

***UNICA Rectors Seminar: The Treaty of Rome after 60 years:
Achievements and challenges of European Higher Education***

23-25 March 2017

Address by Prof. Vincenzo Mannino

Authorities, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, good morning, and welcome to Rome.

For the University Roma Tre, as well as for the sister universities in Rome (La Sapienza, Tor Vergata and Foro Italico), it is a great pleasure to have you here today and I would like to thank the people who organised this extraordinary event that allows us to have all of you here. First of all, I would like to thank the Secretariat and the Steering Committee of UNICA.

I am pleased to know that the universities of the European capitals are represented in this event organised as part of the 60th anniversary celebrations of signing of the Rome's Treaty to look at how specifically the European Universities have evolved in front of the – often difficult – process of European unification. The debate on the role of universities in today's society, looking at tomorrow's European Union, is a complex task, because the tensions against the unification process are now greater than it have been during the past years.

We are all familiar with the challenges of the European higher education area, and with the difficulties for the development of the European project as a whole. All of this will be the focus of our meeting and of our debate.

All of us know the challenge in front of us and I'm sure that the scheduled interventions will greatly help in focusing on the various issues before us. But I am sure that the interventions planned and the debate will greatly help in focusing on the various issues before us

What we must never forget is the direct contribution that the universities can give to the world of which they are a part, as well as the strong belief

that the universities have an fundamental role in contributing to the society's progress. The higher education is a fundamental engine guaranteeing sustainable development, economic progress and more generally social improvement.

On the other hand, this is the role of universities. I never get tired of saying that the oldest university in the world (the University of Bologna) was already founded as a place where students and professors coming from all over Europe studied together, have produced together new knowledge and then they as the ruling class of their time have helped the growth of the society.

We want to reaffirm this role of the university and possibly offer to the decision-makers a contribution in the analysis and solution of today's problems. I very much look forward to seeing the outcomes of the today's debate.

Now I do not want to keep you any further, and therefore I thank again all of you for your presence here today, and I wish you success for your discussions.