



Brussels, 13 December 2011

Dear Rector,
Dear President,

December is a perfect time to reflect on the passing year and at the same time look forward to what the New Year may bring. The year 2011 has certainly been an exciting one for our Network: UNICA held numerous successful meetings and launched three major new initiatives on **Green Academic Footprint, Development Aid Cooperation, and International PR and Communication**. We participated in the EC consultations and issued a number of policy statements and publications. The success of the Work Programme 2011 gives us confidence that the Network will meet the challenges of the Work Programme for the upcoming year, as approved by our General Assembly in Tallinn.

The Network continues to develop EC-funded projects. UNICA has recently been granted a two-year extension of the **Higher Education Reform III Service Contract** and completed the **ExchangeAbility** project on fostering mobility of students with disabilities. The DVD you will find enclosed features short movies portraying everyday lives of student ExchangeAbility ambassadors. You will also find the movie that won the European Competition for Equity 2011.

With the beginning of 2012, the new UNICA Steering Committee will assume its duties. The current UNICA SC members **Dr. Inga Bostad** (University of Oslo), **Prof. Uwe Nagel** (Humboldt Universitaet zu Berlin), and **Prof. Rein Raud** (Tallinn University) will be joined by **Prof. Jean-Pierre De Greve** (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) and **Prof. Luciano Saso** (Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza"). On behalf of UNICA, I wish them good fortune and great success in their new responsibilities and I warmly thank the outgoing members, **Prof. Maria Amélia Martins-Loução** (Universidade de Lisboa) and **Prof. Ben Van Camp** (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) for their long-standing commitment to the Network. I also seize this opportunity to thank the UNICA General Assembly for their support and for electing me for the second term as UNICA President – I will continue with the same enthusiasm and collegial spirit.

As the New Year is approaching, we would like to encourage you to pencil in the dates of the **UNICA Rectors Seminar "EU-Canada: The Future of Academic Cooperation", Brussels, 24-25 September 2012**. Organised jointly with **the European Network for Canadian Studies, Université libre de Bruxelles and Vrije Universiteit Brussel**, it will bring together Rectors/Presidents from European and Canadian universities, high-level policy makers from the European institutions, and representatives of the Canadian government. The Seminar will address the global challenges faced by universities on both sides of the Atlantic and give an impetus for strengthening the existing links between Canadian and European higher education institutions. Enclosed, you will find the **preliminary programme** of the event.

And of course 2012 is the time for our student conference! We look forward to welcoming your students at the **UNICA Student Conference 2012 "The Ideal European University", University of Oslo, 10-13 October 2012**. The Conference is expected to bring together 300 participants from our universities.

I thank you for your ongoing engagement with UNICA and wish you a joyous holiday time and a very prosperous New Year.

With best regards,

Stavros A. Zenios, UNICA President