



European
Reform
University
Alliance

ERUA BOOKLET

Reform Universities of the 20th Century

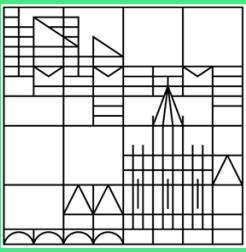


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University of Konstanz

- Reform through Architecture?



Figure 1: University of Konstanz today (URL: <https://www.uni-konstanz.de/universitaet/ueber-die-universitaet-konstanz/profil/geschichte-der-universitaet/>)

In the 1950s, federal and state governments were very willing to invest in the reconstruction, expansion, and modernization of science. This was reinforced by the need to handle the strong increase of university applications (Mälzer 2016). Therefore, in 1960, the Wissenschaftsrat (German Science and Humanities Council) recommended founding three new universities in Germany. This was not only supposed to take care of the overcrowded universities, but the Wissenschaftsrat also raised the idea of a university reform (Piazolo 1979). The University of Konstanz does not see itself as a foundation out of pure need, but as a reform university which breaks up the existing university structure and reorganizes science (Dahrendorf 1966; Strukturkommission Universität Konstanz 1998). Because of these reformative ideas, the Minister of Education of Baden-Württemberg at the time, Gerhard Stolz, supported the foundation of the University of Konstanz (Piazolo 1979).

According to a legend, the then Minister President of Baden-Württemberg and later Chancellor of the Bundesrepublik Deutschland/BRD (Federal Republic of Germany), Kurt Georg Kiesinger, was returning home to Germany from a trip to Italy. When he drove his car over the hill in the neighboring city of Konstanz, Kreuzlingen (CH), and saw Konstanz and the Bodensee (Lake of Constance), he decided that this place needed a university (Dahrendorf 2007). In 1959, Kiesinger formulated three purposes of a possible university foundation in the district of Constance. Firstly, he wanted to create a place of intellectual activity and scientific impulses in an area that is not very lively from the point of view of today's industrial society. Secondly, the first purpose should calm the last old Baden unrest. Thirdly, a location near a border should be chosen (Hess, 1968). In the Bodensee region, people were thrilled by the idea, but nationally, there were many critical voices (Mälzer 2016).

In 1961, the Ministry of Education of Baden-Württemberg commissioned six reports by professors and a research evaluator on the orientation of the university to be founded. Based on the reports, the federal government of Baden-Württemberg wrote a memorandum about their plans for the new university. In 1964, the federal government appointed a founding committee composed of three researchers from the natural sciences, three researchers from the social sciences, three researchers from the humanities, and the chair of the committee Gerhard Hess. Furthermore, various guests were present at the sessions. However, female professors, assistants, or students did not participate. The founding committee had the task to discuss all issues related to the founding and the subsequent operation of a university in Konstanz based on the memorandum by the federal government. Within one year, the committee met ten times and presented their report to the Minister President Kurt Georg Kiesinger on June 2, 1965 (Mälzer 2016).

Among others, the Science Council, a board of trustees of Constance citizens and a group of the “Verband Deutscher Studentenschaften” (Association of German Student Bodies) under Professor Baumgarten endeavored to implement a “new university”. With the enactment of a “Vorläufigen Grundordnung” (Provisional Basic Order) in March 1966, the legal basis was then created for the constitution of the new university (Hess 1968). On February 28, 1966, Gerhard Hess was appointed founding rector of the University of Konstanz. Later, this date was set as the official founding date of the university by the senate (Dahrendorf 2007). On March 26, the first eight members of the teaching staff were appointed (Mälzer 2016) and on April 28, the first student was matriculated (Dahrendorf 2007). Two months later, on June 21, the foundation stone of the university was laid. From the university’s foundation until autumn 1967, the university was located at the Insel-Hotel, a hotel in the city center (Dahrendorf 1966). The reform concept of the University of Constance was finally also implemented in the architecture of the university buildings on the Constance Gießberg, completed in 1972, and additionally emphasized under the motto “Kunst am Bau” (“Art on the Building”). The artwork was created between 1970 and 1984.



Figure 2: Glass roof over part of the inner courtyard (Reiter, Fotos der Universität Konstanz, 2016.)



Figure 3: Sculpture and wallpainting in the entrance area (Reiter, Fotos der Universität Konstanz, 2016.)

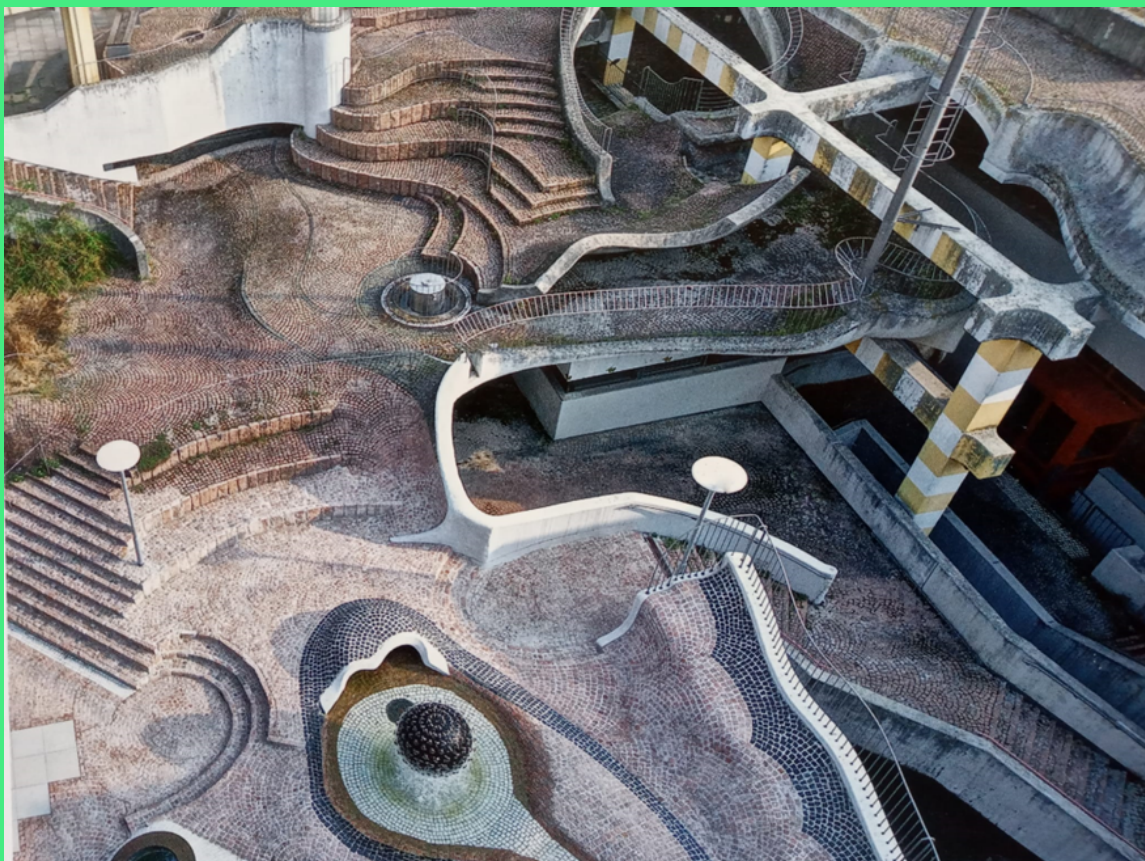


Figure 4: Inner courtyard (Reiter, Fotos der Universität Konstanz, 2016.)



Figure 5: Art to connect two different parts of the university (Reiter, Fotos der Universität Konstanz, 2016.)

There is also the possibility of taking a virtual campus tour where “Kunst am Bau” can be explored further via <https://www.lkm.uni-konstanz.de/otg/touren.php?ID=10>

The concept of the University of Konstanz was based on four schemes:

1. Teaching must be developed from research; the task of higher education is knowledge transfer (Hess 1968). The core concepts the founding of the University of Konstanz was based on were research and cooperation. To facilitate cooperation, each faculty had departments taking on the administrative part of research. Furthermore, the university had more permanent research centers and temporary research groups fostering cooperation between the faculties. The smaller research groups could do research about a certain topic for a maximum of four years (Mälzer 2016).

2. There is a close connection between the program of letting teaching emerge from research and the choice of disciplines represented at Konstanz. An idea that was discussed by the founding committee was to construct the university around the modern empirical sciences, focusing on the natural and social sciences. An inter-faculty would bring together the subjects relevant for all empirical sciences like statistics, philosophy, and languages (Dahrendorf 2007). In the end, the founding committee decided against the focus on the empirical sciences (Mälzer 2016). The University is founded with three faculties comprising a total of 15 departments:

- Faculty of Natural Sciences: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology
- Faculty of Social Sciences: Psychology, Education, Sociology, Political Science, Economics, Law, Statistics
- Faculty of Philosophy: Literature, Linguistics, History, Philosophy (Hess 1968).

Within the faculties, the focus of the study programs lied on modern scientific developments. Therefore, the natural sciences concentrated on biology and the social sciences had the new allocation of experimental, institutional, and normative disciplines at its center (Dahrendorf 1966). With its focus on certain disciplines and the introduction of departments, the University of Konstanz was a pioneer (Strukturkommission Universität Konstanz 1998).

3. The University of Konstanz was organized as a reform university. There were neither institutes and nor isolated chairs. All the instruments of teaching and research that can be used together are grouped in common units like workshops, photographic laboratories, duplications, larger apparatuses, a language laboratory, computer center, or the library. Faculties have only the function of preparing appeals, on which “Der Große Senat” (The Grand Senate) decides. Interdisciplinary research is organized in various centers (Hess 1968).

4. The separation of academic self-administration and so-called economic administration is abolished. The head of the administration is the rector, elected for an indefinite period and appointed by the government (Hess 1968).

The University of Konstanz was planned as a small university with 3000 students and a total of 100 professorships (Mälzer 2016). Additionally, many permanent visiting professors were stipulated. Within three years, they needed to spend minimally one semester and maximally two semesters at the University of Konstanz (Dahrendorf 1966). Due to increasing numbers of students, more and more universities are established to satisfy an external need. However, the classical foundation of universities is rooted in an internal, scientific need to implement new ways of research and teaching. Those universities are not only new, they are reform universities. In this light, the University of Konstanz was founded (Dahrendorf 1966). In his text “Über die Universität Konstanz” (“About the University of Konstanz”) published in the same year the foundation stone of the University of Konstanz was laid, Professor Ralf Dahrendorf describes the considerations behind the university’s establishment and its reform nature. Ralf Dahrendorf who was a professor, sociologist, and politician, is a member of the University of Konstanz’s founding committee and one of its founding professors.

For the 40th anniversary of the founding of the University of Konstanz, Dahrendorf (2007) took stock of whether the university has been able to achieve the goals that were set in the report of the founding committee. Instead of being a university with 3000 students, in the winter semester 2022/23, there were 10987 enrolled students (Universität Konstanz 2022). Law did not stay a subordinate subject. Instead of the five law professorships that were planned by the founding committee, today, there are 18 professors working in the field of law (Universität Konstanz n.d.). In addition to the strong position of law, new subjects like public administration were introduced. As a result, fields of study that were not mentioned at all or only marginally in the report by the founding committee take up a large part of the university (Dahrendorf 2007). Furthermore, instead of the original three faculties, the number has more than doubled as of 1998 (Strukturkommission Universität Konstanz 1998).

However, Dahrendorf (2007) still calls the University of Konstanz a success story. The plan of a university centered around the modern empirical sciences was not implemented. Nonetheless, many of the core ideas and values, quality, flexibility, and internationality, of the foundation were carried out and developed further. According to Dahrendorf (2007) the university is small, but able to compete with the main universities in Baden-Württemberg (quality). It fosters international partnerships (internationality) and inter-faculty cooperation (flexibility). The University of Konstanz is a “university of open doors and short ways” like rector Gerhart von Graevenitz said (Dahrendorf, 2007, S. 11).

University of Paris 8 Vincennes - Saint-Denis

**A university as a laboratory for
the militant and innovative
ideals of May 68**



The University of Paris 8, previously recognized as the University of Vincennes and presently titled Paris 8 Vincennes–Saint-Denis University, stands as a prominent French academic institution established in 1971. The origins of Paris 8 can be traced to the establishment known as the Experimental University Center of Vincennes, conceived in the aftermath of the dynamic 1968 movement

Envisioned as a nucleus of pioneering thought open to the dynamics of the contemporary world, it drew substantial engagement from a myriad of intellectual luminaries of that period, notably hosting a plethora of esteemed figures from the realm of French Theory. The influence of Paris 8 stems from the international renown of numerous teaching and research staff who have worked within its walls, including figures like Hélène Cixous, François Châtelet, Claude Chevalley, Jean-François Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Madeleine Rebérioux, Robert Castel, Yves Lacoste, Denis Guedj, and Daniel Bensaïd



Décret n° 68-1106 du 7 décembre 1968

Objet : Création à Vincennes d'un centre universitaire ayant statut de faculté.

RAPPORT AU PRÉSIDENT DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE

Monsieur le Président,

L'augmentation du nombre des étudiants dans la région parisienne obligeait à créer de nouveaux établissements d'enseignement supérieur.

Mais au moment où la loi d'orientation de l'enseignement supérieur prévoit notamment que les établissements universitaires doivent être pluridisciplinaires et associer autant que possible les arts et les lettres aux sciences et aux techniques, soit en ayant une vocation dominante, il paraissait très souhaitable de saisir cette occasion pour améliorer immédiatement notre enseignement supérieur.

En effet, si certaines difficultés se présenteront en vue de réaliser de tels types d'établissements à partir des structures existantes, les réalisations dans des créations nouvelles seront, au contraire, beaucoup plus aisées. C'est dans cette perspective qu'ont été créés les établissements se trouvant au centre Dauphine à Paris, dont l'orientation majeure est vers les disciplines économiques, mathématiques et linguistiques et la gestion d'entreprise, d'une part, et, d'autre part, à Marseille-Luminy, dont l'orientation principale concerne les sciences de la nature. Il a paru opportun de procéder de même dans les locaux dont dispose le ministère de l'Éducation nationale à Vincennes en mettant l'accent sur les disciplines artistiques et littéraires en liaison avec des formations scientifiques et techniques adaptées. Dans les trois cas, il s'agit d'un programme d'expérimentation.

La nouveauté de l'effort à entreprendre ne permettra pas d'élaborer immédiatement une réglementation précise qui n'aurait qu'une opération de pure forme sans effet sur le fond des hommes et des choses. La voie choisie, celle d'une expérimentation préalable très libre et très ouverte pendant une brève période, est celle-ci même qui a présidé à la

* Ce texte sera rappelé au vol. V, art. 434-0, 435-0 du R.L.R.

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B. O. n° 45 (19-12-68)

Creation of "Vincennes Experimental University Centre" : Decree No. 68-1106 of the University of Paris 8 addressed to President Charles De Gaulle on December 7, 1968

mise en route des instituts universitaires de technologie dont il est permis d'affirmer qu'elle s'est révélée une opération satisfaisante.

Dans une perspective expérimentale de diversification des enseignements, le centre de Vincennes se signalera par le caractère pluridisciplinaire des grandes options, un esprit de polyvalence dans chaque département des possibilités d'obtenir dès la fin du premier cycle un diplôme utilisable et enfin une adaptation constante aux besoins du monde extérieur.

Son caractère pluridisciplinaire se manifestera par la présence, dans le même établissement, d'enseignements qui, actuellement encore, appartiennent aussi bien aux facultés des lettres et sciences humaines (histoire française, histoire, géographie, philosophie, sociologie, psychologie et langues vivantes) qu'aux facultés des sciences (mathématiques, informatique) et des lettres et sciences économiques (initiation aux sciences économiques, sciences politiques, méthodologie juridique). Il est même ultérieurement envisagé de créer un département relatif aux sciences de l'éducation physique et sportive.

La polyvalence se manifestera dans chaque option que seront amenés à choisir les étudiants. Ainsi le département de sociologie, outre les enseignements habituels de sociologie, comprendra obligatoirement des enseignements de mathématiques, d'économie appliquée et des sciences parasites ; le département consacré aux arts, en dehors des enseignements de type traditionnel, comprendra une ouverture très précoce sur les activités contemporaines.

Des possibilités seront offertes aux étudiants qui voudront dès la fin du premier cycle exercer une activité. Par différence avec l'accueil premier cycle des facultés des lettres et sciences humaines trop spécialisée ou disciplines correspondant essentiellement aux branches de l'enseignement secondaire et qui ne menant, en fait, qu'à la préparation d'un second cycle, l'effort sera sur l'enseignement ou la recherche, les masters envisagés permettront aux étudiants de s'orienter vers la vie active au bout de deux ans.

L'adaptation aux besoins du monde extérieur se manifestera enfin sur différents plans. D'abord tous les étudiants, quelle que soit leur spécialité, suivront des enseignements de langues vivantes à caractère pratique et des enseignements d'informatique ; ensuite une révision systématique des enseignements sera envisagée chaque année ; enfin, une étude également systématique des débouchés sera effectuée, car il y a lieu de considérer que les disciplines enseignées à Vincennes ne doivent pas mener d'abord aux carrières de l'enseignement mais préparer les étudiants à leur insertion dans le monde économique, en soulignant la nécessité d'une mise à jour régulière des connaissances.

Il va de soi que les méthodes pédagogiques utilisées présenteront une grande originalité (année continue, suppression des examens traditionnels, large appel aux professeurs associés du monde extérieur, encadrement des étudiants par petits groupes).

Ces innovations pédagogiques s'accompagnent nullement d'augmentation aux règles qui régissent la durée des études dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur ayant une vocation analogue et préparant aux mêmes diplômes. Ce système offre par contre l'avantage de permettre aux meilleurs étudiants d'obtenir leur diplôme en un temps réduit.

Ces dispositions sont les mêmes qui ont guidé les initiateurs du centre Dauphine, de Marseille-Luminy et également la Faculté de droit et des sciences économiques de Paris dans son ancrage de Paris-Nord orientée vers l'administration.

B. O. n° 45 (19-12-68)

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Le nombre des étudiants qui pourra ultérieurement être accueilli sera de l'ordre de 7 000 dans les différents cycles et si, comme on peut l'espérer, cette expérience réussit, il sera possible de l'étendre à des établissements déjà existants.

Tel est l'objet du présent décret que nous avons l'honneur de soumettre à votre approbation. Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Président, l'assurance de notre profond respect.

TEXTE

(Vu D. 17-3-1808 ; D. 28-12-1885 ; L. n° 68-978 du 12-11-1968 ; Avis susc. perm. Conseil ens. sup.)

ARTICLE PREMIER. — Il est créé à Vincennes, à compter de l'année universitaire 1968-1969, un centre universitaire ayant statut de faculté.

ART. 2. — Le centre universitaire comprend plusieurs départements dont la liste sera fixée par arrêté du ministre de l'Éducation nationale.

ART. 3. — Des textes ultérieurs fixeront les modalités d'application du présent décret, notamment en ce qui concerne la durée des études, laquelle ne pourra excéder celle résultant des règles fixées pour les autres établissements d'enseignement supérieur.

ART. 4. — Le ministre de l'Économie et des Finances, le ministre de l'Éducation nationale et le secrétaire d'État à l'Économie et aux Finances sont chargés de l'exécution du présent décret, qui sera publié au Journal officiel de la République française.

C. DE GAULLE.

Par le Président de la République :

Le Premier ministre :

Maurice COUVE DE MURVILLE.

Le ministre de l'Éducation nationale :

Edgar FAURE.

Le ministre de l'Économie et des Finances :

François GORTOLI.

Le secrétaire d'État à l'Économie et aux Finances :

Jacques CHRAC.

(J.O. du 10 décembre 1968.)

This foundational document addresses the pressing need to establish new higher education institutions within the Paris region, driven by the burgeoning student population. It underscores the imperative of aligning with the legislation on higher education orientation, emphasizing a multidisciplinary approach and integrating arts/humanities with science/technology.

Revolutionary pedagogy, the abolition of hierarchical relationships, and an openness to all

After the effervescence of May 1968, a milestone period with multiple socio-political implications in France and all around the world, there was an imperative need for radical changes in the French university landscape and an essential need to welcome the increasing number of incoming students. In an effort to enhance the higher education landscape, two major centers were inaugurated: the Dauphine Center in Paris and the Luminy Center in Marseille.

The blueprint entails the creation of a comparable institution in Vincennes, with a focus on artistic, literary, scientific, and technical disciplines. The inception of these centers is regarded as experimental, allowing for a period of free and open experimentation. The goal was to craft a pliable and adaptive system that resonates with the demands of the real world, mirroring the triumphs of successful university institutes of technology.

Democratic access and inclusiveness in higher education

As explicitly stated at its creation, the vocation of The Vincennes University Centre, is to democratize access to higher education for every student through various measures regardless of whether they have a high school diploma (Faucherre, 1968). Given that the higher education in the 1960s predominantly furnished to a socially and economically privileged elite. The goal of Paris 8 was to address this discrepancy by democratizing access to higher education and offering educational opportunities to all students, regardless of social or economic background. This university's fundamental aim was to promote equal opportunities and inclusivity in education (Soulié, 2014).

As a reform university of its period, the University of Paris 8 promotes university autonomy, a more diverse curriculum and academic freedom

The Vincennes Center will embrace a multidisciplinary approach, offering a spectrum of courses spanning faculties of literature and humanities, science, law, economics, and even encompassing physical education and sports. Innovative teaching methodologies will be adopted, featuring a seamless academic year, a departure from conventional examinations, active involvement of external associate professors, and close-knit student guidance within small cohorts.

Moreover, certain educators who seek to challenge traditional university pedagogy have rejected lectures and the authoritative teacher-student dynamic, thereby questioning the fundamental nature of higher education. Their goal is to eliminate the constraints imposed by a particular method of knowledge transmission and envision a novel approach where the instructor's perspective is not the sole point of reference and learners are empowered to assume responsibility for their own education (Couëdel, 2000).

In contrast to most universities in France, Paris 8 was established as a non-faculty university. The organizational structure of the institution is characterized by the presence of departments that encompass various fields of study, thus enabling a more adaptable approach to the creation of academic programs and scholarly investigations. This organizational framework also fosters interdepartmental cooperation and the establishment of cross-disciplinary curricula. (Faucherre, 1992)

Nevertheless, these pedagogical advancements will stay within the parameters set by comparable higher education institutions and their diploma prerequisites. Envisaged to accommodate approximately 7,000 students across various academic cycles, the prospective Vincennes Center holds considerable promise. Successful experimentation could potentially pave the way for its integration into existing educational establishments.

Story of exile

In 1980, at the initiative of Jacques Chirac, the Mayor of Paris, the university was expelled from the Bois de Vincennes, and the buildings were demolished, although they were supposed to "last for fifty years," according to Pierre Merlin, the university's president from 1976 to 1989 (Arte, 2016).



Destroyed in August 1980

It was relocated to Saint-Denis in 1980, against the wishes of some of its administrators and users. Today, few students are aware of the institution's engaged past. (Soulié, 2012).

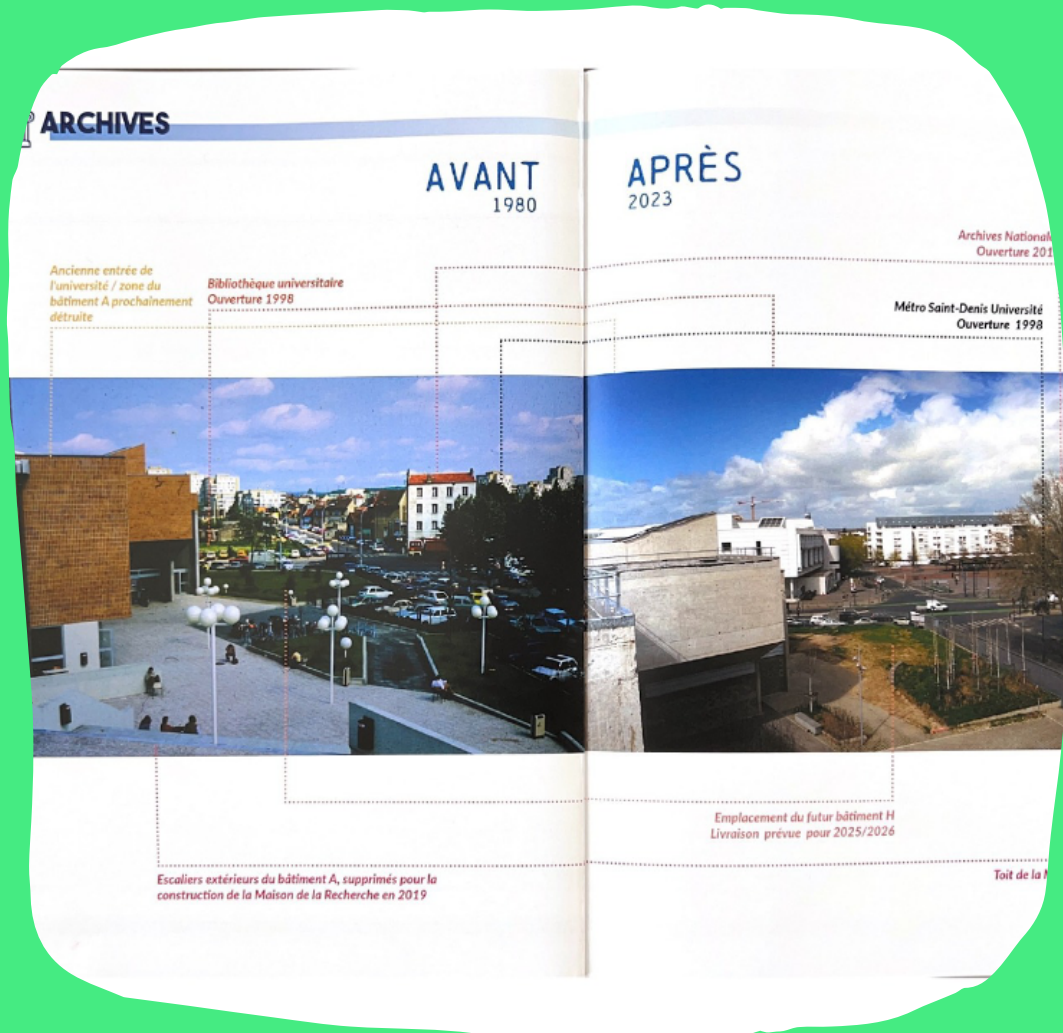
Today



Maison de recherche : the newest building built in 2019

Paris-8 University, currently known as the University of Paris-8 Vincennes–Saint-Denis, is the successor of the Experimental University Center of Vincennes. It is a French university specialized in humanities and social sciences, hosting 21,190 students, 1,058 teaching researchers, and 677 administrative staff members.

“Vincennes is truly the realm of endless possibilities born out of May 68, the revolt of young students joined by workers. It's the first time we open the university to those without diplomas, without the baccalaureate - at that time, the baccalaureate belonged to the bourgeoisie - that's what enchanted me the most about Vincennes. When I was a child, my father Robert Linhart taught philosophy there and would take me along. My rediscovery of Vincennes is this openness to all. Vincennes is the possibility to dream and attain a different life.” Virginie Linhart



Before 1980 / After 2023

“Everyone addresses each other informally (“tu”) and everyone is welcomed: high school graduates, non-graduates, workers, immigrants. The University of Vincennes becomes the stage for struggles between left-wing parties. All dream of a better world and see in this new structure a place for expression and a disruptor in the traditional reproduction of the elites.” (Radio France, 2021)



From the archive of campus photographs taken on different dates

Roskilde University - A “Marxist mission school”?



Roskilde University was founded in 1972 and was then called Roskilde University Centre. The main factor that led to the establishment of Roskilde University was the need to accommodate more students in higher education in Denmark. Before the foundation of Roskilde University, the established universities could not fit more students into their study programmes, and the government wanted more people to take an academic education (Andersen, 2015, p. 63). There was therefore a need for new educational centres where students could be educated, which led to the foundation of Roskilde University.

The government aimed to give more students access to higher education. However, this was not the only goal: A steering committee that consisted of the Rector, three academics, a librarian, an administrative manager, and one representative from the Danish Student Federation sought to establish a university with a new educational and pedagogical foundation (Andersen, 2015, p. 65). The steering committee aimed to reform the organizational structure of and approach to higher education.

The organizational structure of the university was a 2-year 'basic study programme', followed by a 3-year 'superstructure study programme' (Andersen, 2015, p. 65) in one of the three main areas: humanities, social science, or natural science.

The new pedagogical approach to higher education included that the study programmes should be project-oriented, interdisciplinary, group-based, and oriented toward society. This approach contrasted with what the government wanted. A ministry committee had proposed that the study programmes should be based on the traditional disciplines known from the established universities (Hansen, 1998, p. 42) and further be based on a more individual approach to the academic content and characterized by the instrumental values of what higher education can be used for in a future workplace. However, with inspiration from the German student movement, the Danish Student Federation succeeded in implementing the new pedagogical approach to higher education at Roskilde University (Andersen, 2015, p. 65).

At the time, this educational and pedagogical foundation of the university was radical and controversial as it was contrary to the established universities and to what the ministerial committee had proposed. Further public debate ensued, and Roskilde University was accused of being a 'Marxist mission school' (Hansen, 1998, p. 14) and a 'political university', which was considered undesirable (Hansen, 1998, p. 71). However, especially the students maintained the need for a reform approach to higher education to ensure that graduates were fully prepared to deal with the needs of society.



Roskilde University library (RUB)



University of the Aegean

- Mediator of the Slavic and Turkish-Arab World

The University of the Aegean represents a historical attempt for the Greek University area since its foundation in 1984, was, in fact, a 're-establishment' as a continuation of the vision of the prominent Greek mathematician Konstantinos Karatheodori at the University of Berlin, who proposed the foundation of an Ionic University as a Greek world mediator of the Slavic and Turkish-Arab world and the world of the West. The Founding Decree of the University of Smyrna was issued on December 1, 1920; however, the Ionian University never opened its doors to students due to the Asia Minor Disaster of 1922. Since the 1970's, this demand for an Aegean University was addressed systematically to Greek governments till the (re-)foundation of the UAegean in 1984 as a reform, multi-insular regional-borderline University-Network (University of the Aegean, n.d.).



*Konstantinos
Karatheodori
(or Constantin
Carathéodory)*

The UAegean's reform profile is based mainly on the following characteristics: it is the first University that, due to its dispersion, has developed the culture and decentralized organization of an institution that has incorporated this feature in its whole academic and research philosophy and its management mode for the interconnection of academic and administrative structures and the standardization of the required procedures thus ensuring its academic and administrative coherence. In this context, it has become the first Greek University that has fully integrated Information and Communication Technologies in its daily academic and administrative operation, introducing networking and synergy in the specific conditions of the Greek Archipelago, thus implementing, to the extent of its importance, the Information Society.

At this stage, the University extends to six islands, making it the first and the largest multi-insularity higher education institution among the Greek institutions with 18 Departments. Its (re)establishment in 1984 reflected a firm strategic, (geo)political decision about the development and unification of the geographically fragmented and culturally diverse Aegean region, with respect to its specific characteristics, the decentralization of the university education, as for the UAegean, to become a pedagogical model for other universities, the support of the Aegean islands by reinforcing their cultural tradition and offering them an alternative (versus tourism) model of cultural & economic development, the development of innovative knowledge disciplines, usually interdisciplinary, at the cutting edge of research, as well as its emergence as a development pillar (University of the Aegean, n.d.).



"Komninakio", an old school in Mytilene (Lesvos) that hosted the first students of the University of the Aegean

As both North and South Aegean Regions of the Aegean Archipelago, due mainly to their insular nature and their diverse endowments of resources, are very heterogeneous, having unique geographic, economic, demographic and social characteristics, the UAegean is systematically and increasingly developed as their Regional Innovator at a social, intellectual, cultural and economic level of the coastal, island, local communities of the Aegean Archipelago. This is a perennial challenge that can also be traced in the research imprint of the University of the Aegean.



Bust of Konstantinos Karatheodori (or Constantin Carathéodory)

New Bulgarian University

The Wind of Educational Reform

Change in Bulgaria

In 1989, in the critical moment for the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and in Bulgaria, a group of scholars around Professor Bogdan Bogdanov formed the idea of a new university. As a result, in 1991, the Great national assembly voted for the establishment of New Bulgarian University (NBU) as a private educational institution. This coincided with the democratic changes and the opening of Bulgarian society towards the European social and economic model. The opening of Bulgarian society included a reformed version of higher education. Professor Bogdanov saw this as an opportunity to formulate an alternative to providing the ranks of the state administration with obedient clerks. As an alternative, a reformed university, like NBU, had to help the development of qualified professionals and engaged citizens (Dochev, Staynov, Garnizov, 2016, pp. 14-17).



The university thus differed from other universities in Bulgaria as the founders successfully implemented the model of the 'entrepreneurial university'. Therefore, private initiative, entrepreneurship and its willingness to constantly change and improve were at the heart of NBU's development.

From the outset, New Bulgarian University stood against uniformity in teaching and a hierarchical model of academic life. Instead, the founders of the university proposed to build up a horizontally oriented teaching and learning environment. As a result, NBU has been conducting the *Artes liberales* method of education along with the introduction of learning in the field and open seminar activities for more than 30 years (Bogdanov, 2006, pp. 37–40).

In order to achieve its priorities, NBU reformed the idea of the university by combining the traditional role of teaching with socially responsible research.

The focus of the teaching model rests on the individuality of the student. Therefore, in-class work should not interfere with the time needed to be spent in libraries and, more importantly, the social and civic activities of the student. Today the students of NBU belong to a dialogical regime of teaching-learning activities. As a result, they have been given the opportunity to create a curriculum of their preferences and to conduct forms of distance learning.



Another aim of NBU was to prioritize independent and interdisciplinary research open to both students and academic staff. As a result, in 2005, the Central Fund for Strategic Development (CFSD) of the Board of Trustees of NBU was established with the aim of providing financial support for projects related to scientific, educational, and creative activities.

New Bulgarian University has managed to remain a private university which makes it possible to develop self-management and independence from the state. While the traditional state universities were organized hierarchically and according to the principle of financial and academic agglomeration, New Bulgarian University has developed a system of decentralization on these two levels. Thereby the university can implement its key goals with a focus on an entrepreneurial attitude towards both the material and immaterial dimensions of education. In terms of financial income, NBU sustains itself on student fees. Therefore, the quality of the teaching is supposed to be controlled by the students as they are in the role of service users (Metodiev & Doinov, 2021, pp. 127–149).

NBU has the mission to be responsible for preserving national and international cultural heritage and maintaining the importance of entrepreneurial diversity in the 21st century. It prepares and encourages students to participate in civic activities. Therefore, the university promotes different forms of civic education along with welcoming the social engagement of its students. That is believed to set up the prerequisites of the community of students to fulfill their civic duties on both national and international levels.



Manifesto 'For the New Bulgarian University': founding document of NBU from 1990

The Manifesto 'For the New Bulgarian University' was first published in the newspaper Century 21, year 1, number 8 on May 23rd 1990. The authors of the Manifesto are Dimiter Dochev, Petko Staynov and Vassil Garnizov.

You can find here quotes from the English version of the Manifesto (In: 25 years New Bulgarian University. Sofia, NBU Publishing, 2016, p. 14-17)

*“Academic education in this country is displeased with itself.
It is displeased because the academic part in it is too small.”*

*“Today both Bulgarian lecturers and students are in the grip of the same
deadlock called tradition. And tradition - for what it is worth - has one
specific feature: it does not consolidate individual effort, it leaves it in the
lurch. Tradition presents individual effort as a repetition deprived of an
immediately visible meaning.”*

*“Such an alternative environment can only be created by a genuinely new
Bulgarian university. In its struggle for educational programmes', the old university
insisted on freedom for the professor. But how many of the professors of the old
times really know what freedom means? Standing clear and outside any status
quo, such a question can, indeed, puzzle. And yet, despite the fervour of the
governing party, such professors do exist! And they are what we talk about.”*

*“But the new university is not the type of thing that we seek spurred by necessity.
Contrarily, our necessity at this time is different and more pragmatic. A new
university has its place on earth not because we cannot live without it, but
because we feel an urge to create it and the very thought of it causes a stir.
Instead of a frozen tradition, a new university gives an intelligent and effective
construction of dynamics - this is its reply to the military principle. Not a
recurrence of one structure in another one, but evolving a brand-new structure
whose essence is in the continuously evolving dynamics.”*

*The university space is being re-drawn as well. Its traditional centre once was
the lecture hall with its lectern and the auditorium with the one-sided
proclamation of the truth; now it is substituted for the small library rooms where
the stimulating co-existence of the written and the live word is being born.*

*“Therefore, apart from being a smart location, the new university is more than
that - it is a healthy place. In a sense, the new university is already here. It is in
the tiny niches of Socratic communication where, 'teacher' and 'student'
dynamically and willingly switch places. Its institutionalisation is a matter of
time and this future has already begun.”*

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