

Prague Declaration

Published on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of the birth
of King of Bohemia and Roman Emperor, Charles IV,
founder of Charles University in Prague

Building upon the inspirational legacy of notable medieval universities, as well as upon the legacy of King of Bohemia and Roman Emperor, Charles IV, who gave consent to the establishment of eleven of them, and feeling a shared responsibility for the state of the world today, we publish this declaration in Prague, on the occasion of our meeting.

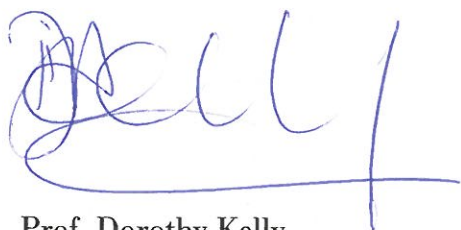
Since their very beginning, universities have always played an important role in European national states. Scientific, artistic and educational activities of universities in Italy, England, France, Spain and in central Europe were extremely important not just for the nurturing of science, art and education itself, but universities also cooperated closely with prominent scholars and members of political elites – such as Charles IV – who had established them and often turned to them for advice, consultation or much appreciated support for his ideas and plans.

Universities were already then aware of their unique position, as well as of the fact that knowledge and education represent inalienable values of immense importance. Universities were also places for gatherings, free discussions and exchange of opinions, which led not just to new scientific discoveries, but also to better understanding of “the other”, and thus to tolerance and cultivation of society as a whole.

Universities prepare their students for future involvement in society, which will in many aspects be different than it is today, particularly taking into account that most students will reach their professional height twenty or maybe even more years after they leave university. Thus, they should be able to adapt to changing social conditions – and should be willing to accept the ever-changing world without any prejudice. Top science and research – which push knowledge beyond the seeming limits of human abilities – are not the only obligations of modern universities. They must also analyse the state of the world today and interpret processes and phenomena that might seem unclear at first sight. An educated “citizen of the world” is less likely to accept simple solutions. And it is the education of such people that universities should strive for.

In today's globalised world, the role of universities has lost none of its past significance. Our world has changed dramatically since the era of Charles IV, but the critical mind of free men and women and the free exchange of opinions were, are and will be the most powerful tools and the most precious values in civilisation. We cannot solve any of today's global problems without research and education. The importance of basic and applied research also grows as we are flooded with information of all kinds and the world of today becomes more and more difficult to understand. Quite often, people act as if the universal values upon which our modern society was built over the centuries and upon which it still stands, values such as humanism, tolerance and openness – all essential parts of democracy – exist no more, and as if it were possible to relativize almost anything. Universities are here to remind them that it is not so – that such values still exist and are worth fighting for.

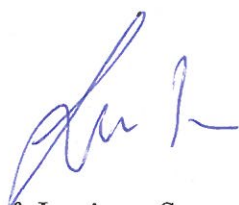
Prague, 13 May 2016



Prof. Dorothy Kelly
*Chair of the Executive Board
of the Coimbra Group*



Dr. Andrew Graham
*Chair of the Europaeum
Academic Council*



Prof. Luciano Saso
President of UNICA



Prof. Tomáš Zima
Rector of Charles University



Kateřina Valachová
*Minister of Education,
Youth and Sports*

on behalf of Universities that expressed support of this Declaration:

Austria	University of Vienna
Belgium	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
	Université catholique de Louvain
	Université Libre Bruxelles
	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Bulgaria	Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"
Croatia	University of Zagreb
Cyprus	University of Cyprus
Czech Republic	Academy of Arts, Architecture & Design in Prague
	Academy of Fine Arts in Prague
	Academy of Performing Arts in Prague
	Brno University of Technology
	Charles University in Prague
	College of Polytechnics Jihlava
	Czech Technical University in Prague
	Czech University of Life Sciences Prague
	Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice
	Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem
	Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno
	Masaryk University
	Mendel University in Brno
	Palacký University Olomouc
	Police Academy of the Czech Republic
	Silesian University in Opava
	Technical University of Liberec
	Tomas Bata University in Zlín
	University of Defence
	University of Economics, Prague
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Lithuania	Vilnius University
Luxembourg	University of Luxembourg
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Poland	Jagellonian University in Kraków
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Romania	Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași
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Serbia	University of Belgrade
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United Kingdom	University of Oxford
United States of America	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill