



PRESS RELEASE
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Poznań at the centre of the European debate on the future of universities

On 20 May this year, education leaders from across Europe will meet at Poznan University of Technology to discuss the future of academic cooperation in the European Union. The 3rd European Universities Conference will bring together representatives of EU institutions, rectors, experts and practitioners involved in the internationalisation of higher education.

Organised by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (FRSE), the conference is one of the most important European events dedicated to the European Universities initiative. This year's edition, under the theme "**Shaping the Future of European Universities – Integrated Knowledge, Capacity and Skills**", focuses on exploring how education, research and innovation can be effectively combined into a single coherent system that responds to the challenges facing Europe today.

European higher education has been undergoing a dynamic transformation in recent years. The Bologna Process and programmes such as Erasmus+ have significantly transformed the academic environment, increasing the mobility of students and staff and supporting the harmonisation of education systems in Europe. Flexible learning pathways, microcredentials and the recognition of qualifications, which respond to the changing needs of the labour market and learners' expectations, are becoming increasingly important today.

In this context, joint and double degree programmes developed within the European Universities play a particularly important role, providing access to international career pathways and strengthening the competitiveness of universities. In this context, joint and double degree programmes developed within the European Universities play a particularly important role, providing access to international career pathways and strengthening the competitiveness of universities.

The 3rd European Universities Conference will be officially opened by **Dr Marcin Kulasek, Minister of Science and Higher Education, Mirosław Marczewski, Director-General of FRSE and Prof. Teofil Jesionowski, Rector of Poznan University of Technology.**

Bogdan Zdrojewski, Member of the European Parliament and rapporteur for the Erasmus+ programme, will also join the opening session.

Immediately afterwards, the introductory lecture will be delivered by **Benedikt Brisch**, Head of Division Knowledge Exchange and Network at the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), who will address the role of innovative universities in shaping the future of Europe amid growing global uncertainty.

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Further speakers will include **Dr Fatma Sayed** from the European University Institute and **Jon Gunnar Mølstre Simonsen**, who has been involved for many years in the development of European quality standards and academic cooperation. The perspective of EU institutions will be presented by **Ewa Kocińska-Lange** from the European Commission and **Iwona Jabłońska** from the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, while research-intensive universities will be represented by **Ivana Didak** from The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities.

Representatives of Polish universities actively involved in developing European cooperation will also play a key role in the discussion, including **Klementyna Kielak** from the University of Warsaw and **Radostaw Stanczewski** from SWPS University. The section on research and innovation will feature recognised academics such as **Prof. Cristina Satriano** from the University of Catania and **Prof. Tadeusz Uhl** from the AGH University of Krakow, who will highlight the growing role of universities as centres of knowledge and technology transfer.

The conference will provide a platform for expert discussion on the direction of change in European higher education. The discussion will focus on the development of joint European degrees, new forms of education – including microcredentials – and building the competences of the future. Strengthening synergies between education and research will also play a key role in the discussion, particularly in the context of cooperation between the Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe programmes.

The event will also present the findings of a study on the impact of European Universities alliances on Polish higher education institutions, illustrating how participation in this initiative contributes to institutional development, the quality of education and the internationalisation of higher education.

The discussions will also cover issues related to responsible global cooperation, knowledge security and the protection of fundamental academic values, such as university autonomy and freedom of research. In the face of growing geopolitical tensions, these issues are becoming increasingly important in shaping the direction of higher education development.

The sessions will be moderated by representatives of the academic and expert communities, including **Katarzyna Aleksy**, Director of the Higher Education Programmes Department at FRSE, **Prof. Mariusz Głąbowski**, Vice-Rector of Poznan University of Technology, and **dr hab. Patrycja Matusz**, Professor at the University of Wrocław and Vice-Rector for Internationalisation.

The conference in Poznań forms part of the process of building the European Education Area and strengthening the European Universities initiative, one of the European Union's most ambitious integration projects of recent years. It is within this initiative that a new model of university cooperation is being developed, based on lasting partnerships, joint education programmes and increased mobility of students and academic staff.



The 3rd European Universities Conference is not only expert in nature, but also has a clearly strategic dimension, providing a forum for developing directions for education policy in Europe. The conclusions drawn from this year's debates will be important both for the further shaping of higher education systems in the Member States and for Europe's position in the global competition for talent, knowledge and innovation.

The event partner is Poznan University of Technology, and it is held under the patronage of the Minister of Science and Higher Education and the President of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland.

A publication presenting the FRSE's contribution to the European debate on joint and double degree programmes is available at: <https://www.frse.org.pl/czytelnia/joint-and-double-programmes-in-europe>.

More details about the conference in Poznań are available at: <https://erasmusplus.org.pl/3rd-european-universities-conference>.