

11th Arenberg-Coimbra Group Prize Award

Duke Léopold d'Arenberg, Edinburgh, 9th of June 2017,

Dear Rectors, Professors, Students, dear members of the Coimbra Group, ladies and gentlemen, mesdames et messieurs, meine Damen und Herren,

It is always a pleasure for me to be at the General Assembly of the Coimbra to award our Arenberg-Coimbra Group Prize to a deserving student of one of your universities. This year the Prize goes once more and for the third time to a student from Turku, to Ms Aura Nikkilä, who spent her spring semester as an Erasmus exchange student at the University of Granada in the academic year 2011-2012.

Time has passed quickly since the first Prize was awarded to a student also from the University of Turku in 2007. This Prize has been federating the thirty-eight universities of the Coimbra Group around this common project for more than ten years, originally the idea of Professor Guido Langouche of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and Minister of State Mark Eyskens, president of the Arenberg Foundation and former Belgian prime minister.

Je profite de l'occasion qui m'est donnée pour résumer en quelques lignes les objectifs de la Fondation d'Arenberg qui fait la promotion de l'Histoire et de la Culture des peuples d'Europe.

Nous essayons modestement d'aider les citoyens à *penser*, à penser lentement, à penser dans le long terme, à penser de manière non conventionnelle.

Nous essayons également de promouvoir l'Europe grâce à la réflexion historique dans un esprit à la fois positif et critique et dans le respect de nos différences.

Nous tentons enfin d'offrir aux uns et aux autres des possibilités d'interactions entre personnes et entre peuples afin de promouvoir l'interculturalité dans le cadre d'activités entreprises en commun. Ce faisant, nous contribuons à la construction de l'Europe d'en bas, de l'Europe des gens, de l'Europe des citoyens, de l'Europe démocratique dans le sens grec du terme.

The Arenberg Foundation is based in Enghien/Edingen, a small town close to Brussels.

Our vast archives are open to the public on Thursdays and Fridays upon appointment. The Arenberg archives are the biggest private archives in the former Low Countries (2.5 km of documents) and cover a thousand years of European history.

We organize chamber music concerts. For fifteen years, we have collaborated with our Japanese partner Joji Hattori in the Bernese Oberland; this year's concert took place on February 25th.

We organize seminars: between 15 and 18 March next year thirty researchers from eastern and central Europe will meet at a seminar about “armed resistance in eastern Europe between 1945 and 1955” in collaboration of the Academy of the Republic of Austria.

We publish books and/or help publishing books: On 31st of May, we presented an exceptional book at the Institut de France in Paris: “Lectures princières et commerce du livre, la bibliothèque de Charles III de Croÿ et sa mise en vente (1614)”. It was published in collaboration with the French Academy, les Editions des Cendres and la Société des Bibliophiles François.

In December, we will present another important book in Paris about “La Maison d’Arenberg en France” in collaboration with the AFPAPⁱ and the ANFⁱⁱ, based on fifteen years of hard work of twenty collaborators, mainly professors and archivists.

For the time being, we have twelve books in the pipeline.

We organize oldtimer rallies: on 4-5 June, we organized a two-day cultural oldtimer rally, the Arenberg Trophy, with our partners, the Drones Club of Belgium. We started in the Belgian city of Enghien, stopped at historical places such as Beloeil and Le Roeulx and visited the old mining city of Arenberg Wallers in northern France, close to Valenciennes. The purpose of the rallies is to bring people from different cultural and social backgrounds together.

We have set up four prize awards with competent partners: we have organized two History Prizes since 1992, the Arenberg-Coimbra Group Prize since 2007 and the College of Europe Arenberg Prize since 2013. This last prize is awarded every second year to someone who has written an essay about federal systems in a historical and comparative perspective to encourage reflection about “people living together” in respect of their differences and with the idea to progressively shape a common destiny based on the principle of subsidiarity. On June 7th, we awarded our College of Europe Arenberg Prize to Loïc Charpentier for his work “Intégration Fédérale. Comparaison entre le processus de l’établissement de la République Fédérale des Etats-Unis d’Indonésie et l’Intégration Européenne”. Please do not hesitate to send us your applications for these Prizes. We are at your disposal to answer any questions you may have.

We give medals to people for their good work in the field of culture.

Tomorrow, on June 10th, we will award our medal of merit to a young musician and to a university professor in the Belgian city of Enghien in connection with the meeting of the Board of the Arenberg Foundation.

We organize conferences: on 17 November, we are organizing a conference on “Cybernetics and Terror” in collaboration with the Royal Academy of Belgium. The European coordinator of the fight against terrorism is going to be our keynote speaker. Next year, on March 21st,

we hope to obtain permission to use the hemicycle of the Belgian Senate in Brussels to organize a major conference about "Free trade, advantages and disadvantages with Donald Trump as President of the United States of America".

Currently we also collaborate with the Museum "M", the City of Leuven, the University of Leuven **to set up a large exhibition** about "Arenberg en Europa" in the autumn of 2018 to promote the European idea and our common destiny.

And we keep **fighting for a public museum** open to the general public.

Unsere 2017 Preisträgerin heisst Aura Nikkilä. Sie kommt aus der Universität von Turku und hat im akademischen Jahr 2011-2012 ein Semester an der Universität von Granada in Andalusien verbracht.

Aura Nikkilä spent five and a half months in Granada. Her motivation for selecting this University was her knowledge of the language as well as her interest in art history. Living in Granada helped her better understand the language, but most of all to experience an international environment in the rich historical old city, which in the past was marked by the presence of different cultures.

Ms Nikkilä took all her courses in Spanish, and especially the course dealing with comics studies which played an important role in her professional growth.

Ms Nikkilä has underlined how the Erasmus exchange period in the multicultural environment of Granada influenced her way of seeing the world, her academic career as well as her understanding of Europe's entangled history.

Aura Nikkilä successfully defended her thesis and was awarded a *Laudatur*, the highest grade for a thesis work. She is currently a PhD student at her home University of Turku.

I heartily congratulate her on this year's Arenberg-Coimbra Group Prize and wish her a successful career based on her Erasmus exchange experience.

I would also like to join the selection committee in congratulating the other candidates, whose testimonials were additional excellent examples of the impact of their mobility experience and their academic qualities.

Este comentario seria a conclusao da minha breve intervençao de este dia. Muchas gracias por su atención y paciencia. Alla prossima volta con molto piacere per una nuova edizione del nostro premio Arenberg-Coimbra Group 2018.

Duc d'Arenberg, Pully, le 9 juin 2017

¹l'Association Française pour la Protection des Archives Privées

²l'Association d'entraide de la Noblesse Française