
About

Why a conference about sustainability?

The year 2022 is special. A wind of change has been visible since the new rector took office, and Charles University decided to prove that – amongst other things – it has much to offer in terms of sustainable development and that it is a top-ranking academic institution. At the same time, the Czech Republic is to chair the Council of the European Union. It is for these reasons Charles University came up with the idea of uniting seemingly unrelated worlds, which nevertheless significantly interact with one another, those of academia and politics, and to hold a unique conference entitled “Sustainability in an Unstable World”.

The upcoming event will not take the form of the usual short monothematic presentations and a myriad of speakers. On the contrary, a mere **six prominent figures – six outstanding scholars – will summarize the key issues concerning progress in Sustainable Development worldwide and will present a variety of options on how to best cope with the challenges in the years ahead.** Their theses will be heard and discussed by political leaders, to whom the conference will convey arguments for supporting sustainability around the world, in Europe and in the Czech Republic alike, and for the improved communication of the issue on the floor of the European Union.

We have invited eminent experts in science, education and public and political life to discuss what we can change together – where and how the world of science and research intersects with the world of politics and how they can be mutually beneficial. **The main topics of the conference include Impacts and Opportunities of Zero-Carbon Transition and the Economics of Biodiversity, the aim of which is to clearly communicate the results of research to politicians, together with clear recommendations and proposals for their implementation.** I believe that this conference will help us to articulate not only some of the important areas of overlap (points of contact, intersections) between research work in sustainable development and the politics, but above all a concrete path towards achieving the goals of sustainable development, as well as to stimulating future society-wide debate on key topics.

We are very much looking forward to the dialogue with all those interested in sustainable development, to the leading representatives of high politics, academia and the 4EU+Alliance, and, of course, to students.

Sustainable universities

Education, research and innovation, as well as the role of universities in society (termed the Knowledge Square) are present throughout the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Universities operate within a multi-level governance environment co-created by various institutions at international (including the United Nations), European (including, on the one hand, EU institutions such as the European Commission and, on the other, European associations such as 4EU+ and recently established European university alliances), national (including governments) and local level (e.g. local authorities and socio-economic stakeholders). Universities also interact, inspire and enrich each other and so do their communities (students, teachers, researchers and staff).

Charles University maintains an intensive focus on long-term sustainable development, especially through its primary roles – education and research. However, its third role – that of public service – should not be forgotten either. Charles University is an active participant in the public discourse as the communicator of research results and promoter of their implementation into the real world.

For more information about the attitudes of Charles University to sustainable development, please see [here](#) .