



Press release

Europe's higher education leaders gather in Rotterdam to define strategies for widening access and lifelong learning

European University Association (EUA) Autumn Conference (23-25 October 2008)

15th October 2008. Hundreds of university leaders, together with politicians and business leaders will gather at Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands) later this month (23-25 October) for the European University Association (EUA) autumn Conference.

At the top of the agenda at this international conference will be two key issues which are currently being debated by stakeholders in most countries across Europe: social equity and widening access to higher education, and defining a more strategic approach to lifelong learning. The conference will address these different aspects in the context of the demographic challenges facing Europe, in particular the aging of many populations.

International speakers will include experts such as: Ronald Plasterk, Minister of Education, Culture and Science, the Netherlands; Jeroen van der Veer, Chief Executive Royal Dutch Shell Plc; and Michael Kelly, Chairperson, Higher Education Authority, Ireland.

During the Rotterdam event, the European University Association - an organisation representing more than 800 universities - will officially launch the first **European Universities Charter on Lifelong Learning**. The Charter is elaborated on the basis of extensive consultation, not only with EUA's 800 member universities and 34 national Rectors' Conferences, but also with a wide range of European stakeholder organisations - including students and business. It will call on universities to make a series of clear commitments to lifelong learning, with a call for action from national governments. The Charter will be presented by Professor Georg Winckler, EUA President, on the Saturday morning (25th October) of the conference.

During the three-day conference, EUA members will also elect a new President, who will officially take over from current president, Professor Georg Winckler (Rector of the University of Vienna) in March 2009.

More information on the event is available on the EUA website: www.eua.be

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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