

**Common Statement  
of the Czech Rectors Conference and the Slovak Rectors Conference  
Bratislava, 4 December 2015**

A joint meeting of the Czech Rectors Conference ("CRC") and the Slovak Rectors Conference ("SRC") was held in Bratislava on December 3 and 4, 2015. Personnel and institutional links between higher education institutions in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, their staff and students, have been on an above-average level for a long time. Based on the common history and long tradition of associations of higher education institutions rectors in the two countries, CRC and SRC hold joint meetings at the highest academic level regularly. Debates of rectors are important not only for consolidation of existing contacts and cooperation, but also for establishing new partnerships and exchange of information and thoughts.

1. CRC and SRC members got acquainted with developments in higher education sector in the last two years. CRC representatives presented the latest changes in legislation on higher education and the financial framework in which they operate. SRC representatives introduced their home institutional environment, newly built infrastructure and informed about top research teams at Slovak universities.
2. Rectors of higher education institutions appreciated good relationships, existing cooperation and opportunities the academic staff and students in both countries have on bilateral and European level. CRC and SRC call for further deepening of the existing cooperation, for example in Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, Marie Curie Sklodowska Actions, and joint programmes. An important prerequisite for its realization is and will be a two-way exchange of students and teachers and the quality character.
3. The Higher Education Institutions Act in both countries defines higher education institutions as supreme educational, scientific and artistic institutions. Czech and Slovak higher education institutions are part of the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area. The mission of the higher education institutions is to develop balanced personalities, establish knowledge, cultivate human wisdom, goodness and creativity, and contribute to the development of education, science, culture and health for well-being of the whole society, and thus to the development of knowledge society. CRC and SRC recommend focusing attention also to cultural and social dimension of higher education institutions, i.e. protection, enhancement and dissemination of the national cultural heritage. To completely fulfil their potential, higher education institutions need the support of decision makers as well as of the general public.
4. Higher education is aimed at applied research, innovation and practice in the world today, being oblivious to the non-economic benefits of higher education. Basic research without topic limitation in social sciences, humanities and liberal arts, the fields that are small and rare but representing an integral part of the higher education landscape, are being overshadowed increasingly. CRC and SRC join the initiative of partner European Rectors Conferences to preserve and promote small and rare fields of study.
5. Present time is affected by environmental challenges, global problems associated with military conflicts and political-economic instability especially in Africa and Asia. Czech and Slovak higher education institutions proclaim the ambition to take part in reaching solutions to these problems.

6. CRC and SRC appeal to the governments of their countries for promoting a long-term vision of development of higher education, providing sufficient and sustainable funding, adopting adequate legislation, and promoting broad institutional autonomy (organizational, financial, personnel, and academic), as in other developed European countries.
7. Since the creation of the joint state in 1918, higher education institutions in the Czech Republic and Slovakia have brought up millions of graduates who have contributed to the social and economic development of Czechoslovakia as well as the later separate republics. Higher education is the best investment in the life of every human being. Institutes of both states define higher education as a right, therefore, the state is obliged to provide each student with a respectable environment, modern infrastructure and opportunities for personal and career development. Finance spent on education, science and research are investments in the future of our nations.

Bratislava, 4 December 2015

Prof. Dr. Rudolf Kropil  
President  
Slovak Rectors Conference

Prof. Dr. Tomáš Zima  
President  
Czech Rectors Conference