



**JOINT DECLARATION BETWEEN**  
**THE COLOMBIAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES (ASCUN) AND**  
**THE GERMAN RECTORS' CONFERENCE (HRK)**  
**IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF RECTORS OF ASCUN N° 158**

The Colombian Association of Universities (ASCUN) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) met within the framework of the 158th ASCUN National Council of Rectors, held on March 20 and 21, 2025 at the Universidad La Gran Colombia (Bogotá, Colombia), to strengthen cooperation between universities in both countries.

Both associations confirm that there are common interests and the willingness to maintain and strengthen fruitful relationships between universities in both countries. They also share the need further to develop the higher education systems and international cooperation to contribute to our students and academics, to the communities we serve and to our countries.

At the same time, ASCUN and HRK emphasize that universities play a fundamental role in the scenarios of transformation of our societies, through responsibility in all areas of their mission functions: teaching and learning, research, knowledge transfer, as well as in their operations, infrastructure and governance and all their capacities. Aware of the transformative impact of universities in building more inclusive and sustainable societies, we confirm our commitment to strengthening universities as key players in the dynamic "knowledge rectangle" of education, research, innovation and culture, and thus fostering their long-term contribution to solving the main challenges of the 21st century.

Recognizing the long-standing, trusting and fruitful cooperation between German and Colombian universities, and convinced that close international cooperation is an important prerequisite and an essential contribution to achieving their goals, ASCUN and HRK undertake to work together along the following strategic lines:

1. Reaffirm university autonomy as an essential principle to guarantee academic freedom and scientific independence, thus contributing to social progress and sustainable development.
2. Adapt and innovate in the face of social and demographic changes, seeking solutions that allow our institutions to evolve and guarantee their sustainability, positively impacting the communities we serve.
3. Strengthen a mixed, plural, diverse and collaborative university system that encourages cooperation between different types of higher education institutions, ensuring plurality in academic approaches and promoting equity in access to higher education.
4. Promote strategies to overcome xenophobia and discrimination in higher education institutions.



5. Lead the development and use of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies in higher education in the face of the challenges of digital transformation, ensuring their ethical and responsible integration in research, teaching and governance.
6. Continue promoting academic and cultural mobility in all its forms—geographic, virtual and intersectoral—as a key tool for the cultural, scientific and social enrichment of our nations.
7. Seek opportunities to enhance cooperation in research and higher education among the institutions they represent, advocating for safe, secure and sustainable internationalization in higher education.
8. Promote open science and ethics in research, fostering scientific collaboration based on the principles of transparency, inclusiveness and ethics, to generate accessible knowledge applicable to global challenges.
9. Share good practices in dual training in higher education.
10. Hold follow-up meetings on the agreements signed.