Concluding statement by the Presidents of Aix-Marseille Université, the Universitat de Barcelona, the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and the Sapienza-Università di Roma

“Towards a northern Mediterranean Transnational Campus”

Today, Europe and the Mediterranean region are facing new and numerous challenges. These contain major threats that call for our learning communities to combine and strengthen their forces.

In the last three decades, the political sphere alone was able to guarantee the stability of major geopolitical equilibria, peace, and the planning of long-term public policies. Today, however, politicians need the support of the research and teaching communities because they have enjoyed more durable forms of stability and they can be mobilised to pass on to the younger generations the fundamental values of the European project and of Mediterranean solidarity.

Preparing for the next generation has always been one of the key roles of universities. Today, tightening the union of our fundamental values has become vital as well as promoting them among young people through reinforced cooperation. With this in mind, our four universities are joining forces to explore wider integration ventures for the benefit of the European Project and of the Mediterranean.

While in the Northern European countries, civil society and academic communities have long adopted this very method of integration in order to advance their international standing, it has not been the case for the learning communities in the countries of the Mediterranean perimeter. Strengthening integration is therefore an urgent concern for Southern Europe as a whole and this leads to two types of action. First, we have to fortify the economic and democratic activity of Euro-Mediterranean countries by harnessing the contributions of their scientific and academic potential; and, second, we have to promote increased openness to foster more formalised and durable means of cooperation with the Mediterranean countries neighbouring the European Union.
In this context, the presidents of our four universities have decided to strengthen their cooperation and to structure their project of setting up a Mediterranean Transnational Campus around the four axes: (1) Intensify the relationships between the consortium partners in the areas of mobility, training, research, and innovation; (2) Implement joint large-scale projects within a European and international framework; (3) Define targeted themes or fields of excellence that are shared by consortium members; (4) Highlight partners’ academic and scientific potential as well as ranking and mobilisation capacities.

In addition, we are investigating the following types of practical action:

- Student mobility and development of multilateral degrees
- Cooperation in the framework of European programmes
- Collaborative research activities
- Joint summer school projects

Done at Marseille, April 3rd, 2017

For Aix-Marseille Université,

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