



## **Oxford University Society of Luxembourg (OUSL) President's Report 2023**

### **Overview**

Dear Members,

As the President of the Oxford University Society of Luxembourg, it is my pleasure and duty to present an annual report. In practice, the governance has been led by two Co-Chairs, Dr. Jan Könighaus and yours truly. This co-leadership has provided added depth and flexibility.

The Society has gone from strength to strength, illustrated by growth in active membership – to 75 paid up members. The growth has also been evident in the intensity of the event calendar – on average more than every two weeks, as well as scope, including the growing role of partnerships. Such growth boosted the society's value for members, local impact and already very robust finances.

The report is largely based on feedback by members, for members – as it delivers highlights of reports by those who organised events for the Society. The events during the year have demonstrated the vibrancy of the Oxford community, and burgeoning partnerships with other leading alumni associations and institutions. The latter included events led by Cambridge, LSE, INSEAD, Stanford and the University of Luxembourg.

Most Oxford-led events were arranged by Committee Members, and we all owe them immense gratitude for their dedication and innovation!

Added, profound thanks are due to certain Committee Members, who are stepping back from some or all their functions: Special thanks go to Jan Könighaus, an illustrious Co-Chair and stalwart of the OUSL programme. We are therefore grateful for his willingness to remain on the Committee, while standing down as Co-Chair to gain time for other commitments.

We are also indebted to Lidiya Chernyeva, given her tireless work on membership outreach and events – the adventures of newly wedded life beckon. Fortunately, the several volunteers have stepped forward to renew the Committee, their appointment being put forward to the AGM.

Last but by no means least, the remarkable ongoing work of existing Committee Members warrants a commendation: Agnieszka Walczak de Queiroz (Treasurer and Vice-Chair), Henri Dupong (Counsel), Dan Schmit (Secretary) and staunch Members Mette Ahlefeldt-Laurvig and Jos van Bommel, whose contribution exceeded their office, as well as Honorary Auditor Richard Goddard.

In keeping with tradition, the annual review of events below aligns more with the Oxford academic year, and the past 12 months since the last AGM. It focuses on events that OUSL hosted and is followed by a section listing certain partner events, illustrating the success of the partnership model.

2023-24 has been a year of progress for the OUSL, delivering enriching experiences and meaningful connections. I extend my heartfelt thanks to all members, volunteers and Committee Members for their valuable contributions and participation. Let us continue to build on this momentum in the coming year.

Yours Faithfully,

Peter Munro

President, Oxford University Society of Luxembourg (OUSL)

## EVENT REVIEW – Oxford-led events

### **\*\*Visit by Oxford Professor of Higher Education\*\***

Simon Marginson, Professor of Higher Education and the Director of the Centre for Global Higher Education at the University of Oxford, gave a dinner talk to our members and guests on 23rd May 2024 at Cercle Munster. Professor Marginson is a renowned scholar in the sociology and economics of higher education and he spoke about “The University from West to East”. His presentation was followed by a lively discussion. During his wider visit to Luxembourg discussion topics ranged across higher education strategy and rankings.

This event underlines the importance of dialogue on education in the Society’s activities, and was the excellent initiative of Committee Member Agnieszka Walczak, with support from Committee Advisor David Clark.

The event, which was open to our friends from the Cambridge Society, was attended by around twenty guests. Besides the intellectual inspiration, attendees enjoyed the exclusive atmosphere and excellent service at Cercle Munster, which is a popular venue for OUSL’s events.



## **\*\*Vineyard Visit\*\***



On April 28 2024, we visited the Dominikaner Weingut of Carmen von Nell-Breuning in the Ruwer valley near Trier. Organised by Jan Königshaus, and hosted by Dr. von Nell-Breuning, the event provided a fascinating insight into the vineyard's history and the intricacies of wine production. Dr. von Nell-Breuning guided us through the various grape varieties, the evolution of the wine-growing season, and the meticulous process of Sekt wine fermentation. The visit concluded with a delightful wine tasting session and lunch at the Pauliner Hof restaurant.

## **\*\*Sustainable Finance Seminar\*\***



On February 27, our Co-Chair and President Peter Munro delivered a presentation on sustainable finance at the University of Oxford's Faculty of Law. The seminar, organized by Dr. Felix Pflücke, OUSL Member and Lecturer in Law at Oxford, focused on the EU's example and the global integration of ESG regulations. There was lively debate with Faculty and Masters students, with wide-ranging origins from Australia to Germany and Ukraine. Discussion points included the importance of evidence-based policy-making and the future implications of AI in sustainable finance.

**\*\*Oxford Tenor at the Philharmonie\*\***



February 25 saw a captivating performance by Oxonian tenor Ian Bostridge at the Philharmonie, accompanied by the Luxembourg Chamber Orchestra. The concert featured personal interpretations of works by Berlioz, Boulanger, Tarrodi, and Wagner, offering a beautiful blend of lullaby and awakening melodies.



**\*\*Christmas Market Visit\*\***



Our annual Christmas Market visit took place on December 12, beginning with drinks at Hotel Cravat. The highlight was a contest for the best Christmas jumper, which added a festive spirit to our gathering. Congratulations to Andrew, who won the contest with his creative jumper.

**\*\*Luxembourg Art Week Dinner\*\***



Co-Chairs Jan and Peter joined the Luxembourg Art Week Collectors Dinner, alongside other Art Week benefactors (on 11 November). This remarkable annual dinner draws over 500 attendees. Following this pilot exercise, there is an opportunity to arrange a larger participation along with partner societies, if the Society so decides next time.

## **\*\*Annual Black-Tie Dinner\*\***



The flagship annual black-tie dinner on November 7 at Cercle Münster was graced by Professor Dr. Jens Kreisel, rector of the University of Luxembourg. Dr. Kreisel's presentation on interdisciplinary research and the university's strategic vision was both informative and inspiring. The evening was a perfect blend of engaging conversations and fine dining, expertly organized by Mette Ahlefeldt and Jan Könighaus.

## **\*\*Foire de l'Étudiant and Practice Interviews\*\***

On October 26-27, OUSL Committee Members participated in the annual student fair in Belval, providing prospective students with information about studying at Oxford. In early November, our volunteers from within and beyond the Committee conducted practice interviews for candidates preparing for their Oxford and Cambridge admissions, offering invaluable feedback and support.

Special thanks Steve Brabbs of the Cambridge Society for coordinating the interviews, and our members Lidiya, David, Harriet, Lisa, Hervé, Naomi, Andrew, Jos, Florian, Jesper, Paschalis, Matthew, Marilyn and Adrian for the vital input.

**\*\*Family Event: Flower Creativity Workshop\*\***



On October 21, Lidiya Cherneva hosted a flower arranging workshop at her home, bringing together families in a creative and joyous atmosphere. The event was filled with artistic expressions and lively conversations, enhanced by delicious snacks.

**\*\*Third OUSL-FDEF Law Talk\*\***



Our third law talk was held on October 5, organised by Dr. Felix Pflücke and featuring Dr. Johannes Ungerer from Oxford. The discussion focused on the harmonization of rules concerning third-state defendants in EU courts, providing deep insights into the legal complexities and implications of extending EU regulations.



## **\*\*Tripartite Dinner\*\***

One of the most popular events alongside our own annual dinner was the annual Tripartite Dinner on September 28, with Cambridge and LSE alumni. Held at the Hostellerie du Gr newald, the evening featured fine gastronomy, amusing impromptu speeches and of course excellent conversations. It was over-subscribed, so sign up early for the next edition! Kudos to Cambridge for organising this time.

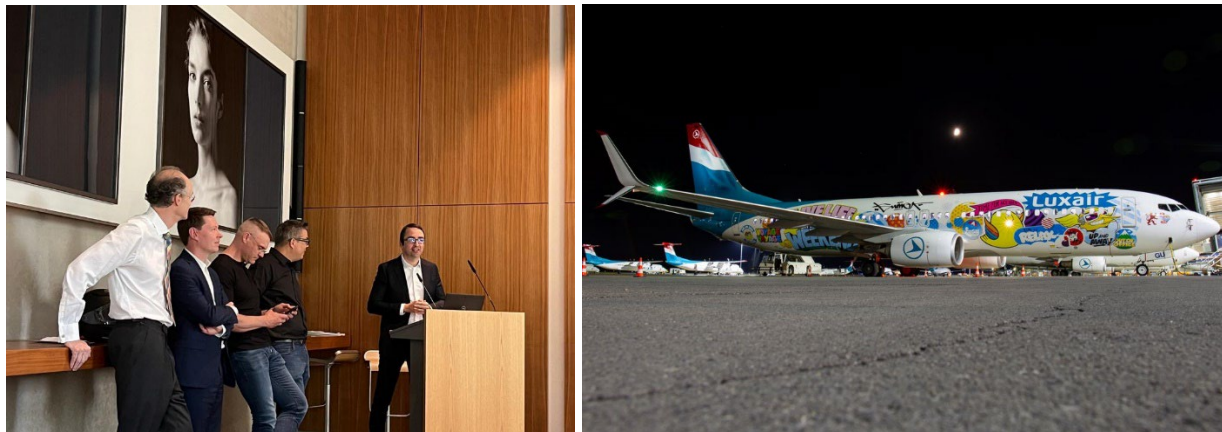


## **\*\*Freshers' Dinner\*\***

Our annual Freshers' dinner on September 12 welcomed six new Oxford students from Luxembourg. The event is appreciated by freshers, alumni and the Oxford alumni office alike. It helps prepare freshers for the joys and challenges of Oxford life, academic and extra-curricular.



## **\*\*Event with Sumo\*\***



This event, in June 2023, was not about Japanese wrestling, but on Street Art. The guest speakers were the leading Luxembourg street artist SUMO, and Luxair CEO Gilles Feith, with INSEAD alumni as guests. They presented and discussed their collaboration in use of art on aircraft, and how this innovative application of art to an aircraft proved a strategic tool to revitalise staff and passenger engagement during the pandemic, with lasting brand impact. The event was initiated by Lidiya Chernyeva's link to SUMO, and was then shaped jointly with Peter Munro, who made the bridge to the Luxair speaker and INSEAD alumni.

## EVENTS WITH PARTNERS – a selection

- Monthly: Drinks with Cambridge Alumni
- September: University of Luxembourg 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations, including invitation to dinner with speaker from Oxford and conference.
- 19 January: New Year's Dinner of Oxbridge Society Rhineland, Industrieclub Düsseldorf
- March 1<sup>st</sup>: Stanford Club Luxembourg visit of ETZ2, Amazon's new Robotoc Fulfilment Centre in Metz
- 30 March: Boat race event hosted by Cambridge
- April 12<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> Oxbridge walking trip in the Ardennes organised by OxBridge NL
- Apr 15: LSE event on Exploring the English-based international schools landscape in Luxembourg
- April 23<sup>rd</sup>: INSEAD AI event hosted by Deloitte
- 31.5 – 2.6: Oxbridge Benelux alumni event in Den Haag and Amsterdam, hosted by Oxbridge Society Netherlands