

# OPINION

of the

European Economic and Social Committee

on the

**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Supporting growth and jobs - an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems**

COM(2011) 567 final

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Rapporteur: **Joost P. van Iersel**

Co-rapporteur: **Juraj Stern**

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## Key points:

- Well-designed higher education is critical for Europe's economic and intellectual future, strengthening the basis of social and economic performances, enriching living and working conditions of the coming generation(s), and being indispensable for shaping future values in European society.
- The EESC underlines that the EU Agenda needs to be completed and expects more ambition from the Council.
- The EESC insists on effective synergies between the various types and on flexible learning pathways at all levels of education; smart specialisation and distinctive profiles are needed.
- Europe 2020 should be fully applied, in substance as well as in organisation.
- Autonomy, accountability, and transparency of the institutions are key to fulfil their mission and to generate better value for money. These are also crucial for putting higher education at the centre of job creation, employability and innovation.
- Funding is vital.
- More students, knowledge workers and researchers in the technical field are needed; technical education has to be presented more attractively.
- Universities and business, both sides keeping their independence and responsibilities, should jointly develop strategic innovation agendas.
- The EESC welcomes the launch of a carefully designed U-Multirank.
- Convergence of higher education systems positively affects conditions of cross-border mobility of students and researchers which is beneficial for individual performances as well as for the European labour market and European integration.
- The EESC endorses strongly a link between the Modernisation Agenda and Horizon 2020, Erasmus for All and the Structural Funds.

Brussels, 28 March 2012