CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE COMITE INTERNATIONAL DES SCIENCES HISTORIQUES

Reforming Universities

Programme Event

International Committee of Historical Sciences | 26–30 August 2026 | Leipzig, Germany

DATE	LOCATION
29 Aug 2026, 09:00 - 11:30	House 1 T-1004
THEME	CONFERENCE
H - The Institutional Setting	International Committee of Historical Sciences

Overview

This panel focuses on the history of reform of universities in Spain, England and France from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. Professor Manuel Ángel Bermejo Castrillo (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid), investigates the case of Spanish universities which, during the early eighteenth-century Enlightenment-inspired reform of universities, sought to liberate themselves from the Ancient Régime era of ecclesiastical control but increasingly came under state control. Professor Rafael Ramis Barceló (Universitat de les Illes Balears), in his paper, argues that though Spanish universities sought to challenge the increasingly centralized vision of the state their attempts to reject the state's regulations for universities led to them being closed by the Bourbon monarchy. While reform of universities in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Spain was a top down affair, an imposition by the monarchy on a reluctant institution, this was not the case elsewhere, where reform might come not only from the teaching staff but, as in the case of nineteenth-century Oxford, from the students themselves. Dr Heather Ellis (University of Sheffield), explores how the increasingly self-aware student body at the University of Oxford in the first half of the nineteenth century actively participated in shaping the discourse of change by their protests, journalism and strategic appropriation of classical ideals, and by doing so became not only subjects but also agents of reform. This model was not replicated elsewhere and during times of war the university fell prey to the political machinations of the victors. Professor Pierre Verschueren (Université Marie et Louis Pasteur) examines how in France in the 1950s new reforms were underway to create what was in effect a 'third cycle' (postgraduate studies programs), by which the universities might introduce formalized systems for the transmission of skills. This introduction of a 'third cycle' proved to be a fundamental reform, which has had a major impact on the academic profession, its structure and practices.

Participants

Convenor

- Mauro Moretti (Università per Stranieri di Siena)

Panelists

- Manuel Ángel Bermejo Castrillo (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)
- Rafael Ramis Barceló (Universitat de les Illes Balears)
- Heather Ellis (University of Sheffield)
- Pierre Verschueren (Université Marie et Louis Pasteur)

Papers

Between enlightened reformism and liberalism. The birth of the state university in Spain

Manuel Ángel Bermejo Castrillo (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)

Resistance to Reform in Spanish Universities between the 18th and 19th Centuries

Rafael Ramis-Barceló (Universitat de les Illes Balears)

Student Agency and the Politics of Reform at Nineteenth-Century Oxford

Heather Ellis (University of Sheffield)

Is it possible to teach the tricks of the trade? The creation of the "third cycle" in French universities and the emergence of formalised research training (1945-1968)

Pierre Verschueren (Université Marie et Louis Pasteur)

Source: https://cish2026.recentglobe.org/events/reforming-universities/

Generated: 13/08/2026 13:23