

**23 May 2018****HRK and French and Polish rectors' conferences:****"Distributed excellence" as a principle of European research and higher education policy**

"Distributed excellence" should become the fundamental principle of European research and higher education policy. Institutions with strong research capabilities should not be concentrated at just a few locations in Europe, but should be supported throughout the EU. This is the main demand of the rectors' conferences in France, Germany and Poland (CPU, HRK and CRASP) in a recently published [policy paper](#).

They emphasise that the objective is a balanced and strong system anchored in all regions. Competition and differentiation processes are a crucial part of this system, according to the group of rectors' conferences, who emphasise that "distributed excellence" should never be misinterpreted as a tool for levelling.

Such a principle of "distributed excellence" would decisively promote the cohesion of European societies, their economic performance and cultural development.

In order to implement their concept, the rectors' conferences propose three funding programmes that underline the wide-ranging nature of universities' activities and can contribute significantly to shaping the knowledge triangle of education, research and innovation:

- Further development of the "Networks of European Universities", called for by President Macron and the European Council, to extend beyond education, in other words to include research and innovation,
- the funding of cooperation arrangements between European universities that form the core of comparable regional innovation clusters,
- European support for national excellence initiatives in those EU member states that need to catch up in the area of science and scholarship, research and innovation.

These funding lines can be implemented as part of the future generation of EU programmes from 2021. They would have a particularly impact if the three political levels – EU, member states and regions/states – worked together to this end. The three rectors' conferences strongly urge policy makers to adopt this approach.