

June 27, 2024, in Paris

Excellence in research, education and innovation cannot be built without openness to the world!

France is, and must remain, a major country for research, innovation and education in order to meet the major challenges of today and tomorrow. In support of the France Universities declaration of June 13, 2024, entitled "The university: a compass for democracy", and the article published in Le Monde on June 23, the member universities of Udice wish to reiterate the founding principles of the university: its public service mission, academic freedom, independence of research, critical thinking and the need to foster fruitful debate.

As centers of excellence in French research and education, places of innovation, sharing and value creation, we research-intensive universities with strong international reputations, members of Udice, will never compromise on the principles that drive us. Our universities will always be an impenetrable bulwark against anti-Semitism, racism and all forms of rejection of others and differences. Our universities are places of freedom for research, which must not be subject to the dictates of utilitarianism, and which must support and protect teachers-researchers, researchers and students in their work. Our universities are also strongly marked by the international dimension that underpins the reputation and excellence of their research.

Together, we are working to promote excellence in French research, education and innovation. Faced with growing international competition, our universities have been in transformation for nearly fifteen years now, structuring lively and attractive sites at regional, national and international levels, and developing their visibility. This far-reaching transformation of the French higher education landscape has required a great deal of energy and commitment on the part of all our communities, but it now enables France to rely on open, strong universities that are recognized for their expertise. Now more than ever, the autonomy of our universities represents a major challenge and a necessary condition for continuing the momentum we have begun, and for ensuring our country's academic competitiveness and economic sovereignty.

But excellence in research, education and innovation cannot be built without openness to the world!

Science, knowledge and research know no borders. That's why we'll never give up on keeping our lecture halls and laboratories open to the international professors and researchers who contribute so much to the reputation and international appeal of our universities. What's true for teachers and researchers is also true for students. We cannot accept that political choices should prevent international students from coming to our universities or limit the international mobility of our students. Restricting exchanges and hindering the arrival of international researchers and students under any pretext whatsoever would mean an inevitable regression in the scientific excellence of our universities, and would run counter to any policy of innovation, progress and economic development. The criteria that guide our strategic choices will therefore never be determined by discrimination and dogmatism.

As such, we will always be committed to the free movement of ideas, researchers, teachers and students, both within Europe and internationally. For us, this means both continuing to contribute to the development of the European Research Area, and campaigning for greater autonomy and fair funding for universities.

Formée en octobre 2020 autour des dix universités labellisées IdEx, Udice porte aujourd'hui la voix de treize universités et établissements français à forte intensité de recherche, œuvrant pour une recherche d'excellence, la performance de l'enseignement supérieur, et le développement d'écosystèmes d'innovation attractifs. Ses membres sont : Aix-Marseille Université, Institut Polytechnique de Paris, Sorbonne Université, Université de Bordeaux, Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1, Université Côte d'Azur, Université Grenoble Alpes, Université de Lorraine, Université de Montpellier, Université Paris Cité, Université Paris-Saclay, Université Paris Sciences et Lettres, Université de Strasbourg.

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