



# **Resolution of the Common Meeting of Slovak Rectors Conference and Czech Rectors Conference**

**Prague, 2-3 June 2022**

Slovak Rectors Conference (SRC) and Czech Rectors Conference (CRC) adopted at the Common Meeting of SRC and CRC the following resolution:

1. SRC and CRC, after getting acquainted with the situation in both countries since the last common meeting, which took place on 6 and 7 June 2019 hosted by the SRC in Bratislava, consider it important to inform each other about the state and development of Slovak and Czech Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), which is a basic precondition for deepening cooperation in higher education, science and research. The meeting, which was to be held in the Czech Republic hosted by the CRC in 2021, had to be postponed to 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. SRC and CRC exchanged their views on the period in 2020 and 2021, when due to the COVID-19 pandemic, regular full-time teaching could not take place for most of the academic year and distance forms of education had to be reached. In both countries, this confirmed that the digitalisation of higher education should be integrated into the curriculum in order to modernize the environment, but to a responsible extent so that the quality of such education is at a comparable level to that of full-time education.
3. SRC and CRC both oppose the war waged by the Russian Federation in Ukraine and call for its immediate end. Both conferences seek to help HEIs in Ukraine, as well as Ukrainian students studying in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic and Ukrainian applicants. In addition, there are groups of volunteers from the ranks of students and academics at HEIs in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic, who selflessly help not only Ukrainian students, but all Ukrainian refugees. We live in a world in which human solidarity is essential, which is why the SRC and the CRC are calling on society to defend the democratic values that are under threat in Europe today.
4. Common goal of the SRC and the CRC is a full representation of HEIs in the European Higher Education Area, the European Education Area and the European Research Area. HEIs of both countries want to be a part of the debate on the position of HEIs in the future of Europe and call on politicians to include the position and mission of HEIs, which are exceptional in combining the so-called knowledge triangle – education, research and innovation –, in their visions. SRC and CRC agreed that in terms of legislation, especially the Higher Education Act, they consider the principle of university autonomy, including financial flow management, and equal access to science and research funding to be the most important issues in both countries. They call for more confidence, for academic freedoms not only for individuals but also for HEIs Institutions, and for an adherence to the promise made by ministers at the Rome Conference (2020), which committed ministers to respect for institutional autonomy, academic freedoms and integrity, student and staff participation on higher education management and public responsibility for higher education. Both SRC and CRC consider a quality system of accreditations, objective evaluation of the quality of HEIs and their internationalization to be no less important. They encourage their accreditation bureaus to become members of the European ENQA Network as soon as possible and to be registered in the European EQAR Register.

5. Rising energy prices and inflation in both countries, as well as declining funding for public higher education in the Slovak Republic, may put higher education in an unfavorable situation. In the spirit of the latest UNESCO Recommendations (2022), which declare that higher education is an important priority and can contribute to a social, economic and environmental transformation needed to address the most pressing issues, adequate resources need to be provided for HEIs so that they can devote themselves to service the society. SRC and CRC therefore consider it important to increase the funding of public HEIs every year so that the part of public finances in GDP spent on higher education is in the foreseeable future comparable to the OECD average.
6. SRC and CRC decided to continue the tradition of common meetings and confirmed that the next meeting will take place on 6 and 7 June 2024 hosted by the SRC in the Slovak Republic. In this context, they also consider the cooperation within the European University Association, of which both SRC and CRC have been full collective members since its formation in 2001, to be important. Both SRC and CRC have a history of almost 30 years. The establishment of the SRC from the Czech and Slovak University Rectors Club dates back to 25 November 1992, the establishment of the CRC to 28 January 1993.

Prague, 3 June 2022

On behalf of the Slovak Rectors Conference

Prof. Rudolf Kropil  
President

On behalf of the Czech Rectors Conference

Prof. Martin Bareš  
President