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PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES' CHARTER ON LIFELONG LEARNING

INFORMAL MEETING OF THE MINISTERS FOR EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND THE MINISTERS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Valérie Pécresse, the French Minister for Higher Education and Research, and Ján Figel, the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, concluded the informal meeting of European higher education ministers on the subject of lifelong learning, one of the priorities of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In the meeting, George Winckler, the President of the European University Association (EUA) and rector of the University of Vienna, presented the 'European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning'.

This Charter was developed by the European University Association as part of its reflections, at the request of the French Prime Minister, on lifelong learning in higher education establishments in Europe.

Its aim is to support Europe's universities in developing their specific role as institutions of lifelong learning, which is a central pillar of the Europe of knowledge. It features a series of commitments to which universities are asked to subscribe.

The Charter proposes that universities:

- integrate the concept of lifelong learning into their strategies;
- adapt study programmes to a diverse public to increase the participation of adults and incite them to return to university;
- provide appropriate guidance services and recognise knowledge acquired from experience;
- promote quality assurance processes;
- develop partnerships at local, regional and international level.

The Charter also recommends that States support these objectives, in particular by removing the legal obstacles that prevent a certain number of potential students from returning to higher education and by developing measures to encourage lifelong learning.