

UNICA

Student Conference Europe through Students' Eyes

We 22 Sept 2010 – Aula Magna, Sapienza

It is a very great pleasure for me to join my distinguished colleagues, the Rectors of the three main State Universities of Rome, and welcome you all, students and staff from the various universities of Europe, at this important gathering.

My own institution, the Fourth State University of Rome, takes its name from the famous "Foro Italico", a world-renowned monumental sport complex designed and built in the late 1920s for and around the National Academy of Physical Education, which, after several transformations, was recently upgraded into the newly established university of today.

We have greatly diversified the original study areas and, although still centered on sport and movement, we have considerably expanded both teaching and research, from the classical areas of Physical Activity in Education and Sport Coaching, to a variety of new areas such as Wellbeing, Health and Prevention in relation to sport and lifestyle, or Sport Management, Tourism, Communication, Social Integration, Cooperation, etc.

Even so, that is why -- though being a State university of a European capital to all effects -- because of our recent origin, relatively minor dimensions, and largely vocational character, we are not yet part of the Unica consortium, which we however look forward to joining.

But we greatly appreciate the possibility granted to us of being part of this event, along with our elder sisters -- Sapienza and Tor Vergata (in both of which many of us and I myself have taught for several years), and RomaTre.

That is particularly so because -- precisely on account of our vocational focus on sport, movement, and the body, with the related emphasis on sport values and ethics -- we have a very special feeling for the young people and are very close and responsive to their energy, physical and intellectual, and enthusiasm.

We live a challenging time, in Europe and the world. A time of global crisis, which we very much experience in the university system but that affects all areas, the economy, the geopolitical system, individual societies and human society as a whole, indeed the whole planet and its frail and increasingly threatened equilibrium.

The role of the young generations, and particularly the role that can be played by you, the more motivated and committed students of Europe, is and will be crucial.

It will be through your energy and determination, your eagerness for change, novel ideas, skills and creativity, that our society, our planet, our values will be changed and the future will be shaped -- a future that in fact largely belongs to you, who will live in it.

Be welcome, and enjoy the meeting and your stay in Rome.

Paolo Parisi
The University of Rome "Foro Italico"