



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion 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 European strategy for universities {COM(2022) 16 final}.*

*In proposing the strategy, the Commission is delivering on the announcement in its 2022 Work Programme. The European society needs the contribution of universities and other higher education institutions more than ever to address climate change, the digital transformation and challenges of the aging population, at a time when it is hit by the global health epidemic and its economic fall-out and is responding to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Universities, and the entire higher education sector, have a unique position at the crossroads of education, research and innovation, in shaping sustainable and resilient economies, and in making the European Union greener, more inclusive and more digital.*

*The European strategy for universities aims to support universities by enabling them to adapt to changing conditions, to thrive and to contribute to Europe's resilience and recovery. It is a call to Member States and higher education institutions across Europe to join forces. It seeks to take transnational cooperation to a new level of intensity and scope and to develop a genuinely European dimension in the higher education sector, built on shared values. The strategy recognises excellence and inclusion as a distinctive feature of European higher education, exemplary for our European way of life.*

*The Commission welcomes the Camera Deputaților's broad support for the European strategy for universities, and in particular its support for fundamental academic and democratic values.*

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*The Commission is pleased to have this opportunity to provide feedback on the elements raised by the Camera Deputaţilor in its Opinion.*

*Concerning the European Union support to the universities to develop study programmes accessible to people with disabilities, refugees and other disadvantaged students, the Commission confirms that equity and inclusion are values at the heart of the European Union, and at the core of our vision for a European Education Area. It is a priority of the European Strategy for Universities. The Commission is in close cooperation with the stakeholders and the Member States to develop a European framework for diversity and inclusion, identifying challenges and solutions for universities, and the needed support of public authorities. The Commission calls on Member States to encourage universities to implement institutional change through concrete measures for diversity and inclusion, including voluntary, quantified targets for inclusion and inclusive gender equality plans, building on [the Bologna Process Rome Communiqué](#).*

*On the exchange of good practices between Member States, the Commission intends to use the Higher Education Working Group of the European Education Area Strategic Framework for regular exchanges between Member States. For example, in this framework, peer learning activities are being organised. In June 2022, a peer learning activity on micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability was organised.*

*The Commission confirms that, through its policies and funding instruments, it is promoting partnerships between higher education institutions and local and regional authorities and civil society organisations, as well as other relevant stakeholders. This is, for example, the case under Erasmus+ through the European Universities initiative, where the selected European Universities alliances are teaming up with their knowledge eco-system partners to tackle societal challenges. This further promotes student-centred learning and teaching, as well as feedback loops between education, research and innovation.*

*The Commission confirms that it adheres to the division of competences between the Member States and the European level, and that it respects the principle of subsidiarity and institutional autonomy, also with regard to the organisation and financing of the higher education systems in the Member States.*

*For the further implementation of the European strategy for universities, the Commission will work together with Member States and the higher education sector stakeholders.*

*The 'Study in Europe' portal serves the role of one-stop shop for promotion, information and advice on studies in European Union Member States and third countries associated to the Erasmus+ programme. It includes information structured on two levels: a 'European layer', which guides users towards information on European programmes and other existing European tools, which can provide study-related or other practical information of help to potential students, and guidance towards information at national level (higher education system in a given country, institutions and courses available, scholarship schemes, etc.). The aim is to drive traffic towards existing information already developed by the Commission or European Union Member States and third*

*countries associated to the Erasmus+ programme who promote their higher education offer. The content of the portal is being updated on a regular basis. The Commission, together with the consortium implementing the 'Study in Europe' project, is also looking into ways of extending the portal's visibility and user impact, while remaining in line with the web aspects of the Commission's corporate approach to communication. The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Věra JOUROVÁ  
Vice-President*