík**, Dean of the Faculty of Education, Charles University
- **Villano Qiriaz**, Head of Education Department, Council of Europe
- **Ira Harkavy**, Chair of the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility, and Democracy; Barbara and Edward Netter Director, Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania
- **Jacynth Henry-Martin**, Saint Kitts and Nevis Ambassador to the Organization of American States and United States of America
- **Hillegje van’t Land**, Secretary General, International Association of Universities

9:30 - 9:50 Keynote on "Envisioning the Future of Democratic Engagement in Higher Education"

Keynote Focus: the role of universities in strengthening democracy amid global challenges.

- **Patrick Deane**, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Queen’s University (Canada); President of the Governing Council, Magna Charta Observatory; Vice-President of the Administrative Board, International Association of Universities

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW SPEAKER BIOS](#)

GLOBAL FORUM ON HIGHER EDUCATION 2025: RENEWAL OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC MISSION

DAY 1 - TUESDAY, 3 JUNE 2025 - CONTINUED

9:50 - 11:00 Opening Plenary on “Global Perspectives on Higher Education’s Role in Democracy”

Plenary Focus: This session brings together higher education leaders from diverse regions to reflect on the keynote and share regional perspectives on the evolving civic mission of universities.

Moderator:

- **Snježana Prijić Samaržija**, Professor of Philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and Former Rector, University of Rijeka, Croatia

Panelists:

- **Jonathan R. Alger**, President, American University, Washington, D.C.
- **Peter Maassen**, Professor of Higher Education, University of Oslo, Norway
- **Francis Petersen**, Vice-Chancellor, University of Pretoria; Chair of Universities South Africa

11:00 - 11:15 Coffee Break - Green Auditorium

11:15 - 12:30 Plenary Session on “Reclaiming Higher Education’s Public Purpose – The Role of Students and Youth”

Plenary Focus: How are students shaping the democratic and civic role of universities? This discussion will highlight student-led initiatives, activism, and the importance of including youth perspectives in decision-making.

Moderator:

- **Ana Gvritishvili**, Global Student Forum Steering Committee Member representing the European Students’ Union (ESU)

Panelists:

- **Kai Hopkinson-Ramsammy**, Newman Civic Fellow, Class of 2025, University of San Diego
- **Rolando Pelicot Ruiz**, Participant, UNAOC Young Peacebuilder Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean
- **Arno Schrooyen**, Vice President, European Students' Union
- **María Nieves Tapia**, Founder and Director, Latin American Center for Service-Learning (CLAYSS)

GLOBAL FORUM ON HIGHER EDUCATION 2025: RENEWAL OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC MISSION

DAY 1 - TUESDAY, 3 JUNE 2025 - CONTINUED

12:30 - 1:00 Side event: Presentation of the Report on the Threats to Academic Freedom

Authors of the Report and members of the Council of Europe Expert Working Group on Democratic Mission of Higher Education

- **Peter Maassen**, Professor, Department of Education, University of Oslo, Norway
- **Zoltán Rónay**, Associate Professor, Institute of Education, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
- **Gergely Kováts**, Associate Professor, Institute of Management, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

12:30 - 2:00 Lunch Break – Restaurants on Campus

2:00 - 3:30 Interactive Parallel Workshops

Location: Faculty of Education, Celetná 13

- **Workshop 1: Design Thinking for Democratic Engagement - Room C202**
 - *Workshop Focus: Developing innovative strategies for participation, particularly student participation in democratic processes on campus.*

Facilitators:

- **Tim Eatman**, Inaugural Dean of Honors Living-Learning Community, Rutgers University - Newark (New Jersey)
- **Pil Maria Saugmann**, President, European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers

- **Workshop 2: Academic Freedom and Responsibility in a Changing World - Room C205**
 - *Workshop Focus: Exploring the balance between academic freedom, institutional responsibility, and societal expectations.*

Facilitators:

- **Amy Reid**, Senior Manager of Freedom to Learn Programme, PEN America
- **Kirsten Roberts-Lyer**, Associate Professor and Chair of Human Rights Programme, Central European University (Austria)

- **Workshop 3: Higher Education and Public Authorities: Navigating Partnerships in Times of Crisis - Rooms C203 and C204**
 - *Workshop Focus: Concentrating on how universities can engage with public authorities while maintaining autonomy and integrity, especially in politically sensitive or conflict-affected regions.*

Facilitators:

- **Tony Gallagher**, Emeritus Professor of Education, Queen's University Belfast (UK)
- **Jack Mayerhofer**, Senior Program Officer for Global Coalitions, Scholars at Risk

GLOBAL FORUM ON HIGHER EDUCATION 2025: RENEWAL OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC MISSION

DAY 1 - TUESDAY, 3 JUNE 2025 - CONTINUED

Return to Charles University Rectorate, Celetná 20, 110 00, Prague

3:30 - 3:45 Coffee Break – Green Auditorium

3:45 - 5:00 Plenary Session on “Democratizing Knowledge – The Role of Faculty, Researchers, and the Public”

Plenary Focus: How accessible is the knowledge universities develop to society? This session explores open science, public scholarship, and faculty engagement in civic life.

Moderator:

- **Paul Pribbenow**, President, Augsburg University (Minneapolis, MN)

Panelists:

- **Nana Aba Appiah Amfo**, Vice-Chancellor, University of Ghana; IAU Board Member
- **Peter Aronsson**, Rector, Linnaeus University, Sweden; IAU Board Member
- **Paola Mattei**, Professor of Public Policy and Political Science, University of Milano, Italy
- **Beatriz Rahmer Pavez**, Deputy Director of the Office for Social and Public Innovation, University of Chile

5:00 - 5:15 Closing of Day One

- **Marie-Anne Persoons**, Chair of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) and International Policy Adviser, Flemish Department of Education and Training, Belgium

5:30 - 6:30 Musical Performance by the Charles University Faculty of Education & Networking Reception - Aula Magna (Great Hall)

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY, 4 JUNE 2025

Charles University Rectorate

Entrance: Celetná 20, 110 00, Prague

9:00 - 10:15 Plenary Session on “Universities as Civic Anchors – Local and Regional Perspectives”

Plenary Focus: How can universities deepen their engagement with local communities and serve as democratic institutions at a time of political and social polarization?

Moderator:

- **Byron White**, Associate Provost for Urban Research and Community Engagement, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Panelists:

- **Verity Firth**, Vice-President Societal Impact, Equity and Engagement, University of New South Wales; Chair, Engagement Australia; former NSW Minister for Education and Training
- **Syndia A. Nazario-Cardona**, Associate Vice President of Government Affairs & Institutional Relations, Ana G. Mendez University (Puerto Rico)
- **Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt**, Executive Director, Institute for the Development of Education, Croatia

10:15 - 10:35 Coffee Break - Green Auditorium

10:35 - 10:45 Remarks from the Director General: "Mobilising Higher Education for Solidarity: A European Perspective"

- **Václav Velčovský**, Director General, Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports of the Czech Republic

10:45 - 11:30 Synthesis Session: Reports from Workshops and Emerging Insights

Session Focus: General Rapporteur & Rapporteurs from each workshop present key findings and recommendations for action.

Workshop Rapporteurs

General Rapporteur:

- **Heather Campbell**, Professor and Director of the School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, Canada

DAY 2 - WEDNESDAY, 4 JUNE 2025 - CONTINUED

**11:30 - 12:30 Summative Policy Panel: Higher Education and Democracy –
Where Do We Go from Here?**

Panel Focus: This closing discussion will bring together key stakeholders to outline next steps and commitments to strengthening higher education's democratic mission globally.

Moderator:

- **Dawn Whitehead**, Vice President, Office of Global Citizenship for Campus, Community, and Careers, American Association of Colleges & Universities; Steering Committee of the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility, and Democracy

Panelists:

- **Yadira Pinilla**, Senior Specialist, Department for Human Development, Education and Employment, Organization of American States
- **Villano Qiriazzi**, Head of Education Department, Council of Europe
- **Hilligje van't Land**, Secretary General, International Association of Universities
- **Radka Wildová**, General Education and Pedagogy Scientific Coordinator, Charles University; Director General for Higher Education, Science and Research in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Czech Republic

12:30 - 1:00 Closing of the Conference

- **Jacinth Henry-Martin**, Saint Kitts and Nevis Ambassador to the Organization of American States and United States of America
- **Ira Harkavy**, Chair of the International Consortium
- **Radka Wildová**, Director General for Higher Education, Science and Research in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Czech Republic



ABOUT THE GLOBAL COOPERATION

The Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education works to build a global movement to fulfill higher education's democratic mission and strengthen the role of higher education in developing, maintaining, and sustaining democracy on campus, in the community, and the wider society. The cooperation is comprised of four pillar organizations: the Council of Europe; the International Association of Universities; the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility, and Democracy; and the Organization of American States.

The Council of Europe (CoE) and the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy (IC) have worked in cooperation since 1999 to advance the contributions of higher education to the development of democratic culture. The Organization of American States (OAS) joined this cooperation in April 2018 and the International Association of Universities (IAU) in October 2019. In January 2021, the CoE, the IC, the OAS, and the IAU named their partnership the Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education.

The Global Cooperation has undertaken cross-national research projects and joint meetings to share best practices, as part of its efforts to advance the contributions of higher education to the development of democratic societies. The first cross-national research project between the CoE and IC started in 1999, with the research findings published by the CoE in *The University as Res Publica: Higher Education Governance, Student Participation and the University as a Site of Citizenship* (2004). Seven global forums have been hosted:

- Higher Education and Democratic Culture: Citizenship, Human Rights, and Civic Responsibility (2006, Council of Europe, Strasbourg)
- Higher Education for Modern Societies: Competences and Values (2008, Council of Europe, Strasbourg)
- Reimagining Democratic Societies: A New Era of Personal and Social Responsibility (2011, University of Oslo)
- Higher Education for Democratic Innovation (2014, Queen's University, Belfast)
- Higher Education for Diversity, Social Inclusion, and Community: A Democratic Imperative (2017, LUMSA University, Rome)
- Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and the Future of Democracy (2019, Council of Europe, Strasbourg)
- Higher Education Leadership for Democracy, Sustainability and Social Justice (2023, Dublin City University)

The Forums have resulted in publications on each conference theme. Three other books have been published that were stimulated and edited by partners involved in the Global Cooperation: *The Local Mission of Higher Education: Principles and Practice* (2019); *Higher Education's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Building a More Sustainable and Democratic Future* (2021); and *Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Civic Engagement and the Democratic Mission* (2023).

At the 2006 Global Forum, a declaration on “The Responsibility of Higher Education for a Democratic Culture: Citizenship, Human Rights and Sustainability,” was adopted by acclamation, affirming the need to increase the commitment of higher education institutions to democratic culture and sustainable societies. It also called for action to promote the principles of democratic citizenship, human rights, and civic responsibility. At the 2019 Global Forum, participants adopted a declaration supporting the role of academic freedom and institutional autonomy in ensuring the future of democracy, which was widely distributed. The 2025 “Global Forum on Higher Education 2025: Renewal of the Democratic and Civic Mission”—hosted in partnership with Charles University and The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic on 3-4 June 2025—marks the eighth installment of this collaborative effort.

Global Cooperation for the Democratic Mission of Higher Education



The Council of Europe (CoE), established in 1949, promotes human rights, democracy and the rule of law, develops continent-wide agreements to standardise member countries' social and legal practices, and promotes awareness of a European identity across cultures based on shared values. It comprises 46 member countries. The Steering Committee for Education oversees the Council of Europe's programmes in the field of education and advises the Committee of Ministers on education issues. Governments of the Council of Europe member States are represented in the Committee by senior officials from the general education and higher education sectors.

The International Association of Universities (IAU), created under the auspices of UNESCO in 1950, represents universities and other higher education institutions, organisations and affiliates across 130 countries. The IAU acts as the global voice of higher education and its organisations, in particular to UNESCO, advocating and advancing a dynamic leadership role for higher education in society.

Articulating the fundamental values and principles that underpin education and the pursuit, dissemination and application of knowledge, the Association advocates the development of higher education policies and practices that respect diverse perspectives. In addition, it promotes social responsibility and contributes to the development of a sustainable future.

The International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy (IC) was created in 1999 to work with the Council of Europe with the objective of developing, explaining, and advancing the contributions of higher education to democracy on college and university campuses, their local communities, and the wider society. It is composed of the United States (represented by a Steering Committee from the American Association of Colleges and Universities, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, American Council on Education, Anchors Institutions Task Force, Campus Compact, and NASPA-Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education); Australia (represented by Engagement Australia); the United Kingdom (represented by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement); Ireland (represented by Campus Engage); South Africa (represented by Universities South Africa); and the Magna Charta Observatory.

The Organization of American States (OAS), established in 1948, is the main political forum of the Western Hemisphere. It gathers all 35 independent states of the Americas to jointly promote and consolidate democracy; strengthen human rights; foster peace, security, and cooperation; and advance in achieving common interests. Since its inception, the main objective of the OAS has been to prevent conflicts and support political stability, social inclusion, and prosperity in the region through dialogue and collective actions including cooperation and mediation.

Global Forum on Higher Education 2025

RENEWAL OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC MISSION

3-4 JUNE 2025

For more information, please contact:

Jelena Drca, Council of Europe, jelena.drca@coe.int

Rita A. Hodges, International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic
Responsibility, ritaa@upenn.edu