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**Session: Is there a need for National and European Strategies to achieve the  
Knowledge Triangle.**

**Conference: “The Knowledge Triangle shaping the future of Europe. Gothenburg,  
Sweden. 31 August . 2 September 2009**

Question: *Is there a need for national and European strategies to achieve the  
knowledge triangle?’ (5-7min)*

Let me first to thank to the SE Presidency for the organisation of this final session on  
the possible need for National and European Strategies to achieve the Knowledge  
Triangle. It is very timely to discuss on these issues in times of economic crisis.

It is a pleasure and an honour for me to be here today to share with you our views on the  
knowledge triangle.

From the perspective of a catching-up country like Spain in terms of Higher Education,  
R&D and Innovation, the answer to the question raised by the moderator is, no doubt,  
**positive.**

We are convinced of the need of a **new knowledge-based sustained economic model.**  
However, though important, education, research and innovation may not be enough by  
themselves without a medium-term and long-term vision of their inter-relation and on  
the key role that universities have to play because of their three missions.

In an increasingly globalised world with a new geographical division of labour between  
knowledge-intensive and non knowledge-related activities, we must develop National  
and European strategies and investments in the knowledge-based economy **to remain  
competitive** at a global scale.

The role of universities in the development of a new social and economic model must  
be based in the interaction with local environments, i.e. cities and regions. **We need  
innovative regions at national and European level**, where knowledge-based  
innovation plays a key role in the regional economic growth and development.

This means better and increased efforts to further develop **effective interactions**  
between higher education, research and innovation to better address the socio-economic  
challenges that today face modern societies on climate change, energy, health, poverty,  
water, etc. These interactions pave the ground to develop a more robust culture and  
social recognition of the role of talent and creativity as well as the extension of  
entrepreneurship based in frontier knowledge.

In the development of these strategies to get a better integration of the knowledge triangle, the **role of universities** is essential to achieve the change towards a new knowledge-based productive model.

**We need** to develop at National level the modernisation of the higher education sector in line with the **European Modernisation Agenda for Universities**, but preserving the diversity of university profiles to reach **excellence** through different pathways in any side of the knowledge triangle. In Spain, the modernisation strategy is developed in the **“Strategy University 2015”** where through eleven strategic axes it is intended to prepare Spanish universities for their new integral responsibility, i.e. socio-cultural-economic, at different geographical levels (regional, national and international) and on specific knowledge domains.

**We need** to provide the right framework and incentives to allow the development of **strong education, research and innovation ecosystems** and partnerships where the different actors, i.e. universities, research institutions, business and administrations may interact, compete, collaborate, develop and excel.

**We need** to give universities sufficient autonomy to develop their own profiles to properly deliver their missions, based on their own strengths and design funding and incentives schemes at national level that recognise the diversity of ways to achieve excellence and contribute to the knowledge-based innovations needed to develop the knowledge-based society.

In Spain the new program **“International Campus of Excellence”** tries to develop this concept, considering interaction with the local environment (university campus), excellence (talent and creativity in teaching, research and innovation plus quality of social services and infrastructures) and internationalisation (contribution to increase the attractiveness of the territory to attract, motivate and retain the best students, professors and researchers as well as innovative businesses based on the results of university-based research).

On the interactions between education and research we need to reform and improve the **doctoral programs** where the links between the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area are more evident. The revision of the present structures and the creation of **International Doctoral Schools** may help to advance on the role of the present university departments and faculties.

**We need** to foster the dynamics of our university system, analysing the strategic alliances and new forms of cooperation between universities, other research institutions and businesses in research and innovation ecosystems.

**We need** to promote the **internationalization** and extension to third developing countries, e.g. Latin-America, of some successful European schemes promoting mobility of students, academics, technologists and researchers as a mean to increase the knowledge and attractiveness of Europe for young talents.

**We need** to move towards the development of an European Higher Education Area, considering the **societal dimension** of the third stream activities of universities, emphasizing their interaction and knowledge sharing with society, their engagement with local and regional communities and their contribution to overcome the global social challenges such as the fight against poverty, food and overpopulation in depressed areas, health, climate change, sustainable energy, etc.

Even if these times of economic crisis make evident the need to **change the economic productive model**, shifting to knowledge intensive sectors from sectors with low added value (i.e., construction, tourism, etc.) the urgency to face increasing unemployment is distracting the attention on the need to really adopt structural measures leading to a knowledge-based economy.

The influence of the integration of the knowledge triangle to change the economic model is related with the **need of well educated and skilled workers**, the **promotion of talent and innovation** as the key differential factor and the **contribution of knowledge-building institutions**, specially universities, to join efforts to really exploit their tremendous potential to contribute to a **sustained economic growth** with more and better jobs in more dynamic and productive economies.

Even if there is a wide acceptance on role of universities for social improvement and regional growth, this role is often forgotten in times of economic crisis. The consolidation of the three sides of the knowledge triangle may help to strengthen the economic recovery.

On the interaction between research and innovation, we can see now the results of an aggressive policy initiated in 2000 to create spaces promoting the relationship between universities and businesses. The Spanish **model of University Science Parks** has brought universities closer to the needs of the economic regional systems.

Moreover we have to consider how the results and policies of academic R&D and Innovation affect macroeconomics indicators like the GDP. In this sense, the experience of countries like Finland and Sweden show that countries that invest in knowledge, especially in times of crisis, get better results re-launching the economy after the crisis.

**I will finish** by announcing that the efforts of the SE Presidency on the knowledge triangle and the role of universities in it, will be continued by us during our Presidency when a series of activities will be organised.

Build on the outcomes of the SE Presidency, the Spanish Presidency will move further the implementation at operational level of the modernisation agenda for the European Knowledge Building Institutions.

Thank you very much for your kind attention