Europe as a campus to allow every European citizen to become a lifelong student

United Nations SDG 4 aims at «ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all». This noble objective will require appropriate European policies to be available to all European learners.

In an era where machines learn and where most jobs will be impacted by the development of technologies such as AI and robotics, we must all become lifelong learners to adapt to a world that is changing ever faster. Yet, today the inequalities in terms of opportunities to upgrade our knowledge are widening, leading to a growing divide between those that benefit from the globalisation and those that fear its consequences. The launch of European university policy is a unique opportunity to address this challenge, provided that learning opportunities are given to all. Upgrading only the learning opportunities of the happy few that already have access to elite places, would widen the gap and miss the UN goal.

Therefore we propose the progressive transformation of Europe into a global campus where everyone will be free to learn, teach, do research and find benevolent mentors and peers in the spirit Humboldt pioneered over 200 years ago. His vision used to be limited by physical constraints, as people and objects are costly to move across the world; limiting access to knowledge, equipment, educated mentors and peers, leading to the concentration of those in a few campuses. Yet today, digital technologies complement and increase the potential of physical systems to create and share knowledge through greater speed, broader distribution, cooperation, inclusiveness and openness. This facilitates learning, participation and employability at scale for the first time in history.

A new ground is laid to fulfill Humboldt’s vision and help build a learning society, where the learning and innovation of everyone will be made easier thanks to the sharing of the first learners and innovators. Moving beyond institutional and mental barriers will promote efficient policies based on equity, inclusiveness and excellence and simple principles:

a) No one knows everything.

b) Everyone knows something.

1 Wilhelm von Humboldt's educational ideal developed around two central concepts of public education: The concept of the autonomous individual and the concept of world citizenship. The "university" should be a place where autonomous individuals and World Citizen can learn at and realize their full potential.
c) Given a and b we can all learn from one another if we are given the chance to share our knowledge.

d) In a fast changing world, where no one knows the future, we can only build an inclusive one together through the mobilisation of our collective intelligence.

In order to allow this progressive transformation, the EU commission can launch complementary calls to actions towards a European university:

1. **To foster the freedom to learn**, EU should create a European open platform freely accessible to every European learners that facilitate knowledge acquisition, co-creation and its acknowledgement. Content quality should be independently labelled by learners, professors, professionals and other stakeholders. In the case of medicine for instance, a triple A system could label contents based on evaluation by medical students, professors working in medical faculties, and acting doctors; it may or may not be considered accessible by patients and could thus be adapted further to their needs while being evaluated by other actors.

2. **To foster the freedom to teach**, EU should invite all EU university professors to produce high quality content to be hosted on such a platform. Progressively all curricula should be available online for all European diploma in all languages through a collective effort. Top professors contributing to this effort should be recognized as European researchers are currently through the ERC. A European Pedagogy Council or a European Academy of Mentors could be missioned to recognize the best contributors and invite them to travel and share best practices across European universities.

3. **To foster the freedom to do research**, EU researchers should be invited to create open and participatory science platforms welcoming all citizen to participate and contribute to the collective intelligence to produce relevant knowledge and solutions to societal challenges such as the 17 UN SDGs.

Particular attention could be given to specific transverse actions such as:

1. **Knowledge recognition**: A knowledge society has to be an acknowledgement society; one should experiment with new ways to acknowledge acquisition and co-creation of knowledge inspired by existing practices and platforms such as stackoverflow, github, open badges etc. Open European diplomas to be included in their portfolios could be built on upgraded French «validation of acquired experience» and its variants that exists across Europe.

2. **Knowledge navigation**: EU should promote the creation of a GPS of knowledge to allow learner to map their position in knowledge space (based on their lifelong learning journey that include formal and informal learning experience) and identify relevant job opportunities, contents, peers and mentors, that can help them move forward.

3. **Lifelong learning portfolios** to invite all European learners to share the ways they learn relevant content and allow them to develop skills and contribute to solve local and global challenges. These portfolios should respect learners privacy and rights, in and outside universities, while contributing to the collective intelligence of Europe.
4. To invite European technology experts to co-create with learners **open interoperable tools** that will facilitate the learning, orientation, job preparation and the co-construction of knowledge of all citizens and young people.

5. To foster the creation of inclusive, **open learning hubs and labs for tomorrow's jobs** across Europe where all learners can join others sharing the will to learn together and co-invent their future jobs (this could be upgraded version of existing places such as libraries, schools, fab-labs or campuses).

6. **To strengthen the fight for inclusiveness** and against social, linguistic, territorial, racial and gender inequalities, a specific focus should be given to develop learning options to public with specificities that can hinder learning. Each country, linguistic group and community should be invited to create interoperable, open, adapted and inclusive versions of these platforms and contents to foster learning opportunities in every language and promote quality lifelong learning for all.

7. **International collaboration** within the EU and beyond should be promoted to help all those willing to benefit and contribute to the global effort.

8. This process should be an evolving one, so that the progresses and failures are all taken into account to adapt the policies and implementation in order to allow Europe to become an **evolving campus** where citizens learn from one another and European universities become learning organisations. Specific incentives will be proposed to invite every stakeholders, including researchers and learners of all ages, fields and nationalities to contribute improving the processes described above via a citizen science of learning.

9. A **European learning festival** could be organized to invite all Europeans to celebrate their learning, the people that helped them learn, the places, ways, tools and contents that allow them to learn. This festival will help build individual and collective reflexivity and invite European citizens and students to think about their future learning opportunities and meet people that can help them achieve their personal and professional goals.

Note that this proposal will be enriched by existing, evolving or emerging universities and EU policies such as the ERC, Erasmus or the creation of more opportunities to discover other European countries and ways to learn, teach and do research across Europe. The prototype phase for the « Europe as a campus » could be to launch calls to existing European institutions willing to contribute to build relevant tools, contents, concepts, prototypes and experiments and share their advances with one another and others willing to join. Special care should be taken to underline the added value of existing local campuses that will remain hubs concentrating resources and talents within the vision of Europe as a global campus. An intermediate assessment of their achievements, innovation, impact and scalability can help design the process for the next phases.

François Taddei
Director of the Center for Research and Interdisciplinarity (CRI)