

# EUROPEAN SUMMER SCHOOL

REBIRTH OR IRRELEVANCE: EUROPE'S URGENT CHOICE

3rd Edition - Ghent Brussels



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INSTITUTE FOR THE  
GLOBAL COMMON GOOD

**This summer hits different!**

*Are you ready for an academic experience that goes **far beyond the classroom?***

*Join the next generation of european leaders.*

***5 days. 1 historic abbey. your seat at the table***

Welcome to the Summer School Ghent 2026, a global, immersive program that has already brought together young leaders from 41 different countries, and now celebrates its third edition in one of Europe's most inspiring cities.

This year, you will learn and live in a historic monastery in Ghent (Belgium), transformed into a modern academic space where international students, expert faculty, and world-renowned speakers come together. **Imagine attending seminars led by politicians, worldwide leaders, scholars, and global policy experts**, all in a setting built for reflection, dialogue, and discovery. **The experience includes a visit to the European Parliament and discussions with Members.**

This edition will take place from 29 June to 3 July 2026, spanning five days, and is directed at young professionals from across Europe. It is a formative journey designed to support participants in understanding the major transformations shaping Europe, combining rigorous study, dialogue, community life, and informal exchanges with experts and participants. Over five days, participants will advance in reading and interpreting Europe's present, while reflecting on their own vocation, the meaning of political action, and the responsibility of engaged citizens in society.

The program includes high-level lectures, sessions with international experts, academics, and public officials, and community spaces that favor practical learning, through which participants address key aspects such as identity, geopolitics, democracy, demography, and the future of Europe, within a humanist and values-driven framework.



# A program designed for young professionals engaged with Europe's future

The European Summer School targets **young professionals** who are committed to engaging with the political, social, and economic challenges facing Europe. Special consideration will be given to candidates who demonstrate **motivation, a solid academic or professional background, and a willingness to engage seriously with Europe's current challenges.**

Participants must be available to attend the full program in Belgium.

## The program welcomes:

- **Early-career professionals** working in public affairs, policy, law, economics, civil society, or any field connected to European governance.
- **Academics and researchers** interested in interdisciplinary reflection on European identity and renewal.
- **Engaged citizens** who seek to move from observing crisis to shaping a shared future.

## What do we offer?



### Engage with top-level international experts

Participate in high-level lectures and dialogues with academics, public officials, and European leaders at the historic Old Abbey of Drogenen, Belgium.



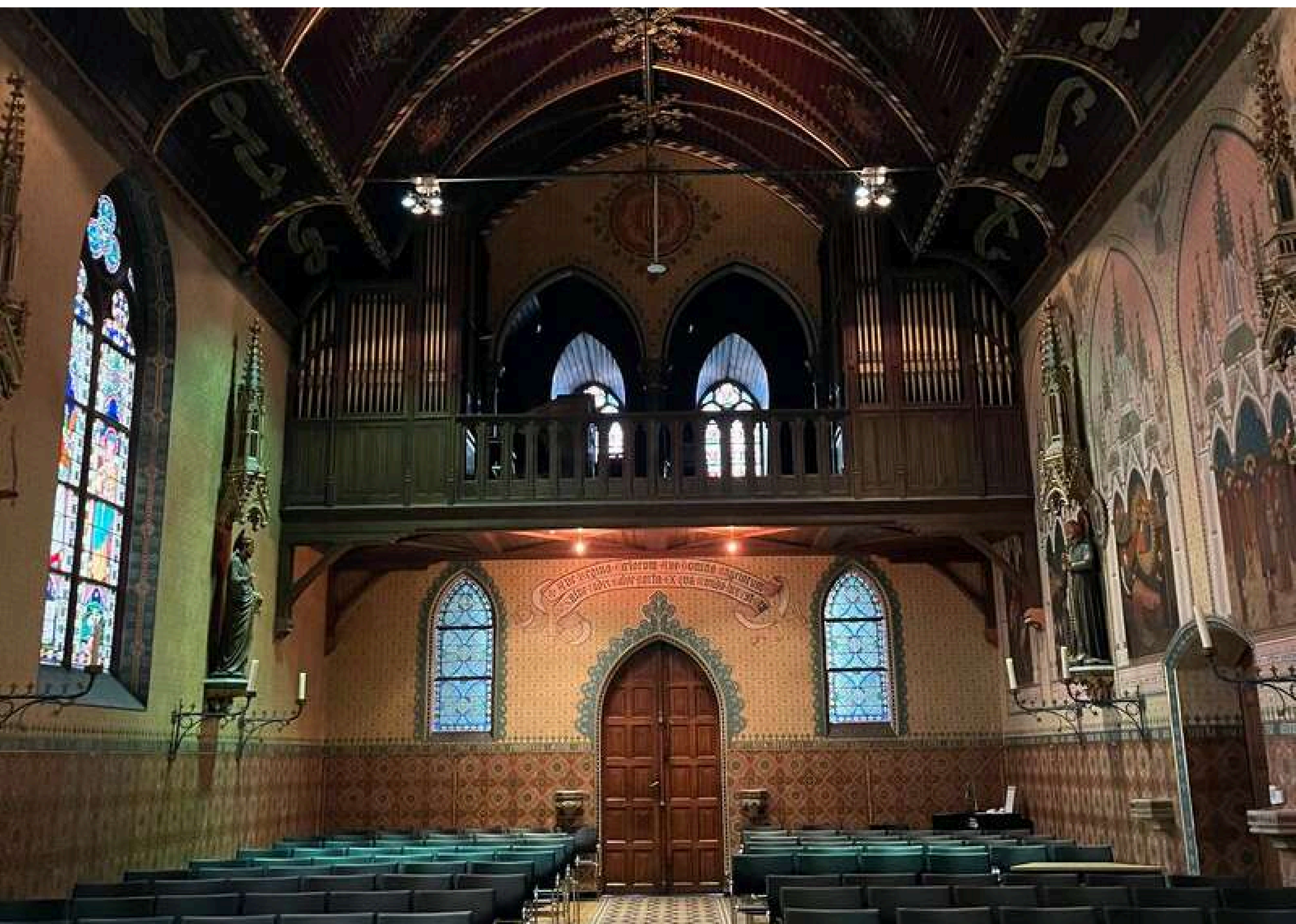
### Build meaningful networks and explore new avenues for leadership

Connect with international peers and engage in community life, informal exchanges and shared reflection. Become an agent of change, not a mere spectator of crisis.



### Access opportunities that can shape your trajectory

Grants and scholarships are available for outstanding candidates selected by the academic committee.



# Location & Accommodation

## Oude Abdij Drongen

Our 3rd edition will take place in Oude Abdij Drongen, a historic monastery surrounded by peaceful gardens along the River Leie. An ideal setting for reflection, rest, and renewed focus. Located in Drongen, just outside Ghent, the abbey is easy to reach from Brussels by direct train. From Bruxelles-Central to Drongen (Tronchiennes), the journey takes about 35–45 minutes!

### How to Get There from Brussels

Take a direct SNCB train from Bruxelles-Central or Brussel-Midi/Zuid to Drongen.

- Average travel time: 36–45 minutes.
- Trains run frequently throughout the day.
- Upon arrival, the abbey is a short walk from the station.

### Accommodation

**5 days and 4 nights** of full board in comfortable double rooms, overlooking the gardens or inner courtyard. Full board covers breakfast, lunch, dinner, and coffee breaks.

**Full address:** Drongenplein 27, 9031 Gent, Belgium.

# Admission & Fees

### Application requirements:

- Completed application form (link below)
- Updated CV
- Motivational letter
- Interview with the admissions team (if applicable)

### Programme Fees:

**Full Programme Fee: €1,200**

Includes full board and accommodation. Places allocated in order of registration and payment.

### Early Bird: €1,000

For participants who enrol and complete payment before 15 May. Full board and accommodation.

First-come, first-served.

### Extended Grant: €750

Awarded to a very limited number of outstanding candidates selected by the academic committee. Covers

full board, accommodation, and all programme activities.

### Full Support Grant: €500

Full board, accommodation, and all programme activities. Reserved for an exceptionally selected group chosen directly by the Director.

### Non-accommodation option: €550

Access to all lectures, sessions, lunch and coffee breaks. No overnight stay included.



# Timetable

## Monday, 29 June, 2026 What is Europe?

09:00 - 11:00 Welcome & Check-in  
11:00 - 12:30 Opening Lecture: Exploring Europe's Roots - **Montserrat Herrero**  
12:30 - 13:15 Opening Mass: Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul  
13:30 - 15:00 Inaugural Lunch  
15:30 - 17:30 Session & Debate: Christian Roots - **Jaume Aurell**  
17:30 - 19:00 Session: Catholic Social Teaching, Hope, and Integral Formation.  
A Call to Action for Change - **José Luis Bazán**  
19:00 - 20:00 Free time  
20:00 - 21:00 Dinner  
21:30 - 22:00 Fire talks (optional)

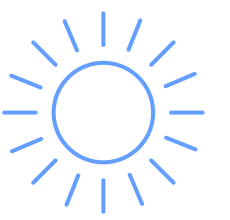
## Tuesday, 30 June, 2026 Who are Europeans Today?

08:00 - 08:30 Holy Mass (optional)  
08:30 - 09:00 Breakfast  
09:30 - 11:00 Roundtable & Debate: Who will Europeans be tomorrow? Family, Demography and the Future of Europe - **Peter Hefele, Matteo Rizzoli, José Luis Bazán**  
11:00 - 11:30 Coffee Break  
11:30 - 13:30 Session & Debate: Demographic Paradoxes and Challenges. Demography, Immigration, and Identity - **Peter Hefele**  
13:30 - 15:00 Lunch  
15:30 - 17:30 Session & Debate: Responses, Hopes, and Prudency. Identity and Integration - **Mathias Nebel**  
17:30 - 20:00 Free time  
20:00 - 21:00 Dinner  
21:30 - 22:00 Fire talks (optional)

## Wednesday, 1 July, 2026 Can Europe still Act?

08:00 - 08:30 Holy Mass (optional)  
08:30 - 09:00 Breakfast  
09:30 **Visit to the European Parliament and Discussion with Members:** Pluralism, Democracy and Common Good  
13:00 Lunch (off-site)  
16:00 - 17:30 Session: How can Democracy be Sustained and Protected in a World marked by Pluralism, Illiberalism, and the Return of Imperial Logics? - **Herman Van Rompuy**  
17:30 - 18:00 Break  
18:00 - 20:00 Session & Debate: Europe as a Protector of Democracy Today? **Rocco Buttiglione**  
20:00 - 21:00 Dinner  
21:30 - 22:00 Fire talks (optional)





## Thursday, July 2, 2026

### Democratic governance and core European Commons?

08:00 - 08:30 Holy Mass (optional)

08:30 - 09:00 Breakfast

09:30 - 11:00 Lecture: Europe in a Multipolar World. Power, Geopolitics, and the Capacity to Act - **Frans Van Daele**

11:00 - 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 - 13:30 Lecture & Debate: Europe Among Friends? NATO, Security, and Defense in a Multipolar - **Andrew Smith**

13:30 - 15:00 Lunch

15:30 - 17:30 Roundtable & Debate: Enacting Europe-Political Prudence and Transformative Action for the Continent - **Andrew Smith, Ignacio Cosidó, Adriaan Kühn, Mathias Nebel**

17:30 - 20:00 Free Time

20:00 - 21:00 Dinner

21:30 - 22:00 Fire Talks (optional)

## Friday, July 3, 2026

### Crafting a Shared Future

08:00 - 08:30 Holy Mass (optional)

08:30 - 09:00 Breakfast

10:00 - 11:30 Closing Lecture: Hope, Shared Future, and the Common Good - **Mons. Bernardito Auza**

11:30 - 12:30 Closing Ceremony - **Mons. Bernardito Auza, Mathias Nebel**

12:00 - 14:00 Farewell Lunch

14:00 Check-out and Closing of the Summer School

*The final phase consists of a collaborative synthesis, from which **participants emerge not as mere spectators of crisis, but as agents of change, ready to shape a shared future for all.***

# General Information

<b>Organizers:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• University Francisco de Vitoria (UFV)</li><li>• Institute for the Global Common Good (IBCG)</li><li>• The Catholic Church in the EU (COMECE)</li></ul>
<b>Program Venue:</b>	Abbey of Drongen (Oude Abdij Drongen), Ghent, Belgium
<b>Dates:</b>	June 29 - July 3 2026
<b>Target:</b>	Young professionals aged 20-35 ( <i>not exclusive</i> )
<b>Methodology:</b>	Hybrid Format <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full residential option</li><li>• Non-residential participation</li></ul>
<b>Fees &amp; Scholarships:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full price (includes accommodation): €1200</li><li>• Non-accommodation fee: €550</li></ul> <i>*Scholarships available on request; reach out to the program team for details</i>
<b>How to apply:</b>	<a href="https://ufv.jotform.com/jggarcia/european-summer-school-2026">https://ufv.jotform.com/jggarcia/european-summer-school-2026</a>
<b>Contact info:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Email: <a href="mailto:ess.egl@ufv.es">ess.egl@ufv.es</a></li><li>• Telf./wh: +34 628 48 08 18</li></ul>

Start date:

**29/06**

In collaboration with:



**EUROPEAN  
SUMMER SCHOOL  
2026**

THIS 3RD EDITION IS CRAFTED FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ASPIRING TO LEAD WITH PURPOSE, VISION, AND IMPACT. LET US EMBARK ON THIS JOURNEY TOGETHER!

**Apply before May 15 and  
get the Early Bird rate**

*a place you'll never forget!*

APPLICATIONS

