

The Magna Charta of European Universities

(Bologna, 18 September 1988)

Preamble

The undersigned Rectors of European Universities, gathered in Bologna for the ninth centenary of the oldest University in Europe, four years before the definitive abolition of boundaries between the countries of the European Community; looking forward to far-reaching co-operation between all European nations and believing that peoples and States should become more than ever aware of the part that universities will be called upon to play in a changing and increasingly international society, consider:

- 1) that at the approaching end of this millennium the future of mankind depends largely on cultural, scientific, and technical development; and that this is built up in centres of culture, knowledge, and research as represented by true universities;
- 2) that the universities' task of spreading knowledge among the younger generations implies that, in today's world, they must also serve society as a whole; and that the cultural, social, and economic future of society requires, in particular, a considerable investment in continuing education;
- 3) that universities must give future generations education and training that will teach them, and through them, others, to respect the great harmonies of their natural environment and of life itself.

The undersigned Rectors of European Universities proclaim to all States and to the conscience of all nations the fundamental principles which must, now and always, support the vocation of universities.

Fundamental Principles

1. The university is an autonomous institution at the heart of societies differently organized because of geography and historical heritage; it produces, examines, appraises, and hands down culture by research and teaching.

To meet the needs of the world around it, its research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power.

2. Teaching and research in universities must be inseparable if their tuition is not to lag behind changing needs, the demands of society, and advances in scientific knowledge.

3. Freedom in research and training is the fundamental principle of university life, and governments and universities, each as far as in them lies, must ensure respect for this fundamental requirement.

Rejecting intolerance and always open to dialogue, a university is an ideal meeting ground for teachers capable of imparting their knowledge and well equipped to develop it by research and innovation and students entitled, able and willing to enrich their minds with that knowledge.

4. A university is the trustee of the European humanist tradition; its constant care is to attain universal knowledge; to fulfil its vocation, it transcends geographical and political frontiers, and affirms the vital need for different cultures to know and [to] influence each other.

The Means

To attain these goals by following such principles calls for effective means, suitable to present conditions.

1. To preserve freedom in research and teaching, the instruments appropriate to realize that freedom must be made available to all members of the university community.

2. Recruitment of teachers, and regulation of their status, must obey the principle that research is inseparable from teaching.

3. Each university must - with due allowance for particular circumstances - ensure that its students' freedoms are safeguarded, and that they enjoy conditions in which they can acquire the culture and training which it is their purpose to possess.

4. Universities - particularly in Europe - regard the mutual exchange of information and documentation, and frequent joint projects for the advancement of learning, as essential to the steady progress of knowledge.

Therefore, as in the earliest years of their history, they encourage mobility among teachers and students; furthermore, they consider a general policy of equivalent status, titles, examinations (without prejudice to national diplomas), and award of scholarships essential to the fulfillment of their mission in the conditions prevailing today.

The undersigned Rectors, on behalf of their Universities, undertake to do everything in their power to encourage each State, as well as the supranational organizations concerned, to mould their policy sedulously on this Magna Charta, which expresses the universities' unanimous desire freely determined and declared.