

P R E S S R E L E A S E

World Cultural Council Award Ceremony at the University of Coimbra postponed to 2022 with renewed imagery

The University of Coimbra (UC) and the World Cultural Council (WCC) announce that they have decided to postpone the 37th World Cultural Council Award Ceremony (to be held at UC in November 2020), due to the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impact on an international event of this standing. The ceremony, presenting the prestigious Albert Einstein and José Vasconcelos Awards, will take place with renewed imagery in 2022, coinciding with the 250th anniversary of the Pombaline Reforms, which opened up UC to scientific and experimental teaching and the ideals of the Enlightenment.

After the decision to postpone the annual World Cultural Council Award Ceremony, the University of Coimbra immediately agreed to host the event in 2022 (exact date to be announced). UC will be the first Portuguese university to host the World Cultural Council Award Ceremony, which has been held at institutions such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Oxford University and the University of Princeton.

“It will be an honour for our institution to host the 2022 ceremony. Obviously, hosting it in 2020 would have had an enormous significance, as it is the year in which UC celebrates its 730th anniversary. However, in 2022, we will be able to take this great symbolism a little further, as proof of our ability to constantly adapt to the most demanding challenges: on that date, UC celebrates the 250th anniversary of the important achievements associated with the reforms of the Marquis of Pombal, which deeply changed the University”, stresses UC Rector Amílcar Falcão. The Pombaline

Reforms resulted in a profound reformulation of Portuguese higher education, originating what are now the Faculty of Science and Technology, the UC Press, and the Science Museum of the University of Coimbra.

The Executive Director of the World Cultural Council, Esteban Meszaros, shows equal enthusiasm at Coimbra hosting the 2022 Award Ceremony: “This is a unique occasion and fitting venue for a WCC Award Ceremony, not only in view of the University’s historical background, but also because of the opportunity it offers to jointly disseminate our many shared values.”

The World Cultural Council is an international non-profit organization founded in Mexico in 1982 by a group of 124 scientists, academics, university deans and executives from five continents, with the mission of promoting a culture of tolerance, peace and fraternity. Since 1984, it has held annual ceremonies to award the Albert Einstein World Science Award, the José Vasconcelos World Education Award and the Leonardo da Vinci World Arts Award, which have already distinguished dozens of world-class scientists, academics and artists.

The Albert Einstein award is delivered annually, while others are granted alternately in even (José Vasconcelos) or odd (Leonardo da Vinci) years. In 2019, the Leonardo da Vinci World Arts Award was presented to the film producer Paulo Branco (the first Portuguese person to receive a WCC award).

Founded in 1290, the University of Coimbra is the oldest seat of higher education in Portugal and in Portuguese-speaking territory, as well as one of the oldest in the world. For over seven centuries, UC has left an indelible mark on education, science, innovation and culture at a global level.

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