

**Summary**  
**Opinion of the Chamber of Deputies on the**  
**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the**  
**European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions**  
**on a renewed EU agenda for higher education**  
**COM(2017) 247**

The Chamber of Deputies welcomes the aim of strengthening collaboration between higher education, research and business, and believes that the mismatch between the skills that Europe needs and competences it holds also reflect a low efficiency of socio-economic mechanisms by which the demand of skills induces changes of qualifications provided by higher education institutions, in a world that is changing fast. The stated objective of supporting effective and efficient systems of higher education involves ensuring competition between higher education institutions, whilst preserving their stability on the market. Therefore, there is a need for greater flexibility of curricula and increased autonomy for higher education institutions in their choice and individualised learning pathways in order to ensure a prompt response to market demands for skills.

Furthermore, the Chamber of Deputies considers that research is necessary for an effective coupling of higher education to economic life and this may be conducted in parallel with the education process in other institutions or even be replaced by traineeships in businesses, especially if universities choose a predominantly vocational guidance.

With regard to the relevance of the students' work as volunteers and in the field of community service, the Chamber of Deputies expresses its reservation considering that such an option is dependent on many factors outside of the control of education institutions, being objectively dependent on personal preferences and should remain at the exclusive discretion of the students.

The Chamber of Deputies welcomes diversification of the range of available courses, including education which lasts 2 years as well as the option for continuous professional development, considering that diversification of courses helps higher education to respond to the demand of new knowledge arising as a result of rapid changes in the economic fabric of Europe and job profiles.

At the same time, the Chamber of Deputies considers that higher education institutions ensures and contribute to innovation, which is possible if innovation is encouraged already in primary education, for such monitoring efforts throughout education.

The Chamber of Deputies welcomes the European Commission's approach in the process of preparing the next multiannual budget for the Union to consider, together with the Member States, the future of the EU's common objectives in the field of education, research and innovation and considers that strengthening cooperation in these areas must take account of the need to reduce disparities between Member States by intensifying European financial support and expertise.