

Prof. dr. h.c. Otmar Seul

It is a great pleasure for us to attend our summer university at least on the last day. So, after a three-year break due to the pandemic, we are continuing a tradition that enjoys international recognition: Vilnius is the forefather of all German - French summer universities for law, which, inspired by its model, have been running in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe since 2004, and even beyond Europe have been set up with partner institutes from third countries. And my joy is all the greater that the three founding fathers of this historic summer university are present today: once again we have to thank Prof. Helmut Kohl from Frankfurt, Prof. Otmer Seul from Paris and Prof. Tomas Davulis from Vilnius for daring to cooperate with us in Nanterre 18 years ago to embark on an original new path of transnational academic exchange and intercultural relations between our universities. What is special about it is that we involve the students in the exchange and let them become “actors” of our summer university. Our strong focus on comparative law is paired with the concern to convey our value system at the same time as understanding the European integration process understood as a contribution to the development of a European civil society. It is precisely these so-called Western values that are now – rather suddenly, in connection with the Russian aggression against Ukraine (which many did not think possible) – in the democratic states of Europe and the world with great political commitment. This applies above all to Lithuania and the other neighboring states of Ukraine, which, as states that are also under threat, are defending their territorial integrity, national identity and democracy with admirable courage and determination. So, this summer university sets standards that are proving to be meaningful today. Our thanks go to all teachers, doctoral students and students who have enriched them with their contributions. Our special thanks go to those who have made an essential contribution to organization and management over the past 18 years - on behalf of all of them, our thanks go to the Assoc. professor Vigita Vėbraitė, who has been the soul of our Vilnius Summer University for many years.