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Europe's universities beyond 2010 – diversity with a common purpose

EUA Convention in Lisbon opens debate on future of European higher education

More than 700 university leaders and higher education stakeholders from across Europe will congregate in Lisbon, Portugal, from the 29-31 March 2007 to attend the European University Association's (EUA) 4th Convention. The three-day meeting will be the opportunity for European university leaders to debate how universities should respond to the growing demands of society and rapid globalisation and the effectiveness of the Bologna process and the EU's Lisbon strategy.

The Convention, to be hosted by the Portuguese Rectors' Conference (CRUP), and five individual EUA members in Lisbon (the University of Lisbon, the Technical University of Lisbon, the Portuguese Catholic University, the New University of Lisbon and The Open University) is timed to take place just before the next Bologna ministerial meeting (London, May 2007).

The opening session, focusing on "The future of higher education beyond 2010", brings together speakers from different parts of the world to compare their views on future developments in higher education: European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Ján Figel; President of the American Council on Education, David Ward; and the Chinese Deputy Minister of Education Zhang Xincheng.

After this global introduction to the challenges for higher education, closer attention will be given to the European developments from an institutional perspective. This will include the first presentation of Trends V, EUA's in-depth report on the state of higher education in

Europe. The importance of research for European knowledge society will also be debated in a plenary session featuring Fotis Kafatos, President of the European Research Council.

José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, will give the closing address to the Convention. Two years ago, at the EUA convention in Glasgow, President Barroso called for increased dialogue with Europe's universities, and stressed that the future of Europe's universities was "unquestionably one of Europe's top priorities". His return to the meeting is proof of the strength of this commitment, and an opportunity for Europe's universities to continue this key dialogue with Europe's highest political representative.

The Convention will result in a **Lisbon Declaration**, to be presented to the Ministerial meeting in London and communicated broadly across Europe to EUA membership, governments and other stakeholders.

<http://www.euaconvention.org>

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.

For further information, please contact:

Andrew Miller, Press officer, tel : +32 2 788 53 19, or Mobile/GSM: +32 473 748 785
email: andrew.miller@eua.be

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