



Press release: 9<sup>th</sup> April 2009

### **European University Association Prague Declaration:**

#### **Universities outline proposals to combat economic crisis and long-term road map for higher education in Europe**

The European University Association (EUA) – an organisation representing more than 800 universities and 34 national university (Rectors' conferences) associations – has today published a Declaration that contains a series of targeted messages to Europe's politicians with proposals from universities to help combat the current economic and financial crisis. Based on the outcomes of the recent EUA meeting of Europe's university leaders in Prague – the Declaration also sets out a long-term agenda for European universities in the next decade identifying '10 paths to success'.

The Declaration - that will be presented to the 46 education ministers attending the Bologna process Ministerial Summit at the end of April – underlines universities' role as a driving force for economic recovery in Europe. However, it stresses that for universities to play their full role in helping European economies out of recession, politicians must commit to major investment in higher education and research. "Europe cannot afford to run the risk of losing a generation of talented people or a serious decrease in research or innovation activity," the Declaration underlines.

EUA urges "decision makers at the national and European level to emulate the major investment in higher education and research that characterises the US economic stimulus package" and which supports both high end research and students and families struggling to pay for higher education. EUA is calling for renewed efforts from governments to reach the Barcelona target of 3% (of GDP) investment in research and the 2% (of GDP) target for investment in higher education proposed by the European Commission. The Declaration recommends that European stimulus packages are needed to: create real opportunities and incentives for young researchers; to tap unused potential through the implementation and financing of lifelong learning across Europe; and to upgrade universities' facilities and campus infrastructure.

Looking ahead to the next decade – the EUA Prague Declaration outlines 10 key success factors for European universities:

- widening opportunities for participation in and successful completion of higher education;
- improving researcher careers;
- providing relevant and innovative study programmes;
- developing distinctive institutional research profiles;
- shaping, reinforcing and implementing autonomy;
- increasing and diversifying income;
- enhancing quality and transparency;
- promoting internationalisation;
- increasing and improving the quality of mobility;
- and developing partnerships.

In the coming months, the EUA Board and Council will develop a specific action plan for each of these 10 issues with recommendations at the institutional, national and European level.

Please visit the EUA website a full version of the Declaration. ([www.eua.be](http://www.eua.be))

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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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You can also visit our website at [www.eua.be](http://www.eua.be)

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#### **Notes to editors:**

Please find below some background information in case this is useful.

1. EUA Political Declarations. Thanks to its role as the representative organization of European Universities and Rectors' Conferences and to its frequent contacts with EU Institutions, international organizations and various stakeholders – EUA has a key function in contributing to European debates in higher education and research. EUA's political declarations result from the discussions held during the EUA Conventions and address key issues for the future of European universities. The policy positions are the documents stating EUA's point of view on a number of topics discussed at the European level. For more information about the EUA Convention of European Higher Education Institutions held last month in Prague, please consult the [www.eua.be/prague](http://www.eua.be/prague)
2. To read a recent EUA newsletter article on the impact of the economic crisis on Europe's universities, please click here <http://www.eua.be/eua-news/view-item/article/757/>
3. For more background on the Bologna process and associated European higher education reforms please consult this leaflet ; [http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user\\_upload/files/Publications/Europe s new HE landscape february2008.pdf](http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Publications/Europe_s_new_HE_landscape_feb_ruary2008.pdf)
4. More information on the Bologna Process Ministerial Summit on 28/29 April is available here: <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference/>