

Udine, Italy, 29th and 30th June 2017



Welcome Address

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Thank you again, I'll be brief because I had the opportunity to speak to you yesterday, but on behalf of the International Association of Universities, I'd like to add that we welcome the opportunity to be here with all of you.

As an international organization, we care deeply about European institutions in the context of the global higher education environment. So, two points about the higher education environment in the context of G7 and Italy: in our view of Education for All, we need as international organizations to pay more attention to students and faculties on the margins, and I'll just mention two groups that the International Association of Universities sees as significant in the next twenty to thirty years.

One is the real significant gender bias that occurs in higher education: it has been true for hundreds of years, it is less true in 2017 than it was fifty years ago, but there is still a wide differential between opportunities for women and men in leadership in higher education, in faculty roles and in terms of student engagement, particularly in the areas I mentioned yesterday where growth is significant. If one looks at the fields of science and technology there is discrimination and yes, you heard me correctly, I use the term 'discrimination' although I understand it is a strong term. We, as a group of education leaders, particularly as we engage in G7 conversations, need to realize it is our responsibility to be more aware of how we engage with our faculties and students and model that education, and model that relationship. I do hope in our talks today we can spend a little more time on that issue, with the emphasis on 'all'; my colleague put the emphasis on education, I will put the emphasis in terms of the international association on 'all'.

The second point is that we will see tremendous growth in the student population; by 2030 we will have 400 million students studying around the globe. Many of them are interested in studying in Europe, many of them are interested in studying in Italy for the reasons we described yesterday:

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G7 UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION FOR ALL UDINE

tremendous cultural context, tremendous history, tremendous opportunity to learn from the higher education specialists who have spent their entire lives and many centuries in higher education. The university system began here. When we think of the 400 million students, most of that growth is going to come from countries that did not experience our rich tradition over 400 years. For example China, where most of the universities are relatively new with academic freedom still being worked through. We need to think more about how we model ourselves to students from countries where academic freedom and freedom of speech is understood in a very different context.

Just one more word about that growth. In the United States, for example, at the graduate level we have an enormous number of foreign students but in the last year, at Fordham - like at most institutions - half, half of foreign students are from China, half. And that was not the case ten years ago, we expect that number to grow, we expect the number of Chinese students who appear in European and North American contexts to really shift the emphasis in terms of disciplines and import.

I only bring that 400 million number to our attention because if we think about education for all, we need to pay even more attention to the students who will be coming our way from other parts of the world. The fact that are they looking for experience is not only relevant for themselves but relevant for the global context that we find ourselves engaged in; issues of sustainability, climate change, disease transmission, these are issues that people from around the world are going to expect Italian universities and European institutions to take as seriously as possible.

So thank you all for inviting the International Association to be part of these discussions and we look forward to a day enriched with opinion. We are an opinion-rich community, I noticed that in Italy and I think it's wonderful and I hope to have those opinions even more enriched by our conversations today.

Thank you.