



**Trilateral Declaration of CPU, HRK and KRASP on the occasion of the Meeting of the European Council
in Brussels on 15.12.2017**

The three Rectors' Conferences strongly welcome the decision of the European Council to take up education and culture as the first topic of the new EU leadership agenda. Education and culture are core and not side issues of European development. Therefore, the EU has to move forward in developing education and cultural cooperation as a multilevel governance issue.

Universities play a crucial role in making the EU stable and future-proof. They bind together capabilities in excellent research, innovation, education and culture in order to create future generations of responsible European citizens. It is a challenging obligation for public policies to sustain universities in these interrelated tasks.

European universities also benefit from the smooth and effective cooperation and enhanced mobility inside the EU that allow teachers/researchers and students to gain international experience as a more and more natural everyday experience.

Therefore, the three Rectors' Conferences welcome support of the Council to all the universities in Europe that want to increase their cooperation in education, research and innovation, so as to develop their individual profiles.

They call for:

- active support in favour of more strongly profiled European universities that aim to jointly construct their strategy and governance in the triangle of knowledge. Building on previous work and opportunities, this enhanced cooperation will take various forms and fulfill different functions.¹
- active support in favour of universities that play a central role in the innovative ecosystems of regions and intend to develop their cooperation with other ecosystems and universities in European regions, and propose a European instrument to that effect;
- active support to those member states that want to increase the capabilities of their universities in order to sustain and distribute excellence in Europe, possibly through excellence initiatives;
- energetic steps in improving the foreign language provision and abilities of all EU students;
- an increase in the share of the population participating in Erasmus mobility measures;

We emphasize the key role of universities in sustaining the European idea and spirit of peaceful integration and cooperation as well as their duty in contributing to the solving of global challenges. We would appreciate if the Council regularly took the interlinked issues of education, research and innovation as well as the preservation of culture into consideration.

¹ The European Confederation of Universities of the Upper Rhine (EUCOR) or "The University of the Greater Region" are but two examples of the many forms such an enhanced cooperation could take.