



EPICUR STATEMENT ON COMMITMENT TO MULTILINGUALISM

Inspired by the ambitions stipulated in the mission letter of the President of the European Commission to the Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel, the EPICUR European Universities Alliance herewith pledges its commitment to contribute to delivering on the objectives put forward in the mission letter. In particular the notion that “by cooperating across languages, borders, and disciplines we can collectively address the societal challenges and skill shortages that currently exist” fits perfectly with EPICUR’s core ambitions and values: fostering multilingualism and raising awareness on the key role European languages play in enhancing European identities.

From its inception, EPICUR has been a strong supporter of the European Commission’s aspiration that young Europeans should be able to speak two European languages in addition to their native language (Council meeting, 14 December 2017). As the linguistic diversity of EPICUR universities is one of the main strengths of the network, EPICUR aims at establishing a European ‘stock of knowledge and practice’ on multilingualism and interculturality that serves as a source of inspiration on future-proof language teaching in the context of training a new generation of Europeans across the European Education Area.

EPICUR strives to make European language learning exciting to (prospective) students. In doing so, EPICUR shall take into account students’ perspectives, and address students’ and staffs’ incentives for learning and studying European languages. Meanwhile EPICUR is mindful to adopt a sensible approach concerning levels of proficiency in line with the Common EU framework for language learning. Our ultimate objective is that, over time, EPICUR aspires to become one of Europe’s preferred suppliers on all issues related to European multilingualism and thereby not only preserving, but also enhancing Europe’s linguistic diversity and underpinning the role language plays in the immaterial preservation of cultural heritage.

EPICUR’s linguistic diversity is anchored in its core values and mission: one of our key objectives is to strengthen our existing, wide variety of language programmes and develop an inclusive institutional language policy for bi- or multilingual universities. Bringing together native speakers of a wide variety of European languages and building on a wealth of language offerings at the EPICUR partner universities, while being mindful of the importance English plays in the academic context, enables EPICUR to strengthen lingual, and intercultural, awareness among the alliance and beyond. EPICUR is keen to offer these outcomes to the Commission and other Higher Education Institutions as these outputs may serve as a blueprint for shaping this aspect of the European Education Area.

In sum, EPICUR is rising to the occasion and inspired by the Commission’s aspiration for trilingual Europeans by 2025 will step up and conceive a joint vision and approach concerning multilingualism and, more widely, inclusive governance in an academic context. EPICUR shares an intrinsic commitment to pursue, through mutual cooperation and dialogue, the establishment of a truly inclusive and welcoming future European university that is widely accessible to young Europeans from all corners of the continent. Inclusive language governance is a key prerequisite and essential first step in achieving this goal.

