

MCO CONNECT

news from the Magna Charta Observatory

From the Secretary General



As we draw to the close of 2022, I would like to reflect and thank all members of our global community for the many and impactful ways in which they have supported the MCO and promoted in practice the real value of academic freedom and the other values and principles set out in the Magna Charta Universitatum 2020.

A recent email from one of our much-valued group of ambassadors said that she had attended more seminars and meetings about academic freedom this year than she had for many years. She went on to suggest the reasons for this, including the impact of populist political parties. The MCO is grateful for all the invitations which it receives to provide speakers for such events and is normally able to oblige.

Moreover, this year, we have noticed more interest in focusing on fundamental values. More universities have opted into the MCO's Living Values project, and more is being written about the importance of values, both in running universities and enabling students to appreciate them. In our November webinar, Professor Pam Gillies, the retiring Principal of Glasgow Caledonian University, described in very practical terms why a values-based approach is invaluable – and she had demonstrated that over her 17 years in the role.

There are many special situations in the world, but few have had as much impact on universities as the Russian hostilities toward Ukraine. Back in March the MCO asked signatory universities to support universities in Ukraine. The response has shown both what a supportive community the MCO signatories can be and how that can have a very positive effect on how universities in that country promote the principles and values of MCU 2020 and enable others to do so. Our 2023 Anniversary conference in Poland will provide another opportunity for the MCO to engage with universities in Ukraine and the surrounding region.

The launch of the MCO's research initiative is attracting wide interest. We look forward to the findings providing insights that will be of value around the world.

More details about these things and other news follow in the final edition of MCO Connect for 2022. For those who celebrate it, we wish you a very joyful and relaxing Christmas. We wish all of our signatories a happy and successful New Year, and we look forward to continuing to enable universities to strengthen their role in society.

David J. Lock

Secretary General

[More about the Secretary General](#)

MCO members out and about

In this section we share information about the main events and activities organised by us or in which members of the MCO participated in recent weeks.

MCO at 16th IAU General Global Conference- Dublin, October

The Magna Charta Observatory participated in the 16th IAU General Global Conference held in Dublin between 25 – 28 October 2022.

The President and Vice-President of the Governing Council and the Secretary General lead a session entitled 'Forming a reliable social contract with Civil Society: putting fundamental values into practice'. This participation led to valuable exchanges about the application of the MCO's Living Values project in different cultural situations.

Patrick Deane, in his role as Principle of Queen's University, Canada, was also a speaker in the final Plenary session 'The Future of Higher Education in an Interconnected and Global Context'.

Details of the event and recordings of the plenary sessions can be seen below:

[More details](#)



WAHEDAY 2022- Online, November

The online event organized by the World Access to Higher Education Network on November 17th brought together leaders in higher education from around the world, to participate in a discussion that accompanied the launch of their new report: 'The equity crisis – higher education access and success to 2030'. Among the speakers were the MCO Secretary General David J. Lock.

[Click here for more details and to access the recording of the event.](#)

[Details and recording](#)



CZEDUCON 2022- Prague, November

The MCO was pleased to present a session at the international conference on strategy and policy in Higher Education at the CZEDU CON 2022 on 21 November 2022 in Prague, the Czech Republic. This was an official event of the Czech Republic's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

During this event, the MCO General Secretary, David J. Lock and MCO governing council member, Dr. Liviu Matei presented a session on how a "fundamental values of higher education" project has emerged as one of the most productive European-wide approaches to addressing a crisis of academic freedom in the continent. David Lock shared information about values-based responses to the academic freedom crisis. Liviu Matei talked about the crisis of academic freedom in Europe and the fundamental values of higher education project.

[More details](#)



MCO Webinar- Living your values for the common good: A conversation with Professor Pamela Gillies

In the last webinar of the year organised by MCO, Patrick Deane, President of the Governing Council of the Observatory, engaged in interesting conversation with Pamela Gillies, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Glasgow Caledonian University about university values and putting them into practice.

The webinar contains compelling evidence showing how subscribing to the values set out in the Magna Charta Universitatum (MCU) can enable a university to serve society effectively. It shows how a focus on values can enable the whole university community, the leadership, staff and students, to shape and be engaged in the quest for this to happen.

The recording of the event (and other MCO events) can be found in our YouTube channel.

[Webinar recording](#)



Universities wishing to engage with the Living Values project can find our guidelines, the Living Values tool box, FAQ and more details at our website or by clicking below

About the Living Values project and how to participate

MCO Congratulates Inaugural Academic Values Prize winners



Dr Elizaveta Potapova and Dr Milica Popović, both of whom were world café table presenters at the MCO's Anniversary in Bologna in September, have both been placed in the top three winners of the inaugural 'Fundamental Academic Values Award'. Organised by the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst-DAAD), the award recognised early career researchers whose work is making an outstanding scientific contribution to the promotion of fundamental academic values, including academic freedom, integrity and autonomy in the European Higher Education Area. Among the judges of this prize were Patrick, President of the Governing Council of Magna Charta Observatory and Liviu Matei, member of the MCO's Governing Council.

Dr Elizaveta Potapova's article 'Speaking Up at Work: Narrative Analysis of Academic Freedom in Russia' examined the issue of academic freedom in modern Russia. This was the topic on which she spoke in Bologna. Dr Milica Popović, who hosted the world café table's, publication was entitled 'Changing Understandings of Academic Freedom in the World at a Time of Pandemic'.

We thank both Milica and Elizaveta for joining us in Bologna and sharing their award winning work with the MCO community.

If you are interested to read more about what was discussed at the table, please look into the World Café Sessions' Reports (table 5) in the link below.

[Read all the World Café Session Reports here](#)

Further Information about the competition can be found on the website of the Fundamental Academic Values Award, below.

[More about DAAD Award](#)

Coming up in 2023...



First MCO Webinar of 2023

Do not miss the first MCO webinar of the year taking place on 16 February 2023!

In this webinar, Helle Porsdam, Professor of History and Cultural Rights, University of Copenhagen, Vasiliki Kosta, Associate Professor at Leiden Law School, and Klaus Beiter, Professor of Law at the North-West University and an MCO Ambassador, will explore the nature of academic freedom as a human right. They will seek to answer the following questions: what would be the content of academic freedom as a human right? What are the benefits of recognising it as an enforceable human right?

Click below for more details of the event and to register:

[Free registration and more details here](#)



Save the Date

Anniversary of the
Magna Charta
Universitatum
MCU 2020

18th - 20th October 2023

Łódź - Poland

MCO Anniversary 2023

The Magna Charta Observatory is pleased to announce that the University of Łódź will be the host for the 2023 Anniversary Conference.

The theme of the conference will be 'Universities and re-construction of cities: the role of research-based education'. This is a fitting theme for the University of Łódź and also for universities in neighbouring Ukraine.

We invite you to save the date!

We also invite you to contribute suggestions for the programme, including possible speakers. Please send your suggestions to magnacharta@unibo.it

More information will follow by email and in future editions of MCO Connect.



MCO Announcement

MCO Research Project Update



Universities which have signed the MCU are invited to join with the MCO in an important research project.

A key sentence in MCU 2022 is:

'Universities acknowledge that they have a responsibility to engage with and respond to the aspirations and challenges of the world and to the communities they serve, to benefit humanity and contribute to sustainability.'

To help universities towards a deeper understanding of what this means in practice and how it is being achieved by signatory universities around the world, the Magna Charta Observatory has launched a new initiative to promote academic research on 'The Responsive and Responsible University'.

We have invited all signatory universities to indicate their interest in joining this initiative and contributing to its further definition and development. This can be done by completing the online form available below. The closing date for expressions of interest, which should include a first description of the scope of the research to be undertaken, the disciplinary fields of study involved as well as relevant external partners is 1 February 2023.

[MCO Research form](#)

The Magna Charta Observatory itself will provide leadership and support by means of its standing committee on research and offer some facilities for supportive desk research where this is needed.

Click below for more details on how to participate and to the MCO research project Conceptual Framework:

[More details of MCO research project here](#)



MCO News Update

Ukraine

Back in March 2022, following the Russian invasion, the MCO issued a letter to all signatories in support of universities in Ukraine. It urged universities who have signed the Magna Charta Universitatum to afford such assistance as they were able to the universities in Ukraine and their staff and students. We know that many signatories have been supportive in many ways and are thankful to them.

What we did not anticipate was that there would be such an appreciative and valuable response from universities in Ukraine. Despite all the challenges they were facing, many positive exchanges took place. In September university staff from Ukraine travelled by road all the way to Bologna to participate in our anniversary. The Rector of Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University, Professor Roman Gryniuk, spoke in the main conference session. In October, he presented a case study as part of the MCO's webinar series.

Professor Gryniuk and his colleagues have since featured MCU 2020 at the centre of an event that marked the eight years since their university was displaced from occupied Donetsk to Vinnytsia, which took place in an underground bunker.

In November, the University's Acting Director of the Educational and Scientific Institute for Academic Potential Development, Dr. Anna Osmolovska, who acted as an interpreter at the MCO Anniversary, took part in an international conference at the Jagiellonian University in Poland entitled "University and War". Participants from Ukraine, Poland, Austria, and the General Consul of Ukraine in Krakow spoke about the activities of Ukrainian HEIs during the war, and Anna spoke about how the values declared in MCU 2020 were being implemented by Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University.

In the last edition of MCO Connect, we reported that colleagues from Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University had produced a Ukrainian translation of MCU 2020. That document has been featured on social media in support of the MCU 2020 and universities serving society. We hope that Ukrainian universities are finding that to be useful. A copy of the Ukrainian translation is available on the MCO website.

The MCO is grateful to all signatories who have supported universities in Ukraine and all universities who have promoted MCU 2020 and supported the MCO in the fulfilment of its strategy. We invite you to send us news for future editions of MCO Connect and our website. Information, ideally including a photograph, should be sent to magnacharta@unibo.it



MCU translated to ukrainian here



Signing the MCU 2020

More than 950 Universities in 94 different countries have already publicly embraced the fundamental principles and values set out in the Magna Charta Universitatum, which include the autonomy of academic institutions, the central importance of academic freedom and the responsibilities of universities to serve society.

If your university embraces these principles and values and is not yet a signatory, why not join this worldwide community to participate in our activities and share with and enable universities around the world?

Universities can apply at any time to sign the Magna Charta Universitatum MCU 2020. The next deadline to submit the documents is 28 February 2023 and submission by then will enable your university to sign at the 2023 Anniversary in Poland.

If any assistance is needed, please contact the Administrator on magnacharta@unibo.it

We are looking forward to your application!

Details of how to do this can be found below:

[Apply to become a MCO member](#)



Communication Specialist Wanted

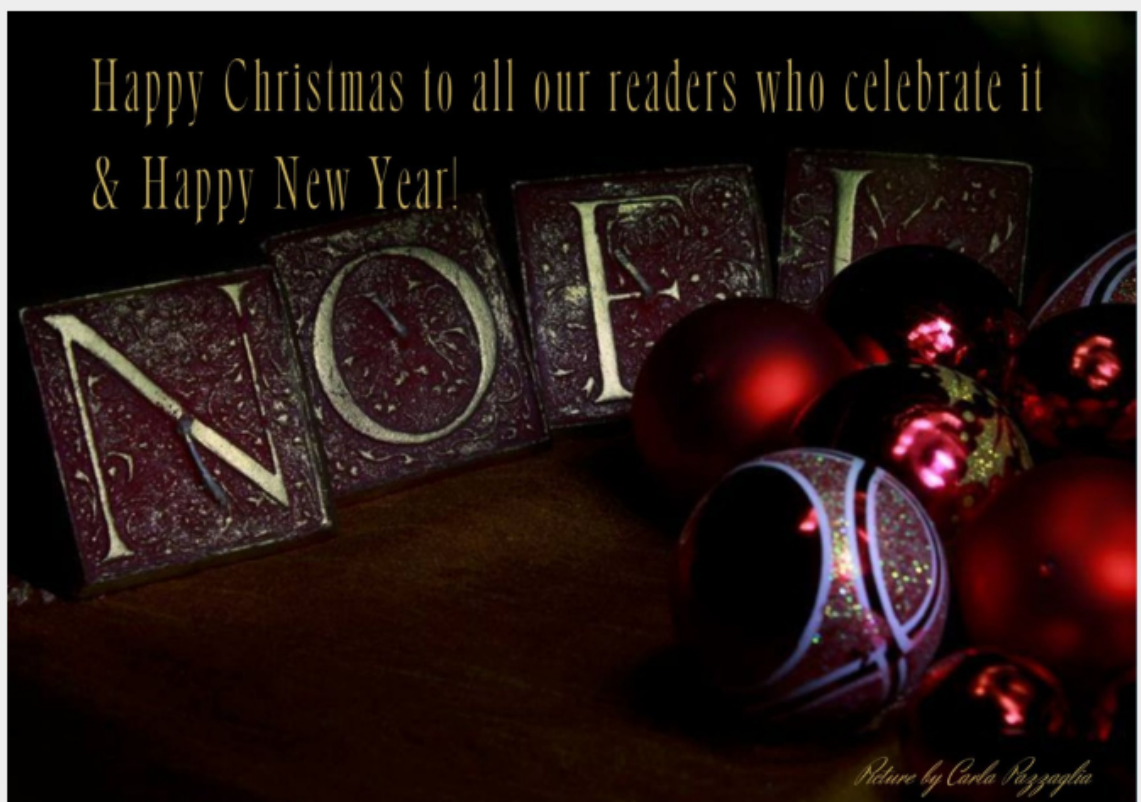
The MCO is looking for a communication specialist to help us deliver our strategy and engage more closely with signatories through the production of external publications, managing our social media accounts, supporting the organisation of events and communication plans.

This provides an opportunity for a signatory university to second a capable member of their communications team to gain global experience from working with the MCO.

The role can be performed remotely and expenses will be paid for the post-holder to travel to MCO events. There can be flexibility in the percentage of time devoted to the role and how it is fulfilled. The international experience gained will be immense and the benefit to the seconding university could be considerable.

If you have a member of staff whom you think may benefit from such an opportunity, please email our Administrator on magnacharta@unibo.it and she will forward details to you.

[More about MCO](#)



Happy Christmas to all our readers who celebrate it
& Happy New Year!

Picture by Carla Pizzaglia

We could not end this issue without thanking most warmly all the universities who are signatories of MCU and all those individuals who participated in our activities and projects throughout the year, as volunteers, members, staff members, spectators, readers, donors, or in any other capacity. We look forward your participation next year and to you engaging even more with our mission.

Happy Christmas to all our readers who celebrate it and Happy New Year!

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