Universities as Partners and Contributors to the Agenda 2030

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Established in 2001
- Non-governmental membership organisation
- More than 800 individual university members
- 34 National Rectors’ Conferences Members
- 47 countries (European Higher Education Area)
- Independent voice of the university sector
- Forum for exchange, peer learning for members

In the ASEM Education Process:
- Stakeholder present since 2008
- Partner in ASEF Rectors’ Conference (ARC), development of ARC Policy recommendations
EUA and sustainable development

SDGs is a fast growing concern for the university sector
• First UN agenda to include higher education (MDG did not)
• Growing number of members base their strategies on the SDGs
• Universities have a role to play in all SDGs

EUA promotes the role of universities for the SDGs in general
• Education, research, and innovation facilitate achieving the goals
• SDG 4 (access to education) and SDG 9 (investment in research and innovation) also facilitate the achievement of sustainable development in general
• Policy development: EUA takes part to the EU SDG Stakeholder Platform
Universities play various roles in pluralistic societies, e.g.:

- Gathering and providing robust evidence about the state of the planet and sustainability
- Training next generation of citizens and professionals, with a responsibility to include sustainability in this training
- Ability to work across disciplines, with different types of partners on solution for complex problems
  - Technological research – new technical solutions
  - Social science and humanities – new societal solutions
- As key actors for international partnerships
Strong institutions for strong partnerships

There is a clear link between Goal 16 and 17
• In order to have meaningful partnerships, strong institutions are needed

Going beyond strong state institutions
• Universities in Europe are both (often) public institutions and part of civil society
• They have institutional autonomy (to a varying degree)
• Academic freedom - Speaking truth to power
• ... And resources to implement their own strategies
Universities as partner in innovation ecosystems

Universities play a vital role in innovation beyond technical solutions

Shape and reproduce values (such as sustainability)

Facilitates co-creation

- Empowering citizens – citizen science
- Facilitating up-take of social and technical solutions by companies and authorities
Universities as global partners

Science is traditionally international
• More so in an age of big science and high complexity

Universities can play a role as channels of contact
• People to people contact (student mobility)
• Science diplomacy
• Institutional cooperation – also with a capacity-building aspect
• Common action for achieving the SDGs globally
  ✓ Common action for quality education (Goal 4)
  ✓ Strengthening institutions together (Goal 16)
  ✓ Developing knowledge-based solutions
Knowledge needs to be acknowledged as a key facilitator for sustainability

Universities play a key role as (co-)producers of knowledge

... and they play a key role as powerful non-state actors with a global reach

... which is probably why universities are becoming increasingly engaged in sustainable development and in global partnerships for the goals

Would the ASEM Education Process also become a place for such global partnerships?
Thank you for your attention