

Press statement: 21st September 2011

EUA response to the EC Communication: “Supporting growth and jobs - an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems”

The European Commission has this week (20 September) published its Communication “Supporting growth and jobs - an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems”.

EUA welcomes the Communication’s emphasis on the key role that higher education and research play in reaching the Europe 2020 strategy objectives and in contributing to efforts for achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and thus also the proposals in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, to significantly increase the budget devoted to ‘investment in knowledge’.

While EUA supports skills’ enhancement as a means of promoting graduate employability, the association would also like to underline that the further modernisation of Europe’s higher education systems depends on strong universities, and other higher education institutions, able to pursue their core missions of knowledge development, transmission and dissemination as well as playing their central role in the innovation chain.

EUA is pleased to see the references in the Communication to several of the issues that it proposed in [its response to the Consultation](#) addressed in the Modernisation Agenda earlier this year, in particular core issues such as quality, improved university autonomy and public funding, and the importance of addressing the professionalisation of university management.

However, EUA believes that these are pan European issues that will be crucial in the years to come in supporting higher education institutions’ further development and thus to the continued modernisation of Europe’s higher education systems. While it is clear that the “main responsibility for delivering reforms in higher education rests with Member States and education institutions themselves”, as stated in the Communication, EU level actions should not only be limited to supporting longstanding activities focused on improving transparency, mobility and international exchange and cooperation. EUA also believes that given the massive changes taking place in higher education, support should be given to the professionalisation of university leadership and management. This will be crucial to making the many of the ongoing reforms truly sustainable and would send an important signal towards both Member States and institutions.

Given the global role of universities, EUA also looks forward to collaborating on the development of the strategy for internationalisation of European higher education, which can be expected to further enhance the international visibility and recognition of European higher education and its readiness to collaborate with partners around the globe.

EUA also welcomes the proposal to launch a high-level expert group on modernisation, as an opportunity for constructive and more long-term dialogue between the European Commission, Member States and stakeholders, and confirms its readiness to contribute actively to such a process.

The modernisation agenda as well as priorities for investment in education and research post 2013 will be discussed at an EUA Council Meeting in October.

Ends.

- The European Commission Communication; “Supporting growth and jobs - an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems” can be downloaded here: http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/com0911_en.pdf
- EUA’s statement in response to the European Commission Consultation on the Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe can be downloaded here:



http://www.eua.be/Libraries/Publications/EUA_Statement_in_response_to_EC_Consultation_on_Modernisation_of_Higher_Education_in_Europe.sflb.ashx

The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA's mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.

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