

## **Rotterdam declaration**

on

**a common position for Safe & Open Higher Education Institutions**

**in the European Higher Education Area**

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### **Preamble**

- Openness and accessibility are intrinsic values of higher education. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are learning communities where students can develop themselves not only in terms of employability but also for personal development, including the transfer of democratic values our European societies are built on. This makes them vulnerable and HEIs should be proud of that. But to be resilient as well, HEIs need a clear vision on their security and risk management.
- The outcome of the EYCS Council Meeting on 24 of February 2016 was to secure that the Paris declaration remains a dynamic and living document and to prepare the ground for possible future steps to strengthen the key contribution education can make towards personal development, social inclusion and participation, by imparting the fundamental values and principles on which our democratic societies are founded, such as the freedom of expression, democratic citizenship and equality.
- This Rotterdam declaration, formulated during the Conference on 'Safe and Open Higher Education' on June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 is a reaction to this appeal and calls for a common position on safety and security. HEIs which endorse this declaration will:
  1. Work on a realistic safety & security policy in their HEI to offer a safe but still open learning and working environment to their students and staff. This policy needs to be cohesively and sustainably structured and safeguarded within the organisation. Boards, staff and students have their own role and responsibilities in this.
  2. Call for close cooperation between HEIs to establish such a policy, based on their own social remit and make the necessary arrangements with local partners to be resilient and to support a proportionate response to incidents,
  3. Promote the valorisation of scientific research on safety issues like radicalisation, cybersecurity, integrity, safety policies, and other related topics.
  4. Invite other HEIs to work together where appropriate, by combining expertise, acting in concert, sharing best-practices, and development of practical approaches for the safety & security challenges HEIs are facing.

### **1. Work on a realistic safety & security policy for Safe & Open HEIs**

- European citizens know that a risk-free society does not exist and HEIs do not have to be safer than the rest of society. HEIs will continue to work on their transparent and reasonable safety & security policy while maintaining the specific open quality of the institutions.
- To this extent, HEIs can support each other with sharing best practices and case-studies. As an example, during the conference a manual is presented, developed within the Safe & Open program in the Netherlands with footholds for an integrated approach with references to practical approaches for the various safety and security topics.

### **2. Integration of teacher empowerment and prevention policies in an integrated safety & security policy**

- HEIs welcome the development of supporting tools for teacher empowerment to take a very active stand against all forms of discrimination and racism and to meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, to impart common fundamental values and to prevent and combat racism and intolerance to provide a safe and open teaching climate.

- HEIs underline that teachers are not alone in this challenge, but can rely on support within their organisation for example by complementary policies and arrangements with local partners.

### **3. Promoting valorisation of scientific research on safety & security**

- HEIs as the main public institutions for academic and applied research not only have the obligation but also the means to engage and ensure productive exchanges and joint actions between parties as scientists, policy makers, heads of boards, teachers, security officers etc. to create maximum synergy between knowing and doing that will bring researchers and practitioners to co-build solutions.
- The European Union, through calls FP7 and H2020 has funded several programs on Grand Societal Challenges. HEIs invite the European Commission to prepare further calls within the Horizon2020 programme, especially aiming at the effectiveness or cost-benefit analyses of integrated safety & security policies.

### **4. Further development**

- The HEIs which endorse this declaration underline the added value of working together on safety and security issues and invite other HEIs to do so, wherever necessary, by combining expertise, acting in concert, sharing best-practices, and development of practical approaches for the safety & security challenges HEIs are facing.
- In the autumn of 2016, the HEIs in the Safe and Open program in the Netherlands will present a quick-scan, based on the manual, presented as a best practice during the conference, and invite other HEIs to use it as a self-assessment to get a better insight in the way their safety and security policy contributes to a safe learning and working environment and options for improvement.