Comenius University in 2019/2020

IN NUMBERS — GRAPHS — PICTURES
MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

The university management
## Management and Organization

### Faculties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>International Students</th>
<th>Number of Study Programmes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>960</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLAW</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>111</td>
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<tr>
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<td>611</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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### International Students

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### The Names and Abbreviations of Comenius University’s Faculties

- **CU** Comenius University in Bratislava
- **FMED** Faculty of Medicine
- **FLAW** Faculty of Law
- **FARS** Faculty of Arts
- **FEDU** Faculty of Education
- **FPHARM** Faculty of Pharmacy
- **FSPORT** Faculty of Physical Education and Sport
- **FMPH** Faculty of Mathematics, Physics, and Informatics
- **FRCTH** Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius
- **FELTH** Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty
- **FM** Faculty of Management
- **FSES** Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences

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**Assoc. Prof. JUDr. Eduard Burda, PhD.**
Dean of the Faculty of Law

**Assoc. Prof. JUDr. Marián Zouhar, PhD.**
Dean of the Faculty of Arts

**Assoc. Prof. JUDr. Milan Jurík, PhD.**
Dean of the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty

**Assoc. Prof. PhDr. JUDr. Lucia Mokrá, PhD.**
Dean of the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences

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**Number of students 21,954**
**International Students 2,548**
**Number of study programmes 888**

**Number of students 3,277**
**International Students 960**
**Number of study programmes 82**

**Number of students 2,328**
**International Students 57**
**Number of study programmes 78**

**Number of students 3,050**
**International Students 146**
**Number of study programmes 184**

**Number of students 1,086**
**International Students 111**
**Number of study programmes 19**

**Number of students 1,813**
**International Students 611**
**Number of study programmes 76**

**Number of students 1,272**
**International Students 127**
**Number of study programmes 131**

**Number of students 1,370**
**International Students 103**
**Number of study programmes 117**

**Number of students 46**
**International Students 8**
**Number of study programmes 8**

**Number of students 799**
**International Students 91**
**Number of study programmes 24**
Comenius University in Bratislava was established on 27 June 1919 as the first university in Slovakia to provide a higher education in the Slovak language. Today it is a modern European university that combines the ability to respond to the challenges of today while also respecting academic traditions.

In 2019 the university celebrated its centenary in both a student-like manner as well as with all the trappings of a formal academic ceremony. The following year was supposed to be a move into a new century with a new approach and new beginning; it was supposed to be a time of developing the promises and commitments of the new management team. However, the university had to face a completely new challenge in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. But this did not cripple us. On the contrary, the university began some much-needed changes and joined forces with partner institutions in order to manage the pandemic as best as possible.

Alongside the Slovak University of Technology, we were the first university to halt teaching activities on site, and we asked the students to leave the dormitories. Without too much trouble and with the active involvement of IT specialists and methodology specialists, we smoothly switched to an online teaching mode and even held state exams and meetings of academic bodies online as well. As the epidemiological situation developed positively, students were then allowed to formally vacate the dormitories under strict safety and hygiene measures. We gave a helping hand to the Slovak government by allowing our accommodation facilities to be used as places of quarantine for people returning from abroad.

During the coronavirus crisis, experts and volunteers from the university became fully involved in dealing with the epidemiological situation. Epidemiologists, virologists, biologists, medical students, pharmacists, and psychologists all worked on the frontline. Different parts of the university joined together in this effort, and there was cooperation with our partner institutions: the Slovak University of Technology and the Slovak Academy of Sciences. We also managed the pandemic situation by working towards a common goal despite the difficult circumstances.

We were the first university in Slovakia to hold state exams online. They were first held on 6 April 2020 at the Faculty of Medicine in the subject of gynaecology and obstetrics.

Our molecular biologists also helped develop the Slovak test for COVID-19. Dr Tomáš Szemes from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Science Park played a key role in the detection of genetic information on the novel coronavirus in Slovakia and in the development of PCR tests.

In the "filters", where our medical students volunteered to take samples from those potentially infected with the novel coronavirus.

Milena Arzhakova joined online classes all the way from Yakutsk in Siberia, which is 7000 kilometres from Bratislava and has a seven-hour time difference.
From the very beginning, the first eight professors of the Faculty of Medicine, who were appointed by the President of the Czechoslovak Republic on 31 July 1919, had a difficult task ahead of them in creating Comenius University. In the shortest time possible, they were supposed to create a functioning rectorate and registry as well as a dean's office for the university's first faculty. They also had to provide suitable conditions for tuition, such as premises for teaching, laboratory and autopsy exercises, clinical practice, and particularly lecturers who were qualified doctors. In addition, they had to provide reading material and accommodation spaces for students from poorer backgrounds, develop study programmes and an education and examination code, and put the necessary administration processes associated with study in place.

In the past, students did not automatically receive grade books at enrolment, and only "proper" university students who had attended a matriculation ceremony could receive them. Students in full-time study were required to carry their identification document at all times and present it upon request. The colour of these documents differed according to the faculty and the decades in which they were used (the black, red, and green ones are from 1945). Today the obligation to have a grade book in paper form is on the decline, and only some faculties have retained this tradition.

Academic insignia are a symbol of historical traditions, the academic self-government of the university and its faculties, and the powers of the rector, vice-rectors, deans, and vice-deans. The insignia include the university emblem and the seal featuring the emblem, the ring, the medals worn on the chains of academic dignitaries, and the rector's mace as well as the maces of the deans of the faculties. In January 1922, Professor Josef Vydra created the designs for the first rector's mace and the maces of the university's first three faculties (Medicine, Law, and Arts). The maces of the deans of the faculties resemble a hexagonal goblet and have the same length of 110 cm. They are silver-plated and partly gilded, and they are decorated with synthetic stones and a three-dimensional floral pattern. In creating the symbols for all three faculties, Vydra was inspired by motifs from ancient mythology.

The construction of the Comenius University building in the city centre began in 1930. Originally, it was supposed to house a grain exchange. The building's designer, the academic architect František Kroupa, planned the structure truly magnificently and in a grand palatial style, giving it a look of monumental and noble beauty. The allocation of the building to the university was the work of Rector Antonín Kolák, who in late 1934 and early 1935 began negotiations with the government. Almost before construction was completed, the government decided in 1935 to definitively allocate the new building to the university and to have it modified for the university's needs. In addition to the Rectorate, the Faculties of Law and Arts both moved into it. The opening ceremony took place on 11 March 1937.

From its establishment until the end of the 2019 academic year, Comenius University has awarded more than 267,000 degrees of great variety. The largest number of degrees have been awarded at the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Education, and the Faculty of Natural Sciences. The most degrees awarded in a year were in 2009 (9269), 2010 (9003), and 2008 (8226). The most common degrees have been "Mgr." (equivalent to a master's degree: more than 83,000), "Bc." (equivalent to a bachelor's degree: nearly 47,000), and "MUDr." (a medical degree: more than 27,000). The largest number of graduates were born in Bratislava, followed by those born in Žilina and those born in Trnava.
The one hundred years of Comenius University’s existence is an huge commitment for the university’s future. In its first hundred years, the university clearly established itself in Slovakia as well as in the Central European region. It is now time to think in a European and international way, and to have our voice heard in society. For the future, the university has set itself five main priorities:

1. Greater comfort for students
   One of the strategic priorities is to improve the current electronic system for students to one which is more user-friendly and which integrates more aspects of university life into it. The university web site will also undergo change; we plan to introduce electronic applications to study at the university, and we are exploring the possibility of electronic degree certificates. We are also focusing on improving the comfort of student accommodation at the dormitories.

2. Openness and transparency
   We want to be open and transparent, and we are working with a foundation in order to help prevent cases of corruption. In addition, better property management may create resources that can be invested primarily in promoting quality science.

3. Bratislava and the universities
   Bratislava should be an attractive city for students. We want to work with the city as one team and help each other. We are promoting studying in Bratislava alongside other universities based here. Together, we are preparing a contact space for academic activities for students and the wider community.

4. The university as a significant voice in society
   We want to be a university whose voice will be heard. We have spoken out about the presidential election, we supported the participation of young people in the European elections, and we actively supported the strike for the climate. We do not want to be a passive institution. We want our graduates as well as the public in general to be able to count on our support on significant issues.

5. An emphasis on improving quality
   We do not want to just live off our good reputation. We want to focus more intensively on the quality of studies, but also improve the quality of scientific work.
PERFORMANCE IN RANKINGS

Comenius University appeared in all major international rankings in 2019. The university also utilizes this type of feedback to evaluate its own activities.

RUR – Round University Ranking
In the 2019 Round University Ranking, Comenius University ranked 417th out of 1100 universities from 85 countries.

THE RANKING OF COMENIUS UNIVERSITY OUT OF ALL UNIVERSITIES INCLUDED IN THE RUR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>687</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>672</td>
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</table>

THE WUR IMPACT RANKING
Comenius University ranked 76th out of over 460 universities from 76 countries in a pilot project showing an innovative way of assessing universities which the world-renowned Times Higher Education World University Ranking came up with. It assesses the impact of universities on the economy and, in a broader context, on society as a whole.

MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY RANKING 2019
(MosIUR “The Three University Missions”)
In the Moscow ranking, Comenius University ranked in the 351–400th band out of 1200 ranked universities from 79 countries. The ranking had a wider selection of 1700 universities.

2019 ACADEMIC RANKING OF WORLD UNIVERSITIES – the Shanghai Ranking
Comenius University ranked in the 801-900th band out of more than 1800 universities waiting to be ranked in the ARWU’s top 500 universities worldwide.

LEIDEN RANKING
Comenius University was placed 606th out of 963 universities in assessing universities worldwide. In the evaluation of disciplines, Comenius University reached the following positions: Biomedical and Medical Sciences (502nd place), Earth and Life Sciences (521st place), Physical Sciences and Technology (526th place), Social Sciences and Humanities (697th place), and Mathematics and Mathematical Informatics (765th place).

EDUCATION

As the oldest, largest, and most important university in Slovakia, Comenius University bases its teaching on its own academic activity. Its ambition is to be a leading centre of European education and a university with an international orientation. The university encourages its graduates to project the highest degree of personal and professional quality as well as the qualities of humanity and humanism. It also aims to improve the scientific and cultural outlook of society and its economic prosperity.

THE LONG-TERM TREND OF COMENIUS UNIVERSITY’S STUDENT SHARE

![Graph showing the long-term trend of Comenius University’s student share](Photo: Peter Uhrin)
In the 2019/2020 academic year, Comenius University offered 888 study programmes for those interested in studying bachelor’s, master’s, postgraduate, and doctoral degrees, and it has the right to grant the appropriate academic degree. Compared to the previous year, the offer of study programmes increased by twenty-eight. The university accepted 10,534 students, and 7454 students were enrolled in the first year of study.

### Students
At the thirteen faculties of Comenius University, 21,954 students studied at all levels (bachelor’s, master’s, postgraduate and doctoral studies) in 2019. Despite the decreasing demographic curve concerning student admissions, Comenius University maintains a high proportion of all Slovak university students. More than 16% of all undergraduates in Slovakia studied at Comenius University in 2019, whereas in 2008 it was just 12%.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
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<td>9 238</td>
<td>1 844</td>
<td>2 548</td>
<td>11 844</td>
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### NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT EACH FACULTY AS OF 31 OCTOBER 2019

Comenius University has the largest number of doctoral students in Slovakia. These young researchers have significant scientific potential. 1844 doctoral students studied at Comenius University in 2019, which accounted for almost 28% of the total number of doctoral students at Slovak universities.

More than a fifth of all international university students in Slovakia choose to study at Comenius University. In particular, the increase in the interest of international students in studying at the first and third degrees of study is positive. There was a decrease of 303 in the number of international students, who came from more than seventy countries, giving a total of 2548 students. This number represents 12% of all students at Comenius University. Most international students study at the medical faculties in Bratislava and Martin and at the Faculty of Management.
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

The Student Conference of Medical Faculties of the Czech and Slovak Republics

As part of the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of its establishment, the Faculty of Medicine organized the ninth edition of the Student Conference of Medical Faculties of the Czech and Slovak Republics from 7 to 9 November 2019. In three sections, there were twenty-six lectures given by students of general and dental medicine who had come from twelve medical faculties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Katarína Mataľová won second place in the clinically-oriented section, and Daniela Vargová was also second in the clinically-oriented section. Both are students of the Jessenius Faculty of Medicine located in Martin. Third place in the dentist section was awarded to Kocid from the Faculty of Medicine.

The Slovak University Ice Hockey Tournament

For the sixth time, the Comenius University Men's Ice Hockey team claimed the Championship. Martin. Third place in the dentistry section was awarded to Jessenius Faculty of Medicine located in Martin.

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A total of 5516 graduates from all levels of education completed their university studies at the faculties of Comenius University in the 2018/2019 academic year. The academic title of Doctor of Medicine was awarded to 638 students. In addition, 2323 students graduated with a master's degree, 2238 students graduated with a bachelor's degree, and the academic title of Philosophiae doctor (Ph.D.) was awarded to 317 doctorands.

**Lifelong learning**

The Centre for Continuing Education of Comenius University provides non-university education and focuses on various groups in the public. It provides language training to international students, thus preparing them for study programmes conducted in Slovak. It also provides career and language education as well as educational programmes for senior citizens and expatriate Slovaks. Its programme portfolio responds to current public needs as well as the needs of the job market. In 2019, 368 students from 52 countries took Slovak language classes and specialized subjects conducted in Slovak.

### Summer schools

The coronavirus pandemic brought about changes in the organization of the university's traditional summer activities. The “coming of age” (eighteenth) edition of Children’s Comenius University was held exclusively online through live streaming. There were nine lectures on topics related to pandemics, viruses, and immunity, which could be watched by children aged between nine and fourteen from the comfort of their homes. Out of XXX students who enrolled, this summer school was successfully completed by XXX of them.

The Summer University of Slovak Language and Culture, which is organized by the Centre for Continuing Education, took place remotely from 13 to 24 July 2020 in small groups via the MS Teams application. Interested participants living abroad, as well as Slovak expatriates and secondary students in their final year of studies living abroad, acquired and improved their communication and language skills in Slovak while becoming aware of the diversity of Slovak history and culture.

Secondary school students who love programming, physics, and mathematics were able to participate in the Trojsten summer school from 13 to 24 July. Lectures were held online, and the recorded footage was then posted on YouTube. During the summer school, there were lectures on topics such as "(Bio)informatics through the Eyes" and "Graphics in Computer Games".

The Summer School of Slovak Language and Culture, run by Studia Academica Slovaca, took place from 3 to 14 August 2020 through remote learning. This is the oldest summer school in Slovakia, and it has a fifty-five-year tradition. It is run from the Faculty of Arts at Comenius University and involves language seminars, conversation lessons, and lectures. Every year it educates Slovak studies experts living abroad alongside other Slavists as well as student, cultural workers, managers, teachers, translators, and other people keen on the Slovak language and culture.

One novelty this year was the Economic in a Circle summer school, which is aimed at explaining the core aspects of the circular economy. It is targeted at pupils in the fifth to ninth years of primary school. Through lectures, workshops, and games on topics like product design, waste management, dealing with biodegradable waste, green buildings, and consumer behaviour, the school showed children how practical solutions can work in everyday life. It was held at the Faculty of Management of Comenius University from 10 to 14 August. It was organized by the Centre for Management Development and Applied Research at the Faculty of Management, the 3E Institute, and Circular Slovakia.
Comenius University is one of Slovakia's most prominent research institutions in terms of the number of researchers, its ability to obtain financial support for research, and the achieved results.

Projects and grants

In 2019 Comenius University projects received a total of €10.59 million in state subsidies. Most of these funds came from the Slovak Research and Development Agency (SRDA), which in 2019 supported 244 scientific projects at thirteen faculties and selected units of Comenius University, providing a total of €7 million. Compared to the previous year, this was an increase in the number of projects as well as the funds received.

In terms of quantity, the largest number of research projects at Comenius University were supported by the Scientific Grant Agency (VEGA) of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Sport of the Slovak Republic, which in 2019 provided support for 344 such projects. The results for 2019 show that while the number of projects was pretty much the same, the amount of funding increased.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NUMBER AND SIZE OF SRDA GRANTS FROM 2011 TO 2019
(IN THOUSANDS OF EUROS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<th>Capital expenses</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>2013</td>
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<td>3,849</td>
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<td>3,849</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4,095</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>4,945</td>
<td>6,138</td>
<td>7,083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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DEVELOPMENT OF THE NUMBER AND SIZE OF VEGA GRANTS FROM 2008 TO 2019
(IN THOUSANDS OF EUROS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1,662</td>
<td>672</td>
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Natália Hlavatá Hudáčková from the Department of Geology and Paleontology
Habilitations and Inaugurations

In 2019, forty-four lecturers became associate professors at Comenius University. The Scientific Board of Comenius University approved seventeen nominations from faculty scientific boards concerning the appointment of professors. In addition to procedures for the appointment of professors, the Scientific Board of Comenius University approved one nomination for the degree of Doctor of Sciences (DrSc), six honorary degrees of Professor Emeritus, and three nominations to fill the positions of visiting professors.

Top-class research

The highest concentration of top research teams at Slovak universities – twenty-six out of a total of fifty-four – can be found at Comenius University. For students, it is important to know that the top research teams working at Comenius University function successfully in an international context while also teaching at the faculties.

The work of young researchers, teachers, and doctoral candidates under the age of thirty is also supported through the Comenius University Grants of thirty is also supported through the Comenius University Grants scheme. In 2019 Comenius University awarded grants to 247 projects totalling €238,900.

The Furka brothers, both doctoral students at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Comenius University, invented the Q-Vent device for pulmonary ventilation which can provide substitute functionality during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic. This simple replacement for artificial lung ventilators that would help in the peak of the coronavirus pandemic. This simple replacement for artificial lung ventilation is an alternative that can be used when no standard device is available in hospitals. Ordinary ventilation machines cost tens of thousands of euros and are few in number when there is a crisis. By contrast, the Q-Vent has a design price of about €80 and is compatible with various conventional hospital devices.

The Stay Healthy app

Doctors led by Dr Andrej Thurzo from the Faculty of Medicine Comenius University have devised a mobile app that can alert people if they have come into contact with someone who tested positive for the novel coronavirus. The mobile application is anonymous but will provide the user with information about whether someone tested positive or negative.

Doctors ramp up the printing of protective shields

The Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University became involved in the call to “Help the Hospital”, and during the pandemic they began to produce protective shields and distribute them to health organizations. The Institute of Simulation and Virtual Education at the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University provided all its 3D printers for this purpose, and in a day they were able to print around fifty protective shields. The
material for printing and producing the shields was supplied by the organizers of the “Help the Hospital” initiative, and the shields were then assembled by students of the Faculty of Medicine.

**BIOLOGY**

Research on the novel coronavirus at the Comenius University Science Park

During the pandemic, there was work done at the Comenius University Science Park to uncover all of the genetic information of the novel coronavirus in Slovakia. At a specialized centre at the Institute of Virology at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, scientists managed to successfully isolate samples of nucleic acid of the SARS-CoV-2 virus taken from the first patients in Slovakia. Such an analysis of genomes and their comparison can reveal a lot about the origin of virus isolates, i.e., where they most likely originated.

A test for COVID-19 is developed

Slovak scientists, including experts from Comenius University led by Tomáš Szemes from the Faculty of Natural Sciences, managed to develop, verify, and certify a new PCR test for COVID-19, all within a short time. The test is specific to strains of the novel coronavirus present in Slovakia and allows for a reliable diagnosis at an early stage of the disease. The production of such local tests has greatly helped with the current pandemic and could also be used in pandemic situations in the future.

**MATHEMATICS**

Calculations help predict the rate of the spread of coronavirus

The scientists Zuzana Chladná, Richard Kollar, and Radoslav Harman from the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics, and Informatics of Comenius University discussed how to map the spread of infectious diseases with the team at the Health Policy Institute. Using mathematical models, they demonstrated how quarantine measures would slow down the spread of the coronavirus and thus reduce the pressure on the health system.

In the beginning of July 2020, the European Commission approved the consortium of nine universities, ENLIGHT, that will offer joint study programmes. Students and teachers will be able to participate in the activities throughout the universities. The alliance connects the University of Ghent (Belgium), the University of Bordeaux (France), the University of Groningen (the Netherlands), the University of Uppsala (Sweden), the University of Ghent (Belgium), the University of the Basque Country (Spain), the University of Göttingen (Germany), the National University of Ireland in Galway, and the University of Tartu (Estonia).

In 2019 the conference took place from 23 to 25 October 2019, was organized by the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty of Comenius University. The conference was interdisciplinary and provided space for a critical reflection on evangelical theology and spirituality in Slovakia and the global context.

Comenius University continues to develop international contacts both bilaterally and multilaterally, and it is on the basis of these ties that teachers and students take part in exchanges. The Erasmus+ programme dominates in this area.

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Also, in the previous academic year there were several international conferences that took place at the university.

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES**

The Institute of Hygiene at Faculty of Medicine has organized the Living Conditions and Health scientific and professional conference alongside the Slovak Medical Association since 1993. In 2019 the conference took place from 23 to 25 September. The conference presented topics such as noise in the environment, the environment and health, epidemiology, and prevention of chronic diseases, and nutrition.

From 21 and 22 October 2019, the Department of Library and Information Sciences at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University, in cooperation with the University Library, organized an international conference entitled Information interactions for the seventh time. The main focus of the conference included digital information, benefits and risks in the information society, and the “reverse side of information”. The aim of the event is the interaction of participants in issues of theory as well as practical issues, methodology, and the latest research findings.

The 100 Years of Evangelical Theological Education in Slovakia international academic conference, which took place from 23 to 25 October 2019, was organized by the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty of Comenius University. The conference was interdisciplinary and provided space for a critical reflection on evangelical theology and spirituality in Slovakia and the global context. The purpose of the conference was to provide some initial perspectives concerning evangelical theology and current scientific discourse.

On 24 October 2019, the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University organized the 26th International Symposium on the Early Bronze Age in Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia.

With the support of the Dean of the Faculty of Management of Comenius University, the fourth edition of the
The seventh postoperative care. rare diseases, and paediatric surgery and new developments in the management of obesity, immunodeficiency conditions, opening ceremony and interesting expert participation on 21 and 22 November (Galand Days) with international the Jessenius Faculty of Medicine of Increasing Efficiency and Performance Progressive Approaches and Methods of Increasing Efficiency and Performance of Organizations (SMART Evolution) international conference took place on 24 and 25 October 2019. The aim of the conference was to exchange theoretical and practical knowledge and experiences in process innovations and their effective management upon the basis of the principles of the present-day SMART phenomenon. In cooperation with its partners, the Jessenius Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University in Martin organized the 81st Slovak Paediatric Conference (Galand Days) with international participation on 21 and 22 November 2019. Participants experienced an opening ceremony and interesting expert lectures. The main themes of discussion included vaccination, biological treatment, obesity, immunodeficiency conditions, new developments in the management of rare diseases, and paediatric surgery and postoperative care.

The seventh Personality in the Context of Cognition, Emotionality, and Motivations international conference was organized by the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University on 27 and 28 November 2019. The aim of the conference was to create a professional platform for the interaction and discussion of academics and professionals interested in basic and applied psychological research and the connection of psychological theory with applied practice from the perspective of experimental and empirical experience. The Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences of Comenius University, in cooperation with the Slovak Association for Critical Psychology and the Institute of Research on Social Communication of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, organized the nineteenth edition of this conference was to create a professional platform for the interaction and discussion of academics and professionals interested in basic and applied psychological research and the connection of psychological theory with applied practice from the perspective of experimental and empirical experience.

The Institute of Special Education Studies and the Department of Special Education at the Faculty of Education of Comenius University organized the Integrated/Inclusive Education of Pupils with Special Educational Needs international academic conference. This event was held on 28 November 2019 at the Faculty of Education and focused on the integration and inclusion of pupils with special educational needs from different Slovak and Czech perspectives. The Department of Special Education at Jan Amos Komenský University in Prague also participated in the organization of this conference.

The intra-biblical interpretation of Earlier Prophets international academic conference took place at the Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius of Comenius University. The aim of this conference was to examine the specific literary characteristics, typological development, and theological significance of the prophetic figures over history in canonical writings that had emerged due to earlier prophets. This event took place from 13 to 15 December 2019.

The Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences of Comenius University, in cooperation with the Slovak Association for Critical Psychology and the Institute of Research on Social Communication of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, organized the nineteenth edition of the Czech and Slovak Qualitative Approaches and Methods in Human Sciences Conference on 27 and 28 January 2020. The conference had the ambition to offer current and interesting approaches in qualitative research while also returning to the history and roots of qualitative research. This conference is the largest event dealing with qualitative research in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Milestones of Law in the Central European Area was the title of a forum where doctoral students and young researchers presented the results of their academic work, discussed current issues of legal theory and sought solutions to problems brought by practical application. The fourteenth edition of this conference was held with the support of the dean of the Faculty of Law of Comenius University from 23 to 24 June 2020. This year the conference was held in an audio-visual online format.

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SIGNIFICANT VISITS

In addition to mutual visits between representatives of foreign embassies and representatives of the university, several other major visits were held in 2019 and 2020 which enriched the academic community with interesting meetings, lectures, and knowledge. This included the awarding of an honorary doctorate to the Prince of Monaco.

On 14 October 2019, Prince Albert II of Monaco received an honorary doctorate ("Doctor Honoris Causa") at Comenius University for his activities in the protection of natural and cultural heritage and in fighting the consequences of climate change. The doctorate was awarded upon a proposal made by the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Comenius University, which has a working partnership with the Prince's scientists. One result of ongoing joint activities of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Principality of Monaco was the signing of an agreement on mutual cooperation in 2019 aimed at protecting the environment.

Professor iner 8. Neumann of Oslo Metropolitan University, one of the most cited social scientists in international relations, gave a lecture at Comenius University on the steppes tradition in international relations. Professor Neumann gave his lecture as part of the Research Seminars series organized by the Department of Political Science at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University on 27 November 2019.

Dr Alain De Mesmaeker, the President of the Swiss Chemical Society and a leading chemistry expert, spoke at the Faculty of Natural Sciences on 12 December 2019 with a lecture entitled "The Design and Synthesis of Strigolactones and Strigolactams Derivatives Using Keteneiminiums as Key Intermediates: Potential Application to Crop Enhancement and Crop Protection".

Professor Dr Volker Leppin from the University of Tübingen spoke at the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty of Comenius University, giving a lecture entitled "The Reformation as the Transformation of the Middle Ages" on 12 December 2019.
The year 2019 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, which in 1989 non-violently brought down more than four decades of Communist totalitarian rule in Czechoslovakia. Courageous individuals from Comenius University, which is Slovakia’s oldest university, contributed to the success of the revolution, which was of fundamental importance in the democratic development of Slovak society. A series of events took place at the university to commemorate the legacy of 1989.

The unveiling of a commemorative plaque at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University

The first statement made by the Public Against Violence (VPN) movement was made on 20 November 1989 in a dome of the Faculty of Arts on Gondova Street. This is commemorated by a plaque on the faculty building, which was unveiled on 14 November 2019. The designer of the plaque, the installation of which was initiated by Professor Valeri Mikula, was the graphic designer and architect Karol Rosmany. He was also behind the logos of VPN and the Student Movement, who were the main initiators of revolutionary events in Slovakia back in 1989.

An exhibition on November 1989

The march of Bratislava university students on 16 November 1989; the establishment of the first strike committee of students in Slovakia four days later at Comenius University; the creation of Zmena (Change), which was the first independent newspaper written by the university’s students of journalism; the Velvet Revolution; and the StB (secret police force) – all of these were things that were covered at an exhibition on November 1989 in the foyer of the main university building on Safarik Square. The exhibition had its opening on 14 November 2019 and presented documents and photographs. It was open to the public until the end of 2019 and came into being as the result of cooperation between the Comenius University Archive and the Faculty of Arts.

The November ‘89 – 30 Years After Conference

The fact that the Velvet Revolution was an unquestionable milestone in Slovakia’s modern history was confirmed by dozens of Slovak and international experts from the humanities and social sciences who have researched its causes, the series of events, and the consequences, and who came to speak in the university’s auditorium on 14 and 15 November 2019. The main speakers of the November ‘89 – 30 Years After Conference, which was organized by the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Comenius University, included Professor Timothy Garton Ash of the University of Oxford, who talked about the significance of the "velvet" year of 1989 and the global crisis after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and Professor James Krapfl of McGill University in Canada, who has researched the politics and culture of modern Europe with a particular focus on East-Central Europe.

The march of Bratislava university students thirty years later

On 16 November 2019, exactly thirty years after its courageous premiere, former Bratislava university students recreated the march that had preceded the one in Prague in November 1989. Just like then, the marchers went from Hodza Square to SNP Square, then to Hviezdoslav Square, over to the Vajanský Embankment, and then to the Comenius University building on Safarik Square. The courage of those students, who on the eve of the Velvet Revolution had publicly demanded democracy and freedom (including for political prisoners), school reforms, and public dialogue about the problems of society, was recognized by the Slovak President, Zuzana Čaputová, and the Czech President, Miloš Zeman, in front of the memorial plaque on the university building.
TEDs at Comenius University

Exactly thirty years after the brutal crackdown by security forces of the Ministry of the Interior against the student demonstration on Národní třída in Prague, the inspirational TEDxUniverzitaKomenského (TEDx at Comenius University) event took place in the university’s historical building on Šafárik Square, allowing the university’s auditorium to resonate with calls for significant, revolutionary, and urgent change. These were the main ideas of the second edition of this event, which welcomed eighteen speakers in four thematic blocks: Society, the Planet, Art, and Technology. One of the speakers was the Comenius University Rector, Marek Števček. A series of accompanying events, including exhibitions, various game activities, and an afterparty, complemented the day-long programme of stimulating talks.

Awards on the occasion of International Students’ Day

On 18 November, the annual award ceremony for exceptional students and teachers was held in the Comenius University Auditorium on the occasion of International Students’ Day. To mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, the traditional sixty awardees were accompanied by another twenty-five people who had participated in the events of November 1989 as students, and who received centennial Comenius University medals from the university’s Rector, Marek Števček. In addition, the Gold Medal of Comenius University was awarded to Professor Valér Mikula and to Ladislav Snopko, also a graduate of the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University, for their efforts during the revolution.

The “We Are Not Like Them” discussion event

After the award ceremony, there was the “We Are Not Like Them” discussion event about November 1989 and its legacy in the present day, which featured prominent figures of the November events who had been students or teachers at that revolutionary time.

COMENIUS UNIVERSITY ACTS

Comenius University handled a switch from classroom studies to the online method very well. The establishment of the Centre for Online Education, Informatics and Didactics, that prepared a methodical guideline for teachers to use systems Moodle and MS Teams for online education, was an immediate reaction to an interruption of classroom studies. In the time of distant studies, the Centre for Information Technologies provided technical or methodical aid and consultation to the employees of the university. In the meantime, many university staff and students were involved in lending a helping hand to the best of their professional abilities. Here are some examples.

Working with patients and helplines

Epidemiologists were at the centre of events since the outbreak began. They communicated with those who had COVID-19, tracked down their close contacts, and secured quarantine for them. Medical students worked as volunteers on the information helplines during the pandemic. They also assisted in “filters”, where they collected samples from people who had been possibly infected.

A strain on pharmacies

The difficult situation in the pharmacies was alleviated by pharmacy students, who gave a helping hand in the preparation and dispensing of medicines.

Psychological counselling

Many find it hard to deal with change and experience stress and the anxiety of isolation. For these people, there were experts at hand from the Psychological Counselling Office of Comenius University who were joined by psychology students under the supervision of therapists.

Legal aid

In this new situation, legal help was needed by those who could not afford the services of a lawyer. This is why students of the Faculty of Law of Comenius University and willing lawyers came together and decided to produce written legal analyses free of charge as a part of an online student legal advisory unit.

WE PROMOTE SCIENCE

The opening of the academic year

On 23 September 2019, the ceremonial opening of the academic year took place in the university’s auditorium. A series of accompanying events, including exhibitions, various game activities, and an afterparty, complemented the day-long programme of stimulating talks.

Comenius University Rector, Marek Števček

Photo: Jozef Kétyi

Pharmacy students help

Legal aid

Ladislav Snopko, an activist and founding member of VPN
of the 101st academic year was held in the Comenius University Auditorium. The opening included three lectures. One was given by Roman Holec and was entitled “The University in the State, and the State in the University”. Another lecture was given by Danijela Jerotijevič and was entitled “From Matriculation to Graduation: Rituals and their Meaning”. The third lecture was given by Mária Grófová and was entitled “How the History of Comenius University in Bratislava is Created”. The end of the ceremonial opening then belonged to the students and the Tolstoys band. There was also an afterparty at KC Dunaj.

European Researchers’ Night
At the thirteenth edition of European Researchers’ Night, which took place on 27 September 2020, Comenius University had a presence in the Old Market Hall in Bratislava, at Mirage Shopping Centre in Žilina, and at the MAX Shopping Centre in Poprad. Physicists from the university offered demonstrations of the use of atmospheric plasma and the principles of the physics of particle accelerators. Natural scientists answered questions about biological rhythms and human bones. Scientists also demonstrated experiments on the optical properties of different dyes. They also explained what autism is and what blood cells do, and they presented interesting facts about DNA. Milan Kováč from the Faculty of Arts discussed Mayan culture.

Science and Technology Week
Comenius University was also at Science and Technology Week in 2019. The sixteenth edition of this event took place 4 to 10 November 2019. Its aim is to improve the perception of science and technology and raise awareness in society, promote and present science and technology, and arouse young people’s interest in the study of scientific and technological disciplines. The event featured experts from the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics, and Informatics; the Faculty of Natural Sciences; and the Faculty of Education.

Blackboard
Comenius University, the Slovak University of Technology, and the Slovak Academy of Sciences joined with the Nová Cvernovka cultural centre to present a new series of scientific lectures under the Whiteboard banner. Lectures and discussions at Whiteboard are a combination of the classical academic format of lectures and discussions as a method of learning. It is written classically on a whiteboard with the use of digital images. The main goal is to non-technically yet properly explain scientific topics so that people without a scientific background can understand them. The first lecture was held on 3 March. The other two took place online due to the coronavirus pandemic. The mathematician Richard Kollár gave a lecture on behalf of Comenius University. WHERE TO STUDY
During the fourth edition of the “Where to Study” (Kam na vysokú) Roadshow, Comenius University appeared in seven cities across Slovakia. More than 8000 secondary school student in their final year and in earlier years of study in Poprad, Tmava, Nitra, Žilina, Banska Bystrica, Prešov, and Košice had the opportunity to learn about studying at Comenius University. The roadshow ran from 17 October 2019 to 6 February 2020. Gaudeamus
From 24 September to 6 November 2019, Comenius University took part in the Gaudeamus series of European higher education and lifelong learning exhibitions in Bratislava, Brno, and Nitra. The university provided information about the opportunities and conditions of study. Universities from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and further abroad all took part in these events, and there were more than 250 exhibitors. For the first time, the university presented itself at the exhibition in Brno, where together with the Slovak University of Technology – they introduced Bratislava as a university town, as well. Experience a day in the life of a university student online
This event for secondary school students has moved into an online format this year. On the website zaziden.uniba.sk, students can find lectures by experts from various fields who have taught as a part of the event in previous years. The website also includes videos from the TEDx at Comenius University conference and the popular Children’s Comenius University as well as lectures by experts in physics, marketing, and political science.
A university-wide Open Day

Over one day — 5 November 2019 — students could visit up to eight faculties, get to know them, and experience the atmosphere. Comenius University experts from the fields of law, physics, and management gave talks in the main building on Safrárik Square, and at the end there was a discussion called “Behind the Scenes of Studying at Comenius University.”

The Children’s Comenius University online special

In cooperation with the Datalan IT company, Aréna Theatre organized the Children’s Comenius University online special, which brought knowledge directly into children’s rooms during the coronavirus pandemic through forty-four interesting and inspirational video lectures. Four hundred and seventy-three children were involved, and they received certificates after successfully completing the course. A favourite summer school for children from 9 to 14 years old has moved online this year. Out of 911 signed students, 364 graduated successfully.

Scientific Awards

Scientists from Comenius University annually receive various domestic and international awards.

The Egon Erwin Kisch Award

The winner of the twenty-eighth edition of the Egon Erwin Kisch Award for the best work of non-fiction for 2018 in Slovakia and the Czech Republic was Associate Professor Martin Vašš from the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University for his books Zlatá bohéma (The golden Bohemian movement) and Medzi snom a skutočnosťou (Between the dream and reality). The awards ceremony took place on 25 September 2019 at the manor house in the Czech town of Letohrad.

The Martin Benka Prize


The Literary Fund Prizes

On 26 September 2019 at Zichy Palace, the Literary Fund’s committee of the Section for Scientific and Specialized Literature and Computer Programmes awarded prizes and financial rewards for works that were published in 2018. Rewards for scientific and specialized literature in the category of social sciences were received by Professor Katarína Žilková et al. for Young Children’s Concepts of Geometric Shapes, Professor Peter Žeňuch et al. for Úžhorodský rukopisný Pseudozonar (the Uzhhorod Pseudozonar manuscript), and Professor Jozef Bátora for Slovensko v staršej dobe bronzovej (Slovakia in the Early Bronze Age). In the category of biological and medical sciences, rewards were received by Professor Karol Mičieta et al. for Fylogenéza a morfogenéza cievnatých rastlín (The phylogenesis and morphogenesis of vascular plants) and by Professor Peter Mikúš, Dr Juraj Piešťanský, and Dr Svetlana Dokupilová for Kvapalinová chromatografia, hmotnostná spektrometria a ich kombinácie vo farmaceutickej a biomedicínskej analýze (Liquid chromatography, mass spectrometry, and their combinations in pharmaceutical and biomedical analysis). A reward was also received by Associate Professor Viera Lehotská and Dr Alžbeta Kršáková for their book Rádiológia pre stomatológov (Radiology for dentists).

A university-wide Open Day

WE INSPIRE

I live science in real time

What motivates scientists, and how do they motivate others? This was the motto of the last edition of this event, whose unifying theme was motivation. The main task of this conference was to arrange the meeting of Slovak scientists working in Slovakia as well as abroad so that they can present their own stories and initiate a mutual discussion. Lukáš Felix Pátlošek from the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Comenius University gave a lecture entitled “At the End of the World, on the Edge of Physics, on the Bottom of the Periodic Table”.

The Daniel Tupý Prize

In November 2020 it will be fifteen years since the murder of Daniel Tupý, a Comenius University student who was killed on the Danube embankment. Every year the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University organizes a competition of student texts on violence, extremism, and failures of the state in the field of human rights to mark the anniversary of this event.

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dentists). Professor Karol Mičieta and Dr Gustav Murín also received a reward in the category of natural and technical sciences for their work In Situ Biomonitoring of a Polluted Environment by Wild Plant and Crop Plant Species. In addition, a reward was received by Associate Professor Marek Mentel and Professor William F. Martin for Mitochondria and the anaerobic energy metabolism of eukaryotes — biochemistry and evolution.

The ESET Science Award

Dňa 18. októbra 2019 Nadácia ESET po prvýkrát udeľovala ceny ESET Science Award za významný prínos v medzinárodnom vedeckovýskumnom priestore. Laureátom v kategórii výnimočný vysokoškolský pedagóg sa stal doc. Tomáš Vinař z Fakulty matematiky, fyziky a informatiky UK. Nositeľkou titulu výnimočná mladá vedkyňa do 35 rokov sa stala Dr. Ľubomíra Tóthová, ktorá pôsobí na Lekárskej fakulte UK.

The Association of Institutions of Adult Education Prize

The Week of Lifelong Learning, which took place for the nineteenth time from 21 to 27 October 2019, saw the awarding of prizes by the Association of Institutions of Adult Education. The Prize for Adult Education was given by the Minister of Education, Martina Lubyová, to Jana Pekarovičová, who is the director of Studia Academica Slovaca — the Centre for Slovak as a Foreign Language. This is a specialized centre at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University.

Awards for science and technology

During Science and Technology Week in Slovakia, the Science and Technology Prize was won on 7 November 2019 by three experts from Comenius University: Professor Tibor Katribák from the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics, and Informatics; Professor Michal Meço from the Faculty of Medicine; and Professor Lukáš Plank from the Jessenius Faculty of Medicine in Martin.

The Dr Ludmila Sedlárová-Rabanová Prize and Scholarship

On 16 December 2019, the fourth edition of the award ceremony of the Dr Ludmila Sedlárová-Rabanová Prize in the field of genetics took place at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Comenius University. This award includes a scholarship for a short stay abroad for young scientists under thirty-five years of age, and it was won by Miriam Pillerová from the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University.

The Slovak Woman of the Year

On 20 August 2020, the historical building of the Slovak National Theatre hosted a gala evening for the twelfth edition of the Slovak Women of the Year readers’ poll, where the absolute winner and the winners in individual categories were announced. In the science and research category, Professor Magdaléna Kuželová from the Faculty of Pharmacy of Comenius University was the winner.

FROM STUDENTS TO STUDENTS

The FSES Fest

Students from the Faculty of Social and Economic Science of Comenius University once again organized their popular FSES Fest. This edition of the festival had the central theme “Who am I and where am I going, society?” Participants at the event, which took place on 3 December 2019, could look forward to a rich programme of events and interesting topics. The festival was opened by Michal Kaščák, who is the organizer of Pohoda, which is Slovakia’s largest music festival.

The 2019 Medical Students’ Run in Martin

The Medical Students’ Run in Martin took place on 25 September 2019. The entire proceeds from the event go to the Oncology Centre at the University Hospital in Martin. In addition to its charitable intent, this event is accompanied by an educational and entertainment programme. The organizers of the run were students of Comenius University’s Jessenius Faculty of Medicine, and the event welcomed over seven hundred participants in 2019.
Comenius University has the largest portfolio of dormitories for students in Slovakia. At the end of 2019, these dormitories accommodated 7806 Comenius University students. The canteens served 2,529,136 main meals, of which 2,042,416 were for students.

Comenius University is very closely linked to the city of Bratislava. It is the soul and lungs of the city. Units and facilities of the university can be found in all parts of the city. Comenius University includes its faculties as well as hospitals, pharmacies, the Comenius University Botanical Garden, the garden of medicinal plants, a herbarium, dozens of dormitory buildings, libraries, Comenius University Press, and the Comenius University Archive. Although Comenius University is not a campus-type university, this has its advantages. When you are getting to know the individual parts of the university, you will travel around the whole city and get to know Bratislava itself.

THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY
In 2019 the library’s services were used by 15,897 registered users. The vast majority of these users — 14,261 — were Comenius University students. Up to 420,016 items were borrowed during the year. The library provides access to 530,000 books, theses, journals, and articles.

COMENIUS UNIVERSITY PRESS
In 2019 Comenius University Press published 246 titles, of which 31% was material intended for university study. A quarter of publications came out in electronic form. The sale of titles is carried out in bookstores and through an e-shop.

THE CENTRE FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES
The Centre for Information Technologies ensures the operation of information systems and takes professional care of the information and communication infrastructure. The centre also runs the electronic system for students, e-mail services, the university’s online presence, the IT Support Centre, and other units.

THE BOTANICAL GARDEN
The Botanical Garden’s mission includes the preservation and enlargement of the collections of living plants as well as the experimental acclimatization of various plant species. The plant displays are accessible to primary and secondary schools as well as the general public through exhibitions and seminars.

THE ARCHIVE
The Comenius University Archive is an expert centre that receives, records, and protects archive documents concerning Comenius University and education in Slovakia, also making them accessible to the public. Its collections include degree certificates (diplomas), photographs, general documentation, audio-visual documents, and museum artefacts, including academic gowns, medals, insignia, and teaching aids.
In 2019 Comenius University had a total of 4467 employees. Of these, 2140 were university teachers and 371 were researchers. Comenius University is one of the largest employers in Slovakia. The university focuses on the development of its human resources primarily in its most qualified section.

In 2019, the average age of professors at Comenius University has been falling.

The epidemiologist, Alexandra Bražinová, from CU’s Faculty of Medicine has stood in the front line since the beginning of the corona crisis. She trained medics in communication with patients and directing the infected on the information line of corona.