Open letter to CULT Committee members on priorities for education

Dear Members of the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education,

As a network of nineteen of the most distinguished research-intensive universities in Europe, we congratulate you on your election and thank you for choosing to contribute to the work of the CULT Committee.

Universities are unique in their mission to generate new knowledge, educate the next generation of citizens and engage with businesses, the public sector and civil society. This makes universities instrumental in realising any vision for the future of Europe. At a time when other major economies are investing heavily in their universities, it is essential that the EU takes decisive steps to ensure that academic institutions in Europe retain their position amongst the best in the world.

For that reason, we join the call of the academic community to add research and education in the name of the Commissioner's portfolio to reflect the importance of both research and education for the role, and for Europe at large.

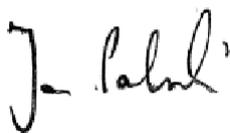In your work at the CULT Committee, The Guild universities call on you to:

- **Defend an ambitious budget for Erasmus+** to ensure the programme delivers on its ambitious objectives. It is crucial that the budget reserved for student mobility, which has been fundamental in the programme's success, is sufficient to offer all students equal opportunities for international mobility as part of their curricula.

- **Ensure Erasmus+ supports the development of all types of transferable skills**. Although digital competences are an important element of employability and the development towards a knowledge society, the programme should support the development of skills relevant across all sectors such as interdisciplinarity, open science and intercultural engagement.

- **Provide support for mobility and cooperation projects across all study fields**, not limited to ostensibly 'forward looking' study fields only. The changing nature of the labour market and the societal challenges of our time require students to develop transferable skills that can spur innovative approaches in all study fields.

- **Support the European University alliances as an important pillar of the European Education Area and help them in delivering on their vision**. Whilst acknowledging the significant potential of alliances to advance transnational collaboration, the priority should remain to achieve qualitative changes so Europe's universities become more competitive globally.

- **Continue strengthening the international dimension of Erasmus+** with additional funds to increase the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area. Erasmus+ should also enable international collaboration within the European Universities initiative. Universities have over the years formed strong partnerships with UK and Swiss colleagues based on their outstanding strength in education, research and innovation, and should be supported to continue the free exchange of ideas.

- **Support the integration of research, innovation and education in a meaningful way**. **For this to happen, it is essential to include higher education institutions in the design and implementation of this vision**. One such example is the area of developing digital proficiencies and eradicating the digital divide which requires a coordinated effort in both education and research. Although building synergies across EU funding instruments will be crucial**,** we should not compromise the core values of Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ programme.

We hope that you will be able to support these principles in the legislative work and policy development related to Erasmus+ programme and take them into account in the preparation of the hearing of Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner-designate for Innovation and Youth.

The Guild looks forward to working with you during the next five years and remains at your disposal for collaboration and advice in the field of education.

Sincerely,

Professor Jan Palmowski
Secretary-General of The Guild