

CESAER

The strong and united voice of universities
of science and technology in Europe

President-elect Ursula von der Leyen
European Commission
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BELGIUM

CONCERNS: Title of portfolio 'Innovation and Youth' for Commissioner-designate Mariya Gabriel

DATE: 25th September 2019

Dear Ms Von Der Leyen

As President of [CESAER - the strong and united voice of universities of science and technology in Europe](#) - I welcome [your announcement](#) on 10th September 2019 regarding the proposed new European Commission.

I was pleased to read the [mission letter](#) to Commissioner-designate Mariya Gabriel which emphasises the value of coordination efforts across research, innovation and education, and I especially commend the clearly stated objectives to “[build a true European Research Area](#)” and to make the “[European Education Area a reality by 2025](#)”.

Strong support and coordination of all three areas of the [knowledge triangle – i.e. research, innovation and education - is at the heart of a knowledge-based society](#) and is required to provide the global scientific, economic and societal leadership needed to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG). Europe can, and should, lead the way on this journey and I am pleased that achieving the UN SDGs is a clearly stated overarching objective for the new Commission.

I was therefore surprised that the [proposed title](#) for Ms Gabriel's portfolio, “Youth and Innovation”, [does not reflect these three underpinning aspects of a knowledge-based society](#). While the title is a label, labels are important as they help coordinate, direct and prioritise our efforts as well as communicating clear purpose. For example, the definition of the UN SDGs has helped to create a common understanding and focus on the world's most urgent challenges.

I, therefore, respectfully urge you to revise the proposed title of Ms Gabriel's portfolio to be [Commissioner for Research, Innovation, Education and Youth](#). This would provide a strong signal about the strengthening of Europe's global leadership, and about our ambitions for truly world-leading research, innovation and education.

Yours Sincerely,



Sir Jim McDonald
President of CESAER
Principal & Vice-Chancellor of the University of Strathclyde