

NANTERRE Network

Since the 1990s, a European network of academic cooperation (Nanterre Network) was developed in order to settle the French-German integrated curriculum in the European Higher Education and Research Area, to give its graduates access to international careers and in order to promote French and German language and legal cultures in Europe. This network, especially based on the Erasmus-Socrates agreements and regrouping more than 50 partner schools as of today, was built in three main steps:

1. by integrating the Law Faculties of Humboldt University in Berlin, Halle-Wittenberg, Potsdam, Dresden (TU) and other universities from new Länder, following the German reunification in 1990;
2. by opening itself, since 2000, to Central and Eastern European universities (the Baltic States, Poland ...), this being prior to their countries' adhesion to the European Union (EU) during the 2004 enlargement wave;
3. by admitting, since 2006, Turkish universities (including the University of Istanbul, Galatasaray, Yeditepe and Bilgi), schools from a country still in the process of adhering to the European Union and potential "candidate" (since 1999), and, since 2014, EU-Candidate countries from the Western Balkans.

Since 1995, *Annual Meetings* have taken place in Nanterre/Paris, Siena, Berlin, Halle, Pamplona, Prague, Vilnius, Łódź, Riga, Paris, Fribourg (Switzerland), Istanbul, Sevilla, Barcelona/Andorra, Berlin, Lisbon, Vienna, Dresden, Zurich, Białystok.

Since the Bologna Declaration (1999), during these meetings, delegates from partner universities address the issue of the adaptation of their own national Higher Education system to the European standards. Coupled with a colloquium or a workshop, these meetings also lead to discussions about the broad tendencies of the ongoing law harmonization in EU countries.

One the most innovative ideas of this "Nanterre network" is doubtlessly the creation, since 2004, of a **Franco-German Summer, Autumn or Winter Universities with Law Schools in third countries** in Europe and even, since 2013, from outside Europe.

The Franco-German Summer, Autumn and Winter Universities have been in place since 2004– the year the European Union was enlarged, in particular towards Central and Eastern Europe. As the very first edition of them, organized by Paris-Nanterre, Frankfurt am Main, and Vilnius, every year in Lithuania’s capital, these Universities aim to follow the evolution of the law within the framework of the European Union, by analyzing the outline of the current legislative and practices harmonization process. Mainly dealing with Comparative European Law, these events do not only contribute to mutual legal understanding, but they also allow the discovering of how each country’s society works. Building upon the constraints and obstacles which slow down the European integration process – after the French and Dutch refusal of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, expressed by ways of referendum in 2005 – a reflection was much needed to better grasp the question of European identity and to better explain the “European project”– what it entails and its policies regarding globalization.

The disciplinary diversity of panelists at these Summer, Autumn and Winter Universities– where historians, political scientists, economists and sociologists are the most welcome– allows a multidisciplinary approach to the juridical questions brought forth by the main topic of a given session.

These Summer, Autumn and Winter Universities serve the purpose of a “complex” project, that of European integration, by explaining it and if possible making that project evolve. Most often tri-national, bilingual or trilingual and always open to participants from other European countries, these events aim to be essentially based on communication and interaction. Gathering research professors, PhD students and students (mainly Master students) in a convivial and less formal setting than that of the typical university classes, these Summer, Autumn and Winter Universities allow for innovative pedagogical approaches. Meant as an open forum for dialogue, they can contribute to a better perception of the law, to the intellectual enrichment of students and PhD students, and then can even promote them as interlocutors for research professors and professionals. Through *workshops*, students can intensively engage in an interactive way: supervised by research professors, they take part in various group works, which they started prior to the session, and they present their results at the end.