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European University Association (EUA) celebrates 10th Anniversary at Annual Conference in Aarhus, Denmark

The European University Association (EUA) will celebrate its 10th Anniversary at its Annual Conference next week (13-15 April) at Aarhus University in Denmark. This conference brings together around 400 university leaders and key stakeholders in higher education from across Europe, and will include a keynote speech by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission.

EUA President, Professor Jean-Marc Rapp says: "European universities have a long tradition of collaboration that dates back many decades. This spirit of collaboration is now underpinned by a clear political framework that promotes common European Higher Education and Research Areas. As a consequence, collaboration between Europe's universities has become increasingly structured in recent years, which is highlighted for example not only in the increasing number of universities which have joined EUA, but also in the increasing number of joint degrees, joint research and exchange programmes."

"In this European framework a common voice for European universities is crucial. It is only through the exchange of best practices and suggesting points of action that matter for universities in Europe that this ambition can succeed. EUA provides the platform for this exchange, while at the same time it voices the outcomes in relevant policy settings," he adds.

EUA was formed in 2001 through the merger of the Association of European Universities (CRE) and the Confederation of European Union Rectors' Conferences. Over the last 10 years, its membership has grown from 550 to nearly 850 institutions, which underlines the important role that EUA plays in higher education policy at the European level. This is an extremely challenging time for higher education across Europe. Not only has public funding been hit badly by the economic crisis, but demands and expectations on universities have grown rapidly. Universities are being pressed by political leaders considerably to increase the number of students they teach, but at the same time to improve the quality of their teaching and to expand their research and innovation mission. The Anniversary conference in Aarhus will allow EUA members in a general assembly to take stock and consider the priority issues for the next decade.

University leaders will also vote for the next EUA President who will lead the organisation from 2012-2015. The two candidates to replace the current President are Professors Maria Helena Nazaré (Portugal) and Lauritz Holm-Nielsen (Denmark).

The overall theme of the conference is talent development – a topic of high relevance for the future competitiveness of Europe. Universities face the challenge of making the European area for higher education and research an attractive destination for the best researchers and students in the world, but without compromising the provision of mass education. This conference will seek to identify ways for universities to attract and develop the bright minds of tomorrow. In addition to plenary presentations from leading European experts, four working group sessions will focus on a series of key issues relating to talent:

- The university's responsibility for building research capacity right from the undergraduate level
- The university's role in fostering career structures and opportunities for young researchers
- The university as employer: institutional human resource management strategies to create the optimal environment for talent development

- How to effectively identify and train future leaders?

Ends:

More information on the Aarhus Conference is available at: www.eua.be/aarhus

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You can also visit our website at www.eua.be

EUA represents and supports higher education institutions in 47 countries, providing them with a forum to cooperate and keep abreast of the latest trends in higher education and research policies. The 850 members of the association are European universities involved in teaching and research, national associations of rectors and other organisations active in higher education and research.