

## RESOLUTION BY THE GREEK AND GERMAN RECTORS' CONFERENCES

### ON THE STATE OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN GREECE AND ON FUTURE COOPERATION

On 4 and 5 June 2014, representatives from Rectors' Conferences and the presidents and rectors of Greek and German universities met to discuss the current state of the Greek and German higher education system and forms of future cooperation. In the wake of this conference, it was made clear that budgetary cuts imposed by the Greek government upon state universities pose an extensive threat to Greece's universities and higher education system. In particular, it was noted that the budgetary cuts for Greek universities seem to have been made without an overarching plan for the future of the Greek university system and therefore also the economic development of Greece.

This calls into question the educational opportunities available to future generations, especially in structurally weak regions—although efforts to further develop a university system were initiated several decades ago. If future generations' chances for higher education are called into question, Greece will face the prospect of a loss of innovative creativity, among both the student body and faculty. Due to massive reductions in income for university faculty, these have few options other than to leave the country or to seek a living outside the university.

For this reason, the undersigned appeal to the Greek Education Ministry to put an immediate end to its aimless budgetary policies and to appoint an independent international expert commission to advise Greek policy-makers about the development of the Greek university system. Pointing out the – according to international standards – low degree of autonomy of Greek universities, the undersigned support the efforts of Greek universities for strengthening their autonomy.

Furthermore, the undersigned expect the Greek government to use the structural funds set up by the European Union to further strengthen education, research and innovation at Greek universities as an investment for the future.

The Rectors' Conferences decided to establish a joint standing committee for monitoring and promoting university cooperation between their two countries and for proposing appropriate measures in this context.

At the same time, the undersigned appeal to the German Federal Government to support the Greek university system by intensifying cooperation between Greek and German universities. Due to the large number of joint research and teaching projects already in existence, the threats to the Greek university system also pose a risk to academic pursuits and developmental possibilities at universities in Germany.

For these reasons, the representatives from Rectors' Conferences and the presidents and rectors of Greek and German universities have made a number of additional proposals for cooperation within the context of a cooperation agreement and have explored as-yet untapped potential for cooperation.

Standing idly by and watching as a vacuum opens up in higher education in the middle of Europe does not simply affect the Greek people, it affects all of Europe, for Greek academia remains strong and contributes significantly to cooperation within Europe and the development of the common higher education landscape. The undersigned appeal to the governments of both countries to take heed of this fact and to initiate a process for safeguarding and further developing a Greek university system which can benefit and enrich Greece, Germany, and Europe.

Rhodes, 5 June 2014

For the Greek Rectors' Conference:

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President

Professor Dr Demosthenes Anagnostopoulos  
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For the German Rectors' Conference:

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