

LAW SCHOOLS WITHIN EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES IN THE AGE OF SECULARIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract There are forty law schools at Catholic universities in twelve European countries. The article is a starting point for academic debate on what it means to be a Catholic law school in the 21st century in Europe. Firstly, it encompasses an overview of the link between mediaeval legal studies and modern law schools at Catholic universities, general requirements for Catholic universities and their law schools, faculty and students. Secondly, the analysis of the position of the Catholic law schools on the academic map of Europe is presented on the country basis, which allows to trace the impact of national context and historical background. Thirdly, the research is focused on analysis of mission, curriculum and position in global ranking, which gives an opportunity to identify some common trends: (1) law schools in Catholic universities are mostly modern and postmodern phenomena; (2) they gradually strengthen their teaching and research capacity; (3) law schools are more explicit about their Catholic mission in countries where the Catholic Church has been persecuted; (4) commitment to excellence, service-driven approach, respect for human dignity are common values. Finally, the conclusion was made that enhancing cooperation between Catholic law schools in Europe can become a strong impulse for the advancement of Catholic intellectual tradition in law in general and a point for growth for each law school in particular.

Keywords Catholic legal education, Catholic universities in Europe, European law schools, Catholic Education.

Résumé Il existe quarante facultés de droit dans des universités catholiques réparties dans douze pays européens. L'article est un point de départ pour un débat académique sur ce que signifie être une faculté de droit catholique au 21ème siècle en Europe. Premièrement, il offre un aperçu du lien entre les études juridiques médiévales et les facultés de droit modernes dans les universités catholiques, les exigences générales pour les universités catholiques et leurs facultés de droit, le corps professoral et les étudiants. Deuxièmement, l'analyse de la position des facultés de droit catholiques sur la carte académique européenne est présentée par pays, ce qui permet de retracer l'impact du contexte national et du contexte historique. Troisièmement, la recherche se concentre

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sur l'analyse de la mission, du programme d'études et de la position dans le classement mondial, ce qui permet d'identifier quelques tendances communes: (1) les facultés de droit dans les universités catholiques sont principalement des phénomènes modernes et postmodernes ; (2) elles renforcent progressivement leur capacité d'enseignement et de recherche; (3) les facultés de droit sont plus explicites sur leur mission catholique dans les pays où l'Église catholique a été persécutée; (4) l'engagement pour l'excellence, l'approche axée sur le service, le respect de la dignité humaine sont des valeurs communes. Enfin, la conclusion a été tirée que le renforcement de la coopération entre les facultés de droit catholiques en Europe peut devenir un élan fort pour l'avancement de la tradition intellectuelle catholique dans le droit en général et un point de croissance pour chaque faculté de droit en particulier.

Mots clés Enseignement juridique catholique, universités catholiques en Europe, écoles de droit européennes, enseignement catholique.

I. Introduction

Universities as an educational phenomenon arose in Medieval Europe penetrated by the Christian spirit. First, they were corporations of either students or professors who have seen their mission in search for truth, which includes faith and reason in an attempt to create intellectual harmony. Legal studies have always been part of Mediaeval university projects. The interest in newly-rediscovered Roman law became the reason for the establishment of the first university. For professors and students of Mediaeval universities, to be Catholic was natural, and to be part of *Orbis Christiana* was seen as a privilege. In modern times, however, those old universities often were secularised.

However, the second half of the nineteenth century became a time of revival for Catholic education. Neothomist movement in theology and philosophy, strong characters of popes speaking about social issues like Pius IX and Leo XIII, cardinal Newman and Oxford circle – Catholic Church started a new wave of intellectual endeavours to defend and better explain faith but also to serve the modern world in many social areas. The foundation of Catholic universities by popes and bishops was part of this new movement.

Today, 40 law schools in Europe operate within Catholic universities. In the US, this number is 29¹. Many of the first European law schools grew up in Catholic educational institutions, and the Catholic intellectual tradition shaped their approach and academic excellence. Moreover, the university itself is often referred to as an invention of the Catholic Church, along with international

¹ Breen, J. M., & Strang, L. J. (2011). *The Road Not Taken: Catholic Legal Education at the Middle of the Twentieth Century*. *The American Journal of Legal History*, 51(4), pp. 553–637. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41345435>, p. 553.

law, some legal principles, and much else. As Thomas Woods has said, Western civilisation owes far more to the Catholic Church than most people, Catholics included, often realise².

In 11-12th centuries, when the first universities and their law schools appeared, the Catholic identity there was self-evident. It was a lens through which the law was interpreted as a phenomenon. Nowadays, the world is becoming globalised and more secular. According to the KOF Swiss Research Institute, since 1970th and 2017, the world globalisation index has almost doubled from 38,4 to 62,1³. Globalisation, in its turn, intensifies secularisation⁴. Today, in parts of Europe (mostly the North and the West), secularisation is sufficiently advanced to erode the place of religion in the private and public spheres⁵.

Many thoughts were given on law schools in Catholic universities in light of these tendencies in the US. The American landscape is deeply elaborated in the works of John M. Breen, Lee J. Strang, Gerard V. Bradley, Angela C. Carmella, William M. Treanor, Randy Lee, Nicholas P. Cafardi, Daniel J. Morrissey, and many others. However, it is difficult to find such research on European catholic universities and their law schools as a phenomenon.

Therefore, many questions arise. What does it mean to be a modern law school in a Catholic university in Europe? Is Catholic identity still there? If yes, what does it mean? What are the challenges law schools in Catholic Universities are facing, and what added value can they offer for new generations of lawyers in Europe? Answering these questions requires in-depth field research. In this article, we only begin to explore the surface layer by identifying a cohort of law schools in European Catholic universities and analysing their mission, curriculum, rankings, etc.

II. The very roots: how did Catholic law schools appear, and what did they bring?

It is remarkable that the Catholic Church itself has reflected a lot on the connection between faith and reason. It can be traced back to early thinkers such as Augustine, who in the 4th century wrote about the faith that precedes reason⁶, and Thomas Aquinas, stating that reason is a “species-defining characteristic of human beings”⁷. In more modern surroundings, Pope John Paul II, in his

² Woods, T. E., & Cañizares, A. (2005). *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization*. Regnery History, p. 1.

³ Baysal Kurt, D., Sofuoğlu, E., & Alver, A. (2020). *A Turning Point In Globalization: The Validity Of Slowbalisation For The G-7 Countries*, p. 25.

⁴ Halman, L., & Draulans, V. (2006). *How secular is Europe?*. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 57, p. 268.

⁵ Davie, G. (Ed.), Leustean, L. N. (Ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Europe*, p. 50.

⁶ Cushman, R. (1950) *'Faith and Reason in the Thought of St. Augustine'*, *Church History*. 1950;19(4), pp. 271–294. doi:10.2307/3161161, p. 271.

⁷ Thomas Aquinas: Moral Philosophy (no date) Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available at: <https://iep.utm.edu/thomasaquinas-moral-philosophy> (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

“Fides et Ratio”, wrote that “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth”⁸.

Looking at the root cause, the 11th century was a fruitful time for commerce supported by the growth of the urban population in central and northern Italy. It was also the time of Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis* rediscovery (the 1070s), which attracted people from all around Europe to learn Roman law. However, foreign learners could not enjoy the same rights as locals and were subject to additional taxation and limitations on their rights. This also indicated a growing need to establish a student union to guarantee its members' justice⁹. Combining these factors led to the founding of the first *studium* – the University of Bologna. It was neither created by the Church nor the Emperor but was solely the students' home. From the beginning of studies, the canon law of the Catholic Church was closely linked to Roman law: as the Church institutionally lived by Roman law, it needed law professionals to maintain its legal affairs¹⁰.

In all first Catholic universities, following the Bologna type, from the moment of founding until the 13th century, Roman and canon law were one faculty with medicine and liberal arts. In Bologna type, since the 13th century, the university could be divided into two groups: *universitas legistarum* (law school) and *universitas artistarum et medicorum* (faculty of arts and medicine)¹¹. As of 1338, the distribution of salaried professors in Bologna was the following: 27 in Roman law, 15 in the arts, 14 in medicine, and 12 in canon law, highlighting the dominant role of civil law in the first university established in Europe¹².

In Europe, law was at the core of the first Catholic universities because of the need for educated rulers and lawyers. The law studies usually created a foundation for the university's further activities.

It is no surprise that all of the first European universities (11-14th century) could seem Catholic to some extent, as care of the soul was an essential part of the household regulations. Firstly, the person needed to be Christian to join the university, which meant being Catholic at the time.

⁸ John Paul II (1998) *Fides et Ratio* (14 September 1998) | John Paul II. Available at: www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

⁹ Bazan, B. C. (1998). *The Original Idea Of The University*. In D. L. Jeffrey & D. Manganiello (Eds.), *Rethinking the Future of the University* (pp. 3–28). University of Ottawa Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1cn6t6p.4>, p. 9.

¹⁰ Pihlajamäki, H. (no date). *Christianity and Criminal Law*. In J. Witte, Jr., & R. Domingo (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Law*, Oxford Handbooks, p. 408.

¹¹ Rüegg, Walter. *History of the University in Europe: Volume 1*. Cambridge University Press, 1991, page 109.

¹² Clark, D. S. (1987). The medieval origins of modern legal education: Between church and State. *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 35(4), p. 701. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/840129>.

Secondly, as Rainer Christoph Schwinges writes: “Mass was celebrated daily, a sermon was delivered once a week, and, at least on all feast days, confession was to be made”¹³.

Since the Early Modern era, after the Peace of Westphalia, Europe started getting more secular, which has also led to the secularization of Catholic universities. In 1886, Paris University (Sorbonne), one of the first Catholic universities, became secular and later was divided into 13 public universities with a predominantly secular character¹⁴. The same happened to the La Sapienza University of Rome, which was founded by Pope Boniface VIII in 1303 and today is a secular public university.

Still, Catholic intellectual tradition greatly impacted the moral foundation of the law. For example, the idea of individual responsibility emerged as intertwined with the concept of sin¹⁵. The prohibition on double jeopardy also appeared first in Christianity: “God does not judge twice in the same matter” (Nahum 1:9); the exact origin applies to the presumption of innocence when God gives Adam a chance to respond to the charge concerning the illegal picking of the apple. Following the same pattern, the privilege against self-incrimination was also first stated by Gregory IX: “No person is to be compelled to accuse himself”¹⁶. The concept of “extraordinary crime” (*crimen extraordinarium*), punishment for the most severe crimes, even if not prescribed by law, also comes from the Catholic doctrine view that every sin shall be punished¹⁷. This concept was later crucial during the Nuremberg and Tokyo Military War Crimes Tribunals and later war incorporated into European human rights law¹⁸.

The list could go further, but it is essential that Christian values, as one of the fundamentals of Western civilisation, have deeply influenced law and its interpretation.

III. General framework for legal education in Catholic universities

It is worth noting that the term “law school” has a broad meaning within this research. It does not necessarily mean law faculty or full-cycle education programs but instead means that a law degree is present within the university’s academic offer. The study focuses on law schools that are subdivisions of Catholic universities. There are no particular requirements for legal studies at

¹³ Rüegg, Walter. *History of the University in Europe: Volume 1*. Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 228.

¹⁴ University of Paris (no date) Visit the main page. Available at: https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/University_of_Paris (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

¹⁵ Pihlajamäki, Heikki, ‘*Christianity and Criminal Law*’, in John Witte, Jr., and Rafael Domingo (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity and Law*, Oxford Handbooks, p. 409.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 413.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 410.

¹⁸ See also Article 7 of the European Convention on Human Rights – No punishment without law

Catholic universities, so we will refer to the general notion of what it means to be a Catholic university.

The definition of a Catholic university is provided in the Code of Canon Law, which was introduced by the Vatican in 1983¹⁹. It defines what universities can hold the title of being Catholic, who can teach at such universities, and what is the role of local bishops in the field of Catholic higher education. Canon 808 states that only universities that have received the consent of competent ecclesiastical authority can hold the Catholic title. Sometimes, some parts of universities can be considered Catholic (oftentimes, the theology department), but the university itself may be secular.

In 1990, John Paul II issued an apostolic constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which provides that a Catholic university is (a) a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge and (b) an academic institution in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative²⁰. In 2023, Cardinal José Tolentino Mendonça, a Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, elaborated on the modern understanding of the *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* norms in his speech “What the Church expects from Catholic Universities?”²¹. Here are the key points of the vision of how Catholic universities and all their units should operate:

1. Every university has to make its Catholic identity explicitly known. It can be done either in a mission statement or in some other appropriate public document.
2. Catholic Doctrine has to flow through the teaching, with no exception to the field of knowledge. The universities should focus on passing on the system of values based on the recognition of the dignity of each person, as well as the fundamental rights arising from that recognition.
3. Education should be combined with formation. Universities must train their students to be outstanding professionals ready to shoulder their society’s burdens through constructive dialogue.
4. Catholic Universities must have the courage to speak uncomfortable truths that do not please public opinion but are necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society.

IV. Faculty at the law schools within Catholic universities

Canon 810 §1 prescribes the duty of Catholic universities to ensure that teachers, besides their scientific and pedagogical qualifications, are outstanding in the integrity of doctrine and probity of life and that they are removed from their function when they lack these requirements. This requirement should be applied in conjunction with national regulation on employment and regional

¹⁹ Cafardi, N. P. (no date). *Catholic Law Schools and Ex Corde Ecclesiae, or What Makes a Law School Catholic*, p. 8.

²⁰ John Paul II. (1990). *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Cardinal Newman Society, para. 14.

²¹ Cardinal Mendonça, J. T. (2023). 'What the Church expects from Catholic Universities'. Holy See: Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education.

human rights standards. In Europe, they are posed by the Council of Europe and the European Union.

In the European Union landscape, there is a “religious ethos exemption” under the Equal Treatment Framework Directive. According to Article 4(1), member states may provide a different treatment based on the nature of the particular occupational activities concerned or of the context in which they are carried out.

Article 4(2) of the Directive provides that in the case of occupational activities within churches and other public or private organisations, the ethos of which is based on religion or belief, a difference of treatment based on a person's religion or belief shall not constitute discrimination if that is a (a) genuine, (b) legitimate and (c) justified occupational requirement, having regard to the organisation's ethos. The courts have a pool for defining the “genuine, legitimate and justified occupational requirement”.

For example, the European Court of Justice in the *IR v JQ* case (C-68/1) found that the dismissal of the Catholic doctor from a managerial position because of the violation of the canon family laws was discriminatory. The Court stated that “the notion of marriage advocated by the Catholic Church does not appear to be necessary for the promotion of IR's ethos due to the importance of the occupational activities carried out by JQ, namely the provision of medical advice and care in a hospital setting and the management of the internal medicine department which he headed. Therefore, that does not appear to be a genuine requirement of that occupational activity”. At the same time, it is interesting to see what position the court would take in the case of a university professor; is the religious component so important in their occupation that it would exempt them from the provision of Article 4 of the Directive? The question is open and awaits its own judgement within the European Union judiciary.

In the Council of Europe framework, the imposition of religious requirements is viewed from the perspective of the right to respect for private life (Article 8) or the right to freedom of conscience and religion (Article 9) under the European Convention on Human Rights.

The European Court of Human Rights in the *Fernández Martínez v. Spain* case ruled in favour of contract non-prolongation with the school Christianity teacher, whose opinions contradicted the Catholic Doctrine. The story concerns a secularised Catholic priest who stands for optional celibacy. From 1991 onwards, he taught Catholic religion and ethics in a State secondary school under an annual contract, which the Ministry of Education renewed based on the binding opinion of the diocese bishop. In 1996, Mr. Martínez took part in the “Movement for Optional Celibacy” of priests, where many other issues were raised, namely abortion, divorce, sexuality, and birth control. His participation in the movement appeared in the local newspaper, and therefore, his teaching

contract was not renewed. The diocese bishop reasoned it was a breach of duty to teach “without creating a risk of scandal”. The domestic court and the Constitutional Court of Spain stuck to the principle of neutrality and found the actions of the Church to be legal.

When reviewing the case, ECtHR²² states that “the applicant had been aware of its rules and should therefore have expected that the publicity he had given to his membership in the movement for optional celibacy for priests would not be without consequence for his contract”²³. In the end, the Court found no violation of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which guarantees respect for private and family life, home, and correspondence. Thus, the ECtHR has decided that the dismissal of Mr. Martínez was justified as he could reasonably expect the circumstances posed by his job.

One more case is the *Siebenhaar v. Germany*, delivered by the ECtHR. In 1997, a Catholic began working as a teacher in a daycare run by a Protestant parish. A year later, it became known that the applicant also joined the Universal Church (Brotherhood of Humanity) and started offering courses on its behalf. After the examination, the Protestant parish pronounced the dismissal of the applicant. The applicant tried to contest the decision within the domestic courts, but they dismissed the claim because the applicant “had breached her obligations of loyalty to the Protestant Church”²⁴.

German national labour regulations on church employees in the area of the Evangelical Regional Church prescribe that the employee must be loyal to the Protestant Church²⁵. It excludes membership in and collaboration with organizations whose principles, objectives, or practical activities contradict the Protestant Church's mission. It also grants the Church a right to terminate the employment relationship if the employee has seriously breached the duties of an ecclesial collaborator by his personal lifestyle or his professional behaviour and has thus seriously endangered the credibility of ecclesiastical service or if he withdraws from the Church.

The applicant complained, based on Article 9 of ECHR, that it violated her right to freedom of religion, but the ECtHR found no violation. The reasoning of the Court is that the national law provisions are reasonable, and the applicant “must have been aware when signing her employment contract”²⁶.

²² ECtHR stands for European Court of Human Rights.

²³ European Court of Human Rights. *Fernández Martínez v. Spain*. 12 June 2014, para. 146.

²⁴ European Court of Human Rights. *Siebenhaar v. Germany*. 20 June 2011, para. 14.

²⁵ *Ibid*, para. 20.

²⁶ *Ibid*, para. 45.

On a national level, in the Netherlands, there have been disputes between the bishop conference and the Radboud University in terms of supervisory board appointments. In 2014, the board nominated a replacement, but the bishops rejected the candidate because she was not married in the Church. The board made another nomination, but the bishops rejected her as well because she was not a practising Catholic²⁷. In 2019, after the rejection of all four nominations, the supervisory board of the university filed a case in the Enterprise Chamber, the highest court for corporate disputes in the Netherlands. The court ruled that the board can temporarily appoint its members without the bishops' approval.

Spain is also interesting in terms of hiring requirements. For example, Deusto University states to align itself with the Code of Conduct of the Society of Jesus in Spain²⁸, while the CEU network, Catholic University of Ávila, Villanueva University, and the University of Navarra mention the Catholic affiliation and expect candidates to “align with the needs, identity, and mission, avoiding discrimination for reasons of any kind”.

The topic cannot be simplified to the represented case law. Still, it serves rather as a ground to state that there are multiple approaches that the courts take when it comes to employment at Catholic institutions, including law schools. Both the European Union and Council of Europe models acknowledge the right of religious-affiliated institutions to have additional requirements for the employees or applicants. In the European Union framework, it must have (a) genuine, (b) legitimate, and (c) justified occupational requirements with regard to the organization's ethos. The European Court of Human Rights emphasises the concept of loyalty and the expectations when joining the organization rather than the objective characteristics of job performance.

V. Students of the Catholic law schools

There is no specific requirement from the Catholic Church for the students regarding their religious beliefs. Every student is free to practice their own religion but with considerable respect towards the Catholic affiliation of the university and its law school. In this term, the approach is rather liberal compared to other religious universities of Christian origin. For example, Brigham Young University, sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon Church), requires its students to maintain an Ecclesiastical Endorsement in its Honour Code. This endorsement is an affidavit stating that they are active participants in the LDS Church. This affidavit is essential to get admitted to university and must be renewed annually. Additionally, the

²⁷ PillarCatholic (2023) *'Going Dutch? Bishops, university split over Catholic identity'*. Available at: <https://www.pillar-catholic.com/p/going-dutch-bishops-university-split-over-catholic-identity> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023)

²⁸ “Work at Deusto.” *Deusto*, www.deusto.es/en/home/we-are-deusto/team/work-at-deusto. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

Code of Honour requires students and staff to attend Church services, while also totally prohibiting same-sex relations²⁹.

VI. Law School in Europe: the common patterns

The list of Catholic law schools in Europe was composed using different sources: FUCE, Dicastery for Culture and Education in the Vatican, information provided by the local bishops, bishops' conferences, personal meetings with law school officials, and online research³⁰. The countries are listed in geographical sequence, starting from Belgium as the home of the highest-ranking law school at a Catholic university in the world.

Belgium:

As Martin Conway has written, “Belgium has been a heartland of Catholic Europe during the twentieth century”. Such a role of the Catholic Church was possible because of the dominant position occupied in Belgian politics by the Catholic Party in the twentieth century³¹. When Belgium became independent in 1830, there was an alliance against the Dutch between two major groups (religious Catholics on the one side and completely secular liberals on the other side). When the two parties agreed to rule together, it led to the country being polarised either with secular or Catholic organizations. As a result, Catholic identity entered the common ground by creating Catholic banks, hospitals, shops, etc. In 2018, only 58% of the population identified as Catholics³². Still, Belgium is home to 3 Catholic law schools, which are the leaders in the world rankings.

The first two universities, KU Leuven and UCLouvain, are the successors of the Leuven University, founded in 1425. In the twentieth century, the original Leuven University was divided based on spoken language. KU Leuven remains Dutch-speaking, while UCLouvain speaks French. However, both still belong to the group of Catholic universities. The University of Namur was founded in 1831 as a Jesuit college and today is one of the biggest education providers in Wallonia.

KU Leuven is considered a leader of Catholic legal education in Europe, holding the 16th position in world law school ranking by the Times Higher Education³³. He is followed by UCLouvain at 101-

²⁹ Church Educational System Honor Code, policy.byu.edu/view/church-educational-system-honor-code. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

³⁰ It is important to note that as the information about Catholic law schools in Europe had to be found from the ground with a limited presence on sight, the list of Catholic law schools may be incomplete. However, thanks to the various sources, it is expected to be close to the objective (if not the objective) in the academic year of 2023-2024.

³¹ Vicent, M. (1996) *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965*. Clarendon Press, p. 187.

³² “Belgium - United States Department of State.” *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, 7 Dec. 2023, www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/belgium/.

³³ “World University Rankings 2024 by Subject: Law.” *Times Higher Education (THE)*, 31 Oct. 2023, www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/subject-ranking/law.

125 position and later by the University of Namur, which is not represented in the law school ranking but is ranked 601-800th on a university level.

In its mission statement, KU Leuven says: “As the world's oldest Catholic university, KU Leuven places special emphasis on ethical considerations in the pursuit of knowledge. The result is a university committed to an important and involved role in the broader progress of our society”, highlighting its service for the common good³⁴. UCLouvain also mentions its shared Christian origin with KU Leuven³⁵.

In terms of law program, UCLouvain aims for its graduates to “never depart from an ethical and moral vision of law and justice, leading them to relentlessly question the meaning and the relevance of the rules that it will create or apply, while also fight in the name of the common good”³⁶. At the same time, all three universities point to the excellence component for their graduates. KU Leuven also has a general university-wide rule that every student has 15 hours of religious studies and service-learning programs (KU Leuven Engage), where law students can practice their skills to help those who need professional legal aid, mainly prisoners.

As for the specific courses, KU Leuven has a Philosophy of Law³⁷, UCLouvain teaches Ethics Applied to Law, Philosophy and Philosophical Anthropology; Societies, cultures, religions: biblical readings/ethical questions/fundamental human questions³⁸, while the University of Namur offers Religious Sciences, Philosophy of Law, Foundations of Ethics, and Questions of Ethics Applied to Digital³⁹. In most cases, the high-ranking positions at the universities and their units are also subject to the bishop’s approval, but it has rather a formal role in the process.

The Netherlands

The Hague is often referred to as the legal capital of the world. It is home to the International Criminal Court, International Court of Justice, Eurojust, and Europol. There are 9 law schools in the Netherlands, two of them belong to Catholic universities. The percentage of Catholics has decreased steadily in the last 20 years⁴⁰. Currently, only 20% of the population in The Netherlands

³⁴ “About KU Leuven.” *About KU Leuven - KU Leuven*, www.kuleuven.be/english/about-kuleuven. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

³⁵ “Missions, Vision, Valeurs.” *UCLouvain*, uclouvain.be/fr/decouvrir/missions-vision-valeurs.html. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

³⁶ “Master of Laws (LL.M) (Leuven) (60 ECTS) Master of Laws.” *Master of Laws (LL.M) (Leuven) - KU Leuven*, onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be/opleidingen/e/SC_53238752.htm#bl=all. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

³⁷ Philosophy of law is a standard class for law students, and it does not necessarily contain the Catholic doctrine in it, but it is still included in the list as it may somehow correspond to the Catholic lens behind the law today.

³⁸ “Bachelier En Droit - Programme Détaillé Par Matière.” *UCLouvain*, uclouvain.be/prog-2023-droi1ba-programme. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

³⁹ “Bachelier En Droit.” *UNamur*, directory.unamur.be/teaching/programmes/100B. Accessed 26 Dec. 2023.

⁴⁰ “Katholieken.” *KASKI*, www.ru.nl/kaski/onderzoek/cijfers-rooms/virtuele_map/katholieken. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

identifies as Catholics⁴¹. However, there are still two Catholic universities that train future lawyers.

The first Catholic university was Tilburg University, founded in 1927, and it started teaching law in 1963. Today, Tilburg is recognized as the 18th best law school in the world by Times Higher Education⁴². The university aims to develop and share knowledge to benefit people and society. It is dedicated to sustainable, broad prosperity for all today and future generations⁴³. The law faculty shares the mission without further contextualization in the legal field. There are courses on the Philosophy of Law and Business Ethics that can be related to the Catholic identity of the university⁴⁴. The research topics are focused on Socio-Technical Change, Connecting Organizations in a Sustainable Society, Global Governance, etc⁴⁵.

The second is Radboud University Nijmegen, which was established in 1923 to protect the Catholics who were underrepresented in society, especially in law and medicine. However, it seems that with time, when the underrepresentation issue was resolved, the Catholic mission got blurred. The Dutch Bishops' Conference decided to withdraw the “Catholic” designation from the Catholic University Foundation (SKU)⁴⁶, the supervisory authority of Radboud University, in response to a decision to open a Transgender Care Center at the university's medical centre⁴⁷. The local bishop conference has appealed to the *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, claiming that Radboud University does not have a missionary function and that they have little influence over the Radboud University, thus not considering it Catholic. Later, the Vatican said that the University still can be considered Catholic and that the decision concerns only the supervisory board⁴⁸. As of August 2023, Radboud University was still on the list of Catholic universities⁴⁹.

⁴¹ CBS. “What Are the Major Religions?” CBS, 17 Jan. 2022, longreads.cbs.nl/the-netherlands-in-numbers-2021/what-are-the-major-religions/.

⁴² “Tilburg University.” *Times Higher Education (THE)*, 25 Sept. 2023, www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/tilburg-university.

⁴³ “About Tilburg University.” *Tilburg University*, www.tilburguniversity.edu/about. Accessed 26 Dec. 2023.

⁴⁴ Tessahofland. “Radboud University No Longer Catholic.” *Erasmus Magazine*, 22 Oct. 2020, www.erasmusmagazine.nl/en/2020/10/22/radboud-university-no-longer-catholic/.

⁴⁵ “Research Tilburg Law School.” *Tilburg University*, www.tilburguniversity.edu/research/law. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁴⁶ “Geschiedenis van de Radboud Universiteit.” *Radboud Universiteit*, www.ru.nl/over-ons/geschiedenis-en-identiteit/geschiedenis-van-de-radboud-universiteit. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁴⁷ PillarCatholic (2023) Going Dutch? bishops, university split over Catholic identity. Available at: <https://www.pillaratholic.com/p/going-dutch-bishops-university-split-over-catholic-identity> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ According to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Groningen-Leeuwarden in response to the email request.

France

While Catholicism had been the official state religion of France until the French Revolution, the population today is mainly secular. A little bit more than half (51%) of the population identifies as having no religion, while only 29% identify as Catholics⁵⁰. Today, France holds 6 Catholic law schools. Due to national legislation, Catholic universities cooperate with public universities to issue a state-recognized law diploma in law.

The six universities are the Catholic University of the West (1373), the Catholic University of Lyon, the Catholic Institute of Paris, the Catholic University of Lille (all founded in 1875), the Catholic University of Toulouse (1877), the Catholic University of Rennes (1989), and the Catholic Institute of Higher Studies (1990). None of these universities are represented in the global law school or university ranking from the Times Higher Education in 2024.

The universities oftentimes precisely state their Catholic affiliation. For example, the Catholic University of Lyon “affirms its intention to work on societal topics in the tradition, continually updated, of the Church’s social thinking”, highlighting service to society and Catholic Social Doctrine⁵¹, Catholic Institute of Paris is “inspired by a long Christian and Humanistic tradition”⁵², and the Catholic University of Toulouse is “at the service of society and the Church”⁵³. Numerous values, such as solidarity, service, and excellence, also follow this.

Law program descriptions share the mission without further contextualization in terms of law, except for an indirect mention from the Catholic University of Lyon, which aims “to train quality jurists but also critical thinkers, who will be active in the development of our society”⁵⁴. As for the courses, there are Christianity and the Origins of the United States course at the Catholic University of Toulouse and Theology as an elective for law students in the Catholic Institute of Higher Studies⁵⁵.

⁵⁰ “Immigrants and Descendants of Immigrants 2023 Edition.” *Insee*, www.insee.fr/en/statistiques/7342918?sommaire=7344042. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁵¹ “The Lyon Catholic University Charter.” *UCLy*, 15 Nov. 2023, www.ucl.fr/en/ucl/our-institution/overview/facts-figures/charter-ucl/.

⁵² Paris, Institut Catholique de. “Discover ICP.” *ICP Paris - Institut Catholique de Paris*, en.icp.fr/about-icp/discover-icp. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁵³ “Missions et Charte - ICT- Institut Catholique de Toulouse.” *ICT*, 18 Feb. 2021, www.ict-toulouse.fr/nous-connaître/charte-2/.

⁵⁴ “Faculty of Law.” *UCLy*, 3 Feb. 2022, www.ucl.fr/en/ucl/our-poles/law-faculty/.

⁵⁵ “Licence Droit.” *ICES (Institut Catholique de Vendée)*, ices.fr/formation/licence-droit/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

Spain

By having 14 Catholic law schools, Spain is a leader by their number. The country has deep ties with the Holy See. In 1979, after the death of Franco and becoming a constitutional monarchy, Spain signed four full-scale concordats with the Vatican concerning legal, educational, military, and financial matters⁵⁶. According to Article 2 of the Education Concordat, Catholic religious education is a mandatory course in state schools, and the teachers are to be approved by the local bishop. 53% of the population identify as Catholics.

The fourteen Catholic Law Schools are the Deusto University (1886), Comillas Pontifical University (1890), María Cristina Royal University Center (1892), CEU San Pablo University, Francisco de Vitoria University (both founded in 1933), Pontifical University of Salamanca (1940), University of Navarra (1952), CEU Abat Oliba University (1973), Villanueva University (1977), Ramon Llull University (1990), Catholic University of Murcia, Catholic University of Ávila (both founded in 1996), CEU Cardenal Herrera University (1999), The Catholic University of Valencia (2003), and San Jorge University (2005). Among them, two are ranked in the global law school ranking by the Times Higher Education: University of Navarra (126-150) and Deusto University (251-300)⁵⁷. What is also remarkable is that Spain is the only country where, despite the secularization tendency, there was a wave of new Catholic universities in the 1990s and early 2000s. Moreover, many of the universities had law since their founding.

In manifestation of Catholic affiliation, the universities use various formulations, namely protection and development of human dignity from a Christian conception of man” (Pontifical University of Salamanca)⁵⁸, service for society through a specifically university-based contribution based on a Christian vision of reality (Deusto University)⁵⁹, commitment to the common good, security, and justice, to defend the fundamental rights of people to promote the principle of equality (CEU Cardenal Herrera University)⁶⁰, for the fullness of Christian life in work, family, and ordinary occupations (University of Navarra)⁶¹, Christian inspiration, where each person is a central

⁵⁶ “The Four 1979 Concordats: Concordat Watch - Spain.” *Www.Concordatwatch.Eu*, www.concordatwatch.eu/the-four-1979-concordats--t34571. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁵⁷ “World University Rankings 2024 by Subject: Law.” *Times Higher Education (THE)*, 31 Oct. 2023, www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/subject-ranking/law.

⁵⁸ “Declaración de Identidad.” *UPSA*, www.upsa.es/la-universidad/declaracion-de-identidad. Accessed 27 Dec. 2023.

⁵⁹ “Mission and Identity.” *Deusto*, www.deusto.es/en/home/we-are-deusto/the-university/mission-identity. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁶⁰ Digital, Servicio de Comunicación. “Estudiar Grado En Derecho En Valencia / Elche.” *Universidad CEU Cardenal Herrera*, www.uchceu.es/estudios/grado/derecho/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁶¹ *About the University. University of Navarra*, en.unav.edu/about-the-university. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

character and unique (Villanueva University)⁶², spirit of solidarity and service for a fairer society (Ramon Llull University)⁶³.

What is interesting is that Spanish Catholic universities put human rights as a university mission, thus defining the importance of the law schools within the Catholic university (mentioned by the Catholic University of Ávila (UCAV) and University of Navarra⁶⁴). Another interesting component that became visible among the statements is that there is an aim to put the person at the centre (mentioned by Francisco de Vitoria University⁶⁵ and Villanueva University⁶⁶), which is also a Christian concept.

As for the law schools, the statements in most of the cases deepen the Catholic mission in the legal context, either directly or indirectly: “science that tells us what we can and cannot do to build a fairer, more balanced society” (Deusto University)⁶⁷, men and women with values, sensitive to the common good and committed to respect for human dignity and with service to your community (María Cristina Royal University Center)⁶⁸, “Do Good, Do Better” (Ramon Llull University)⁶⁹, professionals who would have not only the academic knowledge but also the values to help others in society (Francisco de Vitoria University)⁷⁰, etc. Among the courses that mark law schools within Catholic universities in Spain are Christian Vision of Man and Society, Christian Ethics and Professional Deontology (Pontifical University of Salamanca)⁷¹, Christianity and Social Ethics (Comillas Pontifical University)⁷², Law and Religion in a Democratic State, The Person and the Family in the Social Doctrine of the Church; Philosophy of Law (CEU San Pablo University)⁷³, Ethics, Theodicy: Essence and Attributes of God, Theodicy: existence of God (University of

⁶² “Mission, Vision and Values.” *Universidad Villanueva*, 9 June 2021, www.villanueva.edu/en/mission-vision-and-values/.

⁶³ “The Institution.” *Universitat Ramon Llull*, 12 Jan. 2023, www.url.edu/en/url/institution.

⁶⁴ *About the University. University of Navarra*, en.unav.edu/about-the-university. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁶⁵ “Sobre La UFV.” *UFV*, www.ufv.es/la-universidad/sobre-ufv/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁶⁶ “Mission, Vision and Values.” *Universidad Villanueva*, 9 June 2021, www.villanueva.edu/en/mission-vision-and-values/.

⁶⁷ “Bachelor’s Degree in Law.” *Deusto*, www.deusto.es/en/home/study/courses/bachelors-degree/ba-in-law. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁶⁸ “Identidad y Método.” *Real Centro Universitario María Cristina*, 11 May 2022, rcumariacristina.es/identidad-y-metodo/.

⁶⁹ “Who We Are.” *Esade*, www.esade.edu/en/about-us/who-we-are. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁷⁰ “Estudiar Grado Derecho Madrid. Carrera Universidad Privada.” *UFV*, www.ufv.es/estudiar-grado-derecho-madrid/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁷¹ “Grado Online En Derecho - 50% En La Matriculación.” *UPSA*, www.upsa.es/oferta-academica/grado-en-derecho-online. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁷² “Bachelor’s Degree in Law (E-1).” *COMILLAS*, www.comillas.edu/en/degrees/bachelors-degree-in-law-e-1/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁷³ *Bachelor’s Degree in Law in Madrid | CEU San Pablo*, www.uspceu.com/en/academic-programmes/degree/law. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

Navarra)⁷⁴, Natural Law and Human Rights, Fundamental Ethics, and Social doctrine of the church (Catholic University of Murcia)⁷⁵, Introduction to Christianity and Christian Social Thought (Catholic University of Ávila)⁷⁶, Freedom of Religion (San Jorge University)⁷⁷, Mind, Science and Religion, Moral Social Deontology, Science, and Reason and Faith (Catholic University of Valencia)⁷⁸.

Portugal

Portugal has historically been very close to the Catholic Church, and is home to the World Youth Day, where young people from all around the world unite to get closer to Faith. 81% of its population identifies as Catholics. The country also has a Catholic university that teaches future law professionals.⁷⁹

The Catholic University of Portugal was established in 1967 by the Roman Congregation of Catholic Education and started teaching law in 1978⁸⁰. Today, the university “thoroughly, constructively and critically helps strengthen and develop the human race and its cultural heritage”. It is characterized by a Christian vision of mankind that is deeply rooted in the principles of the Gospel and truth-seeking⁸¹.

The law school aims to continue the students' intellectual, ethical, and cultural training through its Unit for the Integral Development of the Person. Attention is also given to the personal approach; each individual student is at the centre of the learning process⁸². Additionally, the “Law School is known for its demands and for expecting its students to reach levels of excellence”⁸³. For this purpose, the law school offers specific courses, namely Christian Worldview and Bioethics with Biolaw⁸⁴.

Italy

⁷⁴ *Study Program. Degree in Law. University of Navarra*, en.unav.edu/web/degree-in-law/study-program. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁷⁵ “Grado En Derecho.” *COMILLAS*, www.comillas.edu/grados/grado-en-derecho-e-1/#planestudios. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁷⁶ Roman, Carlos. “Grado En Derecho (Online).” *Ucavila*, 15 Dec. 2022, www.ucavila.es/formacion/grados/derecho-online/.

⁷⁷ *Grado En Derecho - USJ*, www.usj.es/sites/default/files/content/ficha_derecho_2021_2022.pdf. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁷⁸ “Universidad Católica de Valencia.” *Grado En Derecho*, www.ucv.es/oferta-academica/facultades/facultad-de-ciencias-juridicas-economicas-y-sociales/grado-en-derecho. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁷⁹ Pier. “Portuguese Culture - Religion.” *Cultural Atlas*, culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/portuguese-culture/portuguese-culture-religion. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁸⁰ “História.” *UCP*, www.ucp.pt/pt-pt/catolicainstitucional/historia. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² “Faculdade de Direito - Escola Do Porto.” *FD*, fd.porto.ucp.pt/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁸³ “Fatores Diferenciadores.” *FD*, 5 July 2023, fd.porto.ucp.pt/pt-pt/licenciaturas/licenciatura-em-direito/fatores-diferenciadores.

⁸⁴ “Plano de Estudos.” *FD*, 23 July 2020, fd.porto.ucp.pt/pt-pt/licenciaturas/licenciatura-em-direito/plano-de-estudos.

As a country that nurtured the first universities in profoundly Christian medieval Europe, Italy is a secular state today. Despite that, 80% of the population identifies as Catholics, and the country has a longstanding tradition of Catholicism. The turning point was when Italy signed the 1984 Lateran Concordat, which amended the basics of interaction between the Italian government and the Holy See. Interestingly, the Concordat in Article 10 also mentioned that Catholic universities still shall submit themselves to the Catholic Church⁸⁵. Today, four such universities educate future lawyers.

These are Pontifical Lateran University (founded in 1773), the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart (1921), the Libera Università Maria SS. Assunta (1939), and the European University of Rome (2005). The Catholic University of the Sacred Heart holds the 201-250 position in the world law school ranking by Times Higher Education⁸⁶.

The universities have various Catholic-affiliated missions. In the case of Pontifical Lateran University, it is to ensure the dimension of Catholicity, which simultaneously guarantees students' cultural, human, and pastoral growth⁸⁷, while for the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, the mission is addressing and resolving in the light of the Christian message and moral principles the problems of society and culture. In addition to that, the latter puts a strong focus on every student being at the centre, saying that everything they give to each student becomes a resource for society, where professionalism is followed by humanity and trust⁸⁸. The idea of students in the centre is also mentioned by the European University of Rome (UER)⁸⁹.

In terms of law school missions, they do not elaborate on the university-level mission in the legal context. The Catholic University of the Sacred Heart expects its students to address society's problems in which they will operate with a critical spirit, capacity for dialogue, relational sensitivity, and, above all, a sense of justice⁹⁰. That is further implemented through specific courses: Relationships between Church and Civil Society, History of Canon Law and Legal Culture (Pontifical Lateran University)⁹¹, Philosophy of Law and Theology (Catholic University of the

⁸⁵ "Modifications to the Lateran Concordat (1984): Text: Concordat Watch - Italy." *Www.Concordatwatch.Eu*, www.concordatwatch.eu/modifications-to-the-lateran-concordat-1984-text--t39221. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁸⁶ "World University Rankings 2024 by Subject: Law." *Times Higher Education (THE)*, 31 Oct. 2023, www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/subject-ranking/law.

⁸⁷ "Pontificia Università Lateranense." *Pontificia Universit Lateranense*, www.pul.va/en/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁸⁸ "Università Cattolica." *Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore*, www.unicatt.eu/universita-cattolica. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁸⁹ *The European University of Rome (2022) Università Europea di Roma*. Available at: https://www.universitaeuropeadiroma.it/en/university/#tab_mission (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

⁹⁰ "Giurisprudenza: Università Cattolica." *Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore*, www.unicatt.it/facolta/giurisprudenza.html. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁹¹ *G. Ballarani – Diritto Di Famiglia (2012) Programma per l'A.A. 2023-2024*, Facoltà di Diritto civile, www.pul.va/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/CIVILE_PROGRAMMI_11.23.pdf. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

Sacred Heart)⁹², Philosophy of Law, Dogmatic Theology, Vatican Law Workshop, Moral Theology, and The Social Doctrine of the Church (Libera Università Maria SS. Assunta)⁹³, and Law, Person, Society; Legal Ethics, and Christian law and Civilization (European University of Rome)⁹⁴.

In terms of faculty, the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart was directly mentioned in the Concordat of 1984 referred to above. Article 10 states that teaching staff appointments at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart and allied institutions are subject to approval by the competent ecclesiastical authority according to a candidate's religious profile⁹⁵.

Slovenia

The Habsburg Empire impacted the Slovenian religious landscape and resulted in the fact that it was predominantly Catholic before WW2. In 1943, with the emergence of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, the Catholic Church was under strict state control, and many of its representatives were persecuted⁹⁶. With the start of communist rule, about 250 priests were imprisoned, and 200 others fled to the West, many intellectuals went into exile⁹⁷. Today, Slovenia enjoys a strong separation between the State and the Church. Article 72 of the Act on the Organization and Functioning of Education of 1996 stipulates that state-funded public and private schools are prohibited from offering religious or confessional education to teach religion. They are also prohibited from allowing a religious community to influence the content, teaching materials, and qualifications of the teaching staff⁹⁸. Still, almost 60 per cent of Slovenians identify as Catholics, and the country has a foundation for the Catholic University⁹⁹.

Today, there is a Faculty of Law and Business Studies (FLBS), which aims to set a basis for a future Catholic university¹⁰⁰. Opened in 2010, it identifies as an “autonomous community of scientists, teachers and students that respects personal freedom and dignity of each individual and is

⁹² “Giurisprudenza : Curriculum: Indirizzo Amministrativo: Università Cattolica: Università Cattolica.” *Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore*, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, www.unicatt.it/corsi/triennale/giurisprudenza-milano/piani-di-studio-2022-23/curriculum-indirizzo-amministrativo.html. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁹³ “Giurisprudenza - Roma.” *Università Di Roma LUMSA*, lumsa.it/it/corsi/giurisprudenza-roma. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁹⁴ “Corso Di Laurea in Giurisprudenza - Giurisprudenza - Uer: Università Europea Di Roma.” *Giurisprudenza - UER | Università Europea Di Roma*, www.universitaeuropadiroma.it/giurisprudenza/corso/laurea-in-giurisprudenza-a-ciclo-unico/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁹⁵ “Modifications to the Lateran Concordat (1984): Text: Concordat Watch - Italy.” *www.Concordatwatch.Eu*, www.concordatwatch.eu/modifications-to-the-lateran-concordat-1984-text--t39221. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

⁹⁶ Stan, Lavinia, and Lucian Turcescu. *Church, State, and Democracy in Expanding Europe*. Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 168.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 168.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 174.

⁹⁹ R., Written by Bluenn. “How Many (and What) Religions Can We Find in Slovenia?: Slovenia Tour, 4 Sept. 2020, sloveniatour.si/how-many-and-what-religions-can-we-find-in-slovenia/.

¹⁰⁰ Inštitut, Katoliški. “International.” *Katoliški Inštitut*, www.katoliski-institut.si/en/international. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

committed to contributing for a true science and expertise from the fields of humanities and social sciences and a deeper culture and a more complete realization of human-being”, highlighting respect to the dignity and society-oriented mission¹⁰¹. FLBS believes that its education should promote excellence and stand on the values of the Catholic tradition¹⁰².

Currently, the Faculty offers a master’s degree program in law, which highlights ethical decision-making and excellent knowledge. This approach is reflected through a set of specific courses, namely Philosophy and Religion, State Ecclesiastical Law, and Canon Law¹⁰³.

Hungary

Among Hungary's almost 10 million population, 51% identify as Catholics, while 23% have no religious affiliation at all¹⁰⁴. Unlike the global tendency, the Hungarian PM has aimed to make public education more Christian. This also means becoming more Catholic due to the percentage of the Catholic population and support of the initiative from Pope Francis¹⁰⁵. Even though the movement mostly touched school education, it has shaped the overall agenda in the country.

In Hungary, one Catholic university teaches future lawyers – Pázmány Péter Catholic University. It has a long history, rooted back to the 17th century, and since 1993, it has held official state accreditation.

The university states that its mission is fundamentally determined by its Catholic affiliation. The University envisions it as both the transmission of traditional knowledge and values necessary for the development of the entire human personality and the formation of the information society and its adaptation to human fulfilment¹⁰⁶.

As for the law school, it offers various law programs and focuses on the legal culture of its students. The general law program includes courses: The World of the Bible, Basic Ethics, Christian Morality and Legal Ethics, The Foundations of the Catholic Faith, Bioethics, Legal Ethical Problems, and Natural Law as mandatory courses for a 5-year-long program¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰¹ “Mission, Vision, and Strategy.” *Katoliški Institut*, www.katoliski-institut.si/en/about-faculty/mission-vision-and-strategy. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ “Courses.” *Katoliški Institut*, www.katoliski-institut.si/en/study/masters-studies/law/courses. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹⁰⁴ “Hungary - United States Department of State.” U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, 7 Dec. 2023, www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/hungary/.

¹⁰⁵ France 24. “Crosses and Catechism: Hungary’s Push to ‘christianise’ Education.” *France 24*, FRANCE 24, 9 Sept. 2021, www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210909-crosses-and-catechism-hungary-s-push-to-christianise-education.

¹⁰⁶ “Kik Vagyunk?” *PPKE.HU*, ppke.hu/kik-vagyunk. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹⁰⁷ At the moment, it is not available online, but it used to be available at <https://ppke.hu/jolj-jog-k-165?page=15>.

Among the electives, some courses contribute to the Catholic identity, such as A History of Political Thought from the Beginning to St. Thomas Aquinas, Holy See in International Law and Crisis Management, The Jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights related to freedom of religion - Some discrimination cases and their possible justification¹⁰⁸.

Poland

One of the defining elements in the identity of Poland today is the religion, especially the Roman Catholic Church. According to the Pew Research Center, 87% of Poles identified as Catholics in 2018, marking the highest percentage in Europe¹⁰⁹. It influences cultural life and oftentimes becomes central in the political debate¹¹⁰.

In 1993, in front of the new Constitution, Poland and the Vatican signed the Concordat. Article 15 states that the Republic of Poland shall guarantee the Catholic Church the right to establish and freely manage higher educational establishments, including universities and research centres¹¹¹. Today, two Catholic universities educate future law professionals – The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw (UKSW).

The UKSW is a state university established by the Polish parliament, which is contrary to the common standard where Catholic universities are private. Both KUL and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University manifest their Catholic mission: to serve God and the Homeland - *Deo et Patriae* (KUL)¹¹² and to search for God in all dimensions of modern society (UKSW)¹¹³.

The law schools elaborate on the mission in the legal context. In the case of KUL, it is to teach future lawyers to be distinctive through their professionalism, openness to people, service to the

¹⁰⁸ At the moment, it is not available online, but it used to be available at <https://ppke.hu/jolj-jog-sz-165?page=19>.

¹⁰⁹ Starr, Kelsey Jo. “5 Facts about Catholics in Europe.” Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 19 Dec. 2018, www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/12/19/5-facts-about-catholics-in-europe/.

¹¹⁰ Mach, Zdzisław. “The Roman Catholic Church in Poland and the Dynamics of Social Identity in Polish Society.” *The Religious Roots of Contemporary European Identity*, edited by Lucia Faltin and Melanie Jane Wright, Continuum International Publishing Group, London, 2011, pp. 117–133.

¹¹¹ “Polish Concordat (1993): Text and Criticism: Concordat Watch - Poland.” www.concordatwatch.eu, www.concordatwatch.eu/showtopic.php?org_id=931&kb_header_id=1331. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹¹² “Historia Kul.” KUL Website, www.kul.pl/historia,149.html. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹¹³ “Strategia Rozwoju, Statut.” Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, 21 Dec. 2023, uksw.edu.pl/universytet/o-nas/misja-statut-strategia/.

truth, and common good¹¹⁴, while in UKSW, it is to apply knowledge in professional work while emphasizing the ethical principles behind it¹¹⁵.

UKSW also has a course on Legal Ethics¹¹⁶, and KUL provides Jurisprudence, Bible: essence and role in culture, Catholic Social Teaching and the social thought of John Paul II, Religious freedom in the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and Bioethical law¹¹⁷.

Ukraine

The population of Ukraine is mainly Orthodox Christian (72%), while the country also has a tradition of Catholicism, with its Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic Church (8%)¹¹⁸. The latter experienced severe persecution in the XX century. As the Soviet regime tried to eliminate religion, Ukrainian Catholic Church leaders were systematically repressed by Soviet rule. When the regime failed to break the leaders, it started using religion for its own purposes. For example, the official Soviet historiography even goes as far as to state that the church "liquidated itself" in 1946 and that its followers "voluntarily joined" the Russian Orthodox Church¹¹⁹. This story is in the very heart of Ukraine's only Catholic university – Ukrainian Catholic University.

The UCU is a successor of Lviv Theological Academy, which was founded in 1929. After years of occupation, emigration, and religious persecution, the Ukrainian Catholic University was re-established in 2002 in Lviv¹²⁰. In 2017, the University launched its first master's degree program in law called "Human Rights". In 2020, the first bachelor's degree students stepped into the class, marking the opportunity to get a full cycle of legal education in a Catholic university.

It identifies as an "open academic community living the Eastern Christian tradition and forming leaders to serve with professional excellence in Ukraine and internationally – for the glory of God, the common good, and the dignity of the human person", highlighting the service and excellence component with respect to human dignity and common good¹²¹.

¹¹⁴ "Wydział Prawa, Prawa Kanonicznego I Administracji." KUL, www.kul.pl/o-wydziale,11054.html. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹¹⁵ "Strona Główna." Wydział Prawa i Administracji UKSW, wpia.uksw.edu.pl/kandydaci/kierunki-studiow/prawo/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹¹⁶ "Strona Główna." Wydział Prawa i Administracji UKSW, wpia.uksw.edu.pl/studenci/prawo-stacjonarne/plany-zajec/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹¹⁷ Plan Studiów, e.kul.pl/qlprogram.html?ra=1&etap=0&kid=48&op=2. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹¹⁸ Press Releases and Reports - Dynamics of Religious Self-Identification of the Population of Ukraine: Results of a Telephone Survey Conducted on July 6-20, 2022, kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1129. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹¹⁹ Soviet Repression of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, diasporiana.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/books/21576/file.pdf. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹²⁰ Передумови – Усу, ucu.edu.ua/en/about/istoriya-ta-fakty/peredumovy/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹²¹ About UCU - UCU - UKY, ucu.edu.ua/en/about/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

The UCU Law School follows the university-wide mission to “form an influential community of like-minded people ready to uphold the same values and standards in the legal profession – in particular, service to society, moral responsibility, ethics, respect for human dignity, and human rights”¹²². That is implemented through specific courses that future law professionals have: Professional Ethics of a Lawyer, Philosophy of Law, Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, Law and Religion¹²³. In addition to that, bachelor’s degree students during the first and second year of studies have the university-wide program “Core Curriculum”, where they choose electives from different blocks, namely “God and I”, “World and I”, and “People and I”¹²⁴.

Georgia

As Ketevan Gurchiani has said, Georgia is a country where Orthodox Christianity is perceived as the main marker of national identity¹²⁵. Today, 83% of the population are Orthodox Christians, 10% are Muslims, and the remaining 7% represent Catholics, Lutherans, Judaists, Jews, and other religious groups who also live in Georgia¹²⁶.

Despite the minor number of Catholics in the country, there is a Catholic university that trains future lawyers – Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University. It was founded by a Catholic bishop in 2001 with only one faculty of Theology and has grown to 5 faculties today¹²⁷. The university-wide mission statement touches on the concept of human dignity as an inseparable principle of the Catholic vision¹²⁸. At the same time, the law faculty focuses on preparing qualified, competent, legally highly cultured, and professionally ethical lawyers and public officials¹²⁹.

¹²² “Law School.” Школа Права УКУ – Сайт Школи Права Українського Католицького Університету, law.ucu.edu.ua/en/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹²³ “Bachelor’s Program in Law.” *Bachelor’s Degree – Школа Права УКУ*, law.ucu.edu.ua/en/bachelor/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Jäggle, Martin, and Ketevan Gurchiani. “Religious Education at Schools in Georgia.” *Religious Education at Schools in Europe*, edited by Martin Rothgangel et al., V&R Unipress, Vienna University Press, Göttingen, 2020, pp. 95–121.

126. Ibid, page 97.

¹²⁶ Jäggle, Martin, and Ketevan Gurchiani. “Religious Education at Schools in Georgia.” *Religious Education at Schools in Europe*, edited by Martin Rothgangel et al., V&R Unipress, Vienna University Press, Göttingen, 2020, pp. 95–121.

126. Ibid, page 97.

¹²⁷ Sabauni. “University - History.” Sabauni, www.sabauni.edu.ge/en/content/chven-shesakheb/universiteti/istoria. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹²⁸ Sabauni. “University - Mission and Vision.” Sabauni, www.sabauni.edu.ge/en/content/chven-shesakheb/universiteti/misia-da-khedva. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹²⁹ Sabauni. “Faculty of Law.” Sabauni, www.sabauni.edu.ge/en/content/fakultetebi/samartlis-fakulteti. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

The law faculty held the Religion and Human Rights Conference in 2019¹³⁰. Now, it offers three courses that can somehow reflect its Catholic affiliation: Religion and Society, Introduction to Jurisprudence, and Philosophy of Law¹³¹.

United Kingdom

Throughout history, the Catholic Church has had many worships in the United Kingdom. Simply put, some Popes did not approve of the legitimacy of the English monarchy. In response, Catholics were discriminated against. However, despite past experiences and the common secularization tendency, Catholicism is still present in the United Kingdom. At least 8% of the population identify as Catholics, and Catholicism becomes the dominating religious affiliation in London¹³². In this landscape, 2 Catholic universities teach future lawyers in the UK: St. Mary's University Twickenham London, and Leeds Trinity University.

Both of the universities brightly show their Catholic mission: develop the whole person and empower their community to have a positive impact on the world through Catholic intellectual tradition¹³³ or transform lives through education, which would be informed by faith¹³⁴.

VII. To sum up

Despite the fact that each of the above universities operates in a different way, in a specific national context, and has a unique historical background, if one puts these pieces together, the overall picture of Catholic legal education in Europe could be seen. It will be a rather abstract picture with blurred images, but some trends can be identified: (1) law schools in Catholic universities are mostly modern and postmodern phenomena; (2) they gradually strengthens their teaching and research capacity; (3) law schools are more explicit about their Catholic mission in countries where the Catholic Church has been persecuted; (4) commitment to excellence, service-driven approach, respect for human dignity are common values.

1. Today's law schools in Catholic universities are modern and postmodern phenomena, a reaction to the mainstream trend toward secularization

¹³⁰ Sabauni. "რეგულაციები - ინვესტიციები - აბაუნო." Sabauni, www.sabauni.edu.ge/ka/content/fakultetebi/samartlis-fakulteti/proektebi/konferentsiebi. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹³¹ Sul Khan-Saba Orbelian University - Sabauni.Edu.Ge, www.sabauni.edu.ge/img/file/1700552768--LAW%20BBA.pdf. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹³² "London More Religious than Rest of Britain, Report Finds." The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 23 June 2020, www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/24/london-more-religious-than-rest-britain-report-finds.

¹³³ "History and Heritage: St Mary's University." St Marys University, www.stmarys.ac.uk/about/history-and-heritage/our-campus.aspx. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

¹³⁴ "Catholic Mission." Leeds Trinity University, www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/about/catholic-mission/. Accessed 24 Dec. 2023.

Despite their affiliation with Catholic universities, the law schools are not direct successors of the medieval tradition, where law studies were one of the cornerstones of the first universities. The only exception to this rule is the oldest law school in a Catholic university – Leuven University, founded in 1425 (KU Leuven and UCLouvain today). Other law schools from the list were founded in the 14th (1), 19th (5), 20th (26), and 21st (6) centuries, while almost half of the list (18) opened between 1989 and 2017. The launch of a law school was not the initial step but rather was added in the coming years, marking the certain development stage of the university as an institution. As of today, 30 Catholic universities in Europe (out of 70) do not award degrees in law. For example, none of the five German Catholic universities has a law school. Only three out twelve universities with a Pontifical status encompass law degree programs. There might be different reasons behind such a decision of university management, but it is clear that universities keep some distance from legal and political life.

In modern Catholic universities, the opening of legal studies is, on the one hand, a response to certain social challenges and, on the other hand, a way of asserting and strengthening the university's impact in the society. The Ukrainian Catholic University School of Law was established after the Revolution of Dignity (2014) in response to the societal demand for liberty, justice, and respect for human dignity, for which a re-start of the legal system on a different value basis was needed. The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin and Pazmany Peter Catholic University opened law programs after the fall of the communist regime in Eastern and Central Europe, where there was also a demand for a fundamental transformation of the state. In Western Europe, the emergence of law schools in Catholic universities seems to be a response to the advancing tendency of secularization in the societies. Training of lawyers and conducting legal research in Catholic universities promote Catholic intellectual tradition by bringing Christian values and mindset to the public agenda on important social-political issues.

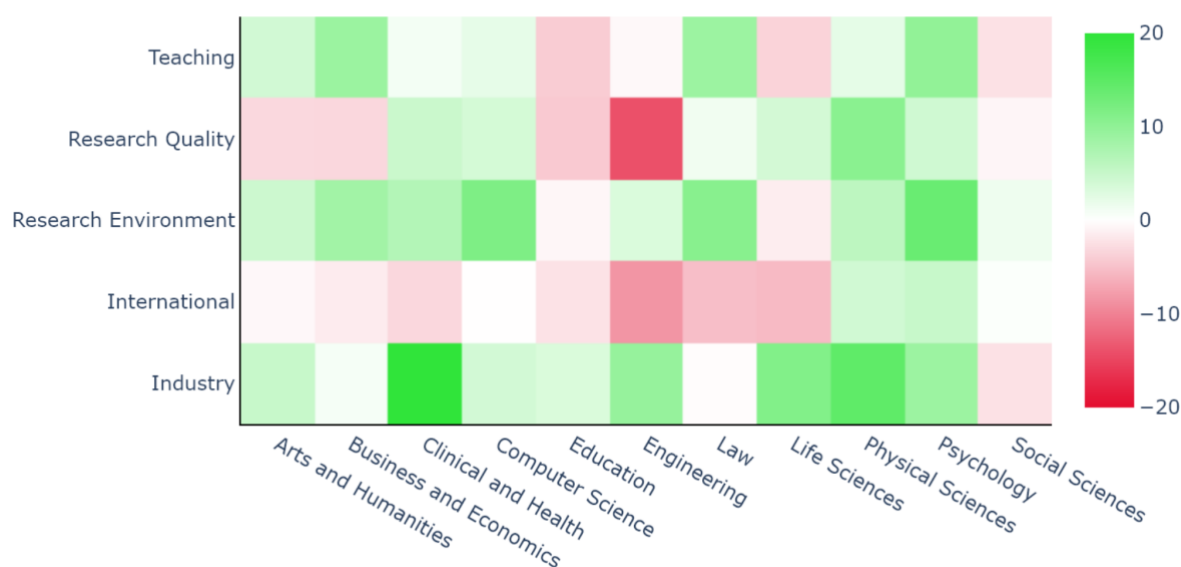
2. Modern law schools in Catholic universities are gradually strengthening their teaching and research capacity

In recent decades, there has not only been an increase in the number of law schools within Catholic universities but also a quality progress. The law schools of the top European Catholic universities offer a high-class teaching, research and research environment in comparison with the European 500 highest ranking universities (under Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2024). At the same time, they score less in the international component, which includes a proportion of international students, international staff, and international collaboration, despite the fact that Catholic universities, in general, are doing quite well with internationalisation.

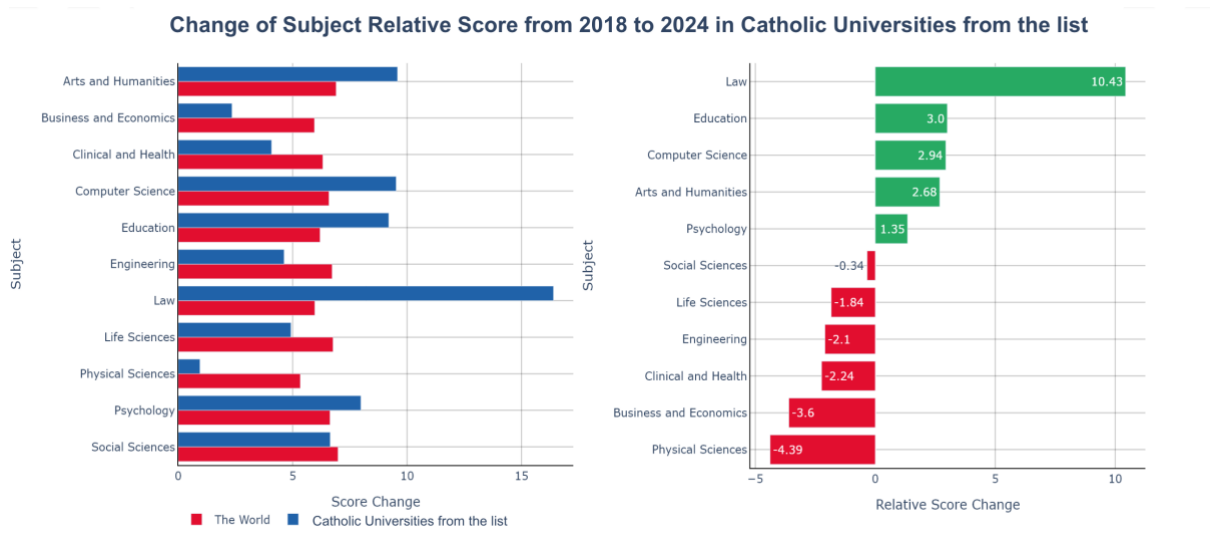
Thirteen out of forty Catholic universities, which provide degrees in law, are represented in the Times Higher Education World University Ranking, namely KU Leuven (45th), Radboud University Nijmegen (140th), UCLouvain (168th), Tilburg University (201-250th), Catholic

University of the Sacred Heart (301-350th), University of Navarra (301-350th), University of Namur (601-800th), Ramon Llull University (601-800th), Catholic University of Portugal (801-100th), University of Deusto (800-1000th), UCAM (1201-1500th), The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (1201-1500th), and Comillas Pontifical University (1501+).

**Catholic Universities from the list compared to Europe TOP 500
WUR 2024: Comparison Heatmap**



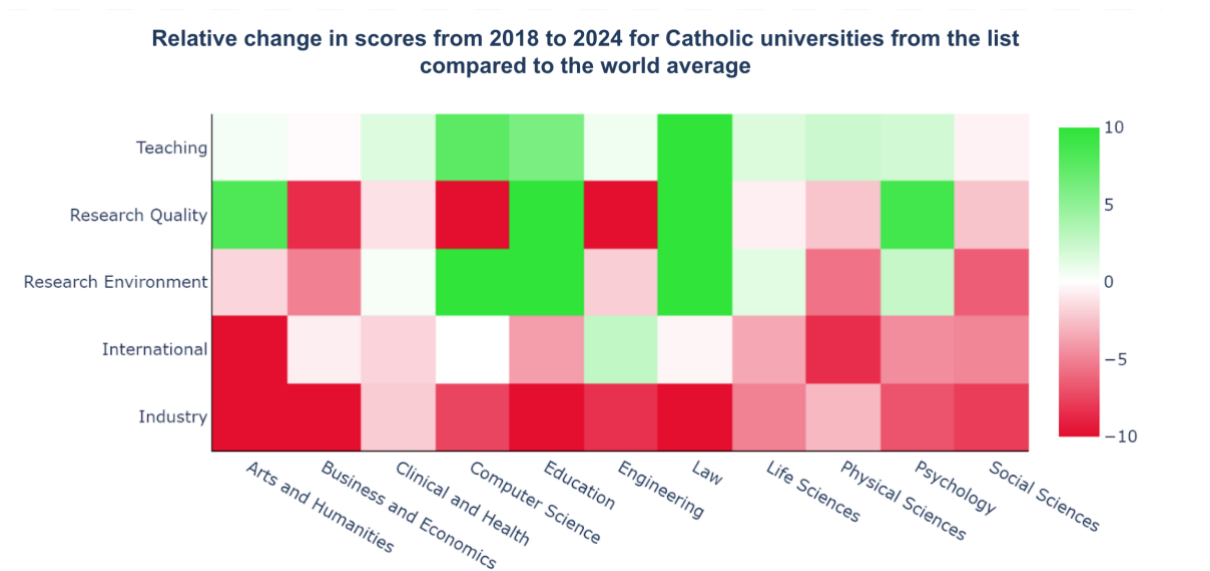
It is interesting to trace the performance of listed Catholic law schools in comparison to the average indicators of the Europe Top 500 in dynamic. Since 2018, the overall score of the law schools in Catholic universities in Europe has grown the most thanks to the progress shown below. If we compare recent developments of different subjects within enlisted Catholic universities and average indicators of the Top 500, we can notice two things: 1) enlisted Catholic universities in the field of law show almost three times higher gross in comparison to the average in Top 500 (see picture 1); 2) within enlisted Catholic universities law is the most developing subject (see picture 2).



Picture 1

Picture 2

If we decompose this growth into different elements, it is apparent that the scores increased primarily due to Teaching, Research Quality, and Research Environment indicators. At the same time, the Industry indicator has decreased, which is the case for all of the subjects in Catholic universities, with a slightly better situation in Clinical and Health and Physical Sciences. From 2018 to 2024, legal studies have improved the most among the disciplines taught at Catholic universities. It gained mostly in Teaching, Research Quality, and Research Environment but lost some points in Industry income, while the International has stayed the same.



Picture 3

Despite the relative nature of the university rankings, the analysis suggests that law schools of Catholic universities in Europe demonstrate high quality in teaching and research, which is a clear sign of a potential for further development. It is noteworthy that the most successful law schools

globally are those of Catholic universities, where the Christian academic tradition has not been interrupted since their founding in the 15th century. Newly established law schools are paving their way to high positions in global rankings.

3. Law schools at Catholic universities are more explicit about their Catholic mission in countries where the Catholic Church has been persecuted

Catholic presence is more vibrant in the countries that were deprived of their Catholic tradition over the course of history. For example, in Poland, where the Catholic Church was under persecution during the Soviet regime. After the fall of communism, the state founded Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw and the KUL launched the faculty of law, canon law and administration. That is also seen in the example of Ukraine, where the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was prohibited, and now the Ukrainian Catholic University strives to return human dignity, solidarity and other Christian values in training for a young generation of lawyers. That can also be seen in the example of Hungary, which faced religious limitations during the communist rule and now holds its Catholic mission strong. The same applies to Slovenia, where the Catholic Church has suffered a lot in the XX century and now tries to restore its presence through the foundation for the future Catholic university.

The bigger idea here is that countries that could not enjoy their Catholic tradition freely in the past today see it as their core value. Christian identity, reflected in the mission statements, have some space in the curriculum and research projects. On the other hand, law schools in countries where the Catholic faith was not under threat or pressure prefer to mention their connection with the Catholic in general terms (service for the society, common good, human dignity, etc.).

The percentage of Catholics also plays an important role. The societies with a high percentage of the Catholic population usually have stronger cooperation with the Vatican (concordats, treaties, etc.), which, in its turn, enhances the presence of the Catholic worldview in legal studies. That can be seen in Spain, Portugal and Italy.

4. Commitment to excellence, service-driven approach, and respect for human dignity are the core common values of the law schools in Catholic universities in Europe

Commitment to excellence

Christianity by itself requires the person to do good, avoid sins, and strive to help others. However, it goes even beyond that. Catholic priest Jared Zimmerer states that Jesus also admonished us not to allow mediocrity in our lives, to set our feet higher and to strive for the maximum possible¹³⁵.

¹³⁵ Zimmerer, Jared. "The Catholicity of Excellence." Word on Fire, 6 Jan. 2022, www.wordonfire.org/articles/fellows/the-catholicity-of-excellence/.

Law schools in Catholic universities are focused on building such attitudes in law students' mindset. The University of Namur Faculty of Law places its training in a "perspective of supporting the student towards excellence"¹³⁶, the University of Comillas Pontifical University refers to the excellence tradition in its mission¹³⁷, and the University of Villanueva's methodology is based on the idea of academic excellence¹³⁸. The University of Navarra created the Excellence program to give its bachelor's students the necessary skills to be leaders in their community with an ethical approach. In a program, coordinated by the Philosophy department, the students are exploring the social environment through a humanistic and ethical prism¹³⁹. The Catholic Church also named excellence among its vision for the Catholic universities. Cardinal José Tolentino Mendonça emphasised that the Church expects the graduates of Catholic universities to be outstanding in learning, ready to shoulder society's heavier burdens, and to witness the faith to the world". It combines both being excellent as a university in its activity and nurturing excellence among its students so that they can be prominent leaders in their communities.

Service-driven approach

The mission of the law schools in Catholic universities is not only to qualify students for personal success but also to put the best values in its students so they would strive to bring change to society and contribute to the common good. And that is one of the biggest privileges that Catholic universities and their law schools have – the willingness to make this world a better place through its community.

That is often done through service learning projects. The initiative is getting institutionalised, and the best projects are awarded the Uniservitate Award¹⁴⁰. For example, KU Leuven has a university-wide program, which is especially popular among law students – The Lived Experience of Imprisonment¹⁴¹. It is not limited only to law students, but half of the class taking it are law students and it is organized by the Institute for Criminology. The students reflect on what is considered good punishment and to what extent prison is a good punishment. As a result, the

¹³⁶ *Des théories du droit à la pratique juridique* (no date) *Université de Namur*. Available at: <https://www.unamur.be/droit> (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

¹³⁷ *Tradición de Excelencia - Universidad Comillas* (no date) *COMILLAS*. Available at: <https://www.comillas.edu/tradicion-de-excelencia/> (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

¹³⁸ *Get to know us* (2023) *Universidad Villanueva*. Available at: <https://www.villanueva.edu/en/get-to-know-us/> (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

¹³⁹ (No date) *Excellence programme. School of Humanities and Social Sciences*. ... Available at: <https://en.unav.edu/web/programa-excellence> (Accessed: 24 December 2023).

¹⁴⁰ What is uniservitate? (2023) *Uniservitate*. Available at: <https://www.uniservitate.org/what-is-uniservitate/> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

¹⁴¹ The lived experience of imprisonment (2023) *Uniservitate*. Available at: https://www.uniservitate.org/featured_item/the-lived-experience-of-imprisonment/ (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

students prepare texts, videos, articles, or presentations to present ideas on how to improve the conditions of the detention centres.

Another widely spread practice among law schools in Catholic universities is legal clinics. The service through legal clinics includes free legal aid to those in need, participating in street law activities (general civic and human rights education), preparing materials for the street law, etc. The Legal Clinic of UCU Law School could be a good example. It was started in 2017 to provide pro bono legal aid to the veterans of the Russian-Ukrainian war and to provide training for young people (mainly school graduates) on legal aspects of financial literacy. After the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, when one of the UCU campuses turned into a shelter for people escaping the atrocities of war, legal aid to internally displaced persons became a main focus. Afterwards, students joined the efforts of Ukrainian non-government organisations in documenting war crimes committed on the occupied territory. Also, the Legal Clinic started a collaboration with the national rehabilitation centre for wounded civilians and military service members to serve those who suffered the most from the war.

Human Dignity

Catholic universities and their law schools directly refer to the concept of human dignity in their mission statements. For example, the Catholic University of Valencia identifies as a “community that contributes to the protection and development of human dignity”¹⁴². Francisco de Vitoria University states that its academic mission is based on the truth, in which they recognise the intrinsic dignity of each human being, open to and embracing the common good¹⁴³. The Pontifical University of Salamanca aims to contribute to the protection and development of human dignity from a Christian conception of man¹⁴⁴. In other cases, human dignity is envisioned through other values, such as integral human development (Catholic University of Lille)¹⁴⁵¹⁴⁵, each person is the central character (Villanueva University)¹⁴⁶, human rights (University of Navarra)¹⁴⁷, and other values that derive from the concept of human dignity. Human dignity is the cornerstone for building an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect within the university community. As the foundation for

¹⁴² *Universidad Católica de Valencia* (no date) UCV. Available at: <https://www.ucv.es/quienes-somos/identidad-catolica> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

¹⁴³ *About UFV* (no date b) UFV. Available at: <https://www.ufv.es/welcome-to-ufv-madrid/about-ufv/> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

¹⁴⁴ *Declaración de Identidad* (no date) UPSA. Available at: <https://www.upsa.es/la-universidad/declaracion-de-identidad> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

¹⁴⁵ *Valeurs* (no date) *Accueil*. Available at: <https://www.univ-catholille.fr/valeurs> (Accessed: 27 March 2024).

¹⁴⁶ *Mission, vision and values* (2021) *Universidad Villanueva*. Available at: <https://www.villanueva.edu/en/mission-vision-and-values/> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

¹⁴⁷ (No date a) *About the university. University of Navarra*. Available at: <https://en.unav.edu/about-the-university> (Accessed: 24 Dec. 2023).

key legal concepts regarding individuals and their rights, human dignity can serve as a way to bring the Christian narrative to legal studies and research.

VIII. Conclusions

The first step of research on law schools in European Catholic universities gives the opportunity to map out the further directions and to put forward the hypotheses that can be either confirmed or refuted at the further stages.

1. The modern law schools in Catholic universities are a contemporary phenomenon that has no direct link to the legal studies in the medieval universities of Catholic Europe. The law schools no longer act as the cornerstones of the modern Catholic universities. They arise due to the profound state transformations, the change in the Catholic Church's role in society, and the related challenges. Since law schools are always about the university's impact in society and shaping the state agenda, the absence of legal studies in Catholic universities may indicate some distancing from the legal and political affairs of the country.

2. Despite the shared titles and declared values, the law schools in Catholic universities hardly constitute an integral phenomenon with shared identity in the academic landscape of Europe. Each law school itself defines what it means to be Catholic, factoring in a national context, university position, historical background, etc.

3. Traditionally, law schools are deeply rooted in national legal tradition and legal framework. However, a small number of Catholic law schools, law students, and law professors within one country does not give rise to a vibrant intellectual environment based on shared values. Therefore, enhancing cooperation and building a network between Catholic law schools has a big potential. Such cooperation can become a strong impulse for the advancement of Catholic intellectual tradition in law in general and a point for growth for each law school in particular. The joint research projects, academic events, and students and faculty mobility can be not only the fulfilment of the call to cooperate (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*)¹⁴⁸ and practical implementation of the solidarity concept (*Fratelli Tutti*)¹⁴⁹, but also an effective method to increase the international indicator, which is a weak link in the chain even for the most successful law schools in European Catholic universities.

The European unity stands on the common spaces: shared market, supranational human rights protection mechanism, shared belief in democracy and the rule of law. Christian values and

¹⁴⁸ John Paul II. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Cardinal Newman Society, 1990.

¹⁴⁹ Francis, P. (2020) *Fratelli Tutti*. S.I.: Catholic Truth Society.

Catholic intellectual tradition are promising foundations for building another common space, which has a lot to offer in the turbulent 21st century. So, why not?