We have many challenges in today's Europe, like globalisation, climate change, our changing demographic profile. This makes it clear that Europe's future lies with its human capital: what the people know, and what they can do with their knowledge. And also: what they want to achieve with their knowledge? We always need a combination of know-how and values.

Universities can help us secure our future as a Europe of knowledge, grounded in the skills, know-how and creativity of its people. Why universities? For many reasons. One of them is that universities were linked to freedom in this continent, and it is still the case. Because, universities are creators of knowledge and innovation. Also, because universities prepare us for life after study – not just for jobs, but as responsible citizens as well…

Despite the fact that Europe has excellent institutions and researchers, we trail our world competitors in terms of our innovation performance. For these reasons, Member States have embarked on a programme of modernising our universities.

Curricula reform: Universities should adapt their curricula to the needs of modern society in order to be more exciting places to study, more in touch with the 'real world', and more attractive to lifelong learners.

# The modernisation of universities in Europe

**Festredner am Dies academicus 2008 war EU-Bildungskommissar Ján Figel. Er beförderte die Gründung des European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), um Netzwerke der Wissenschaft, Ausbildung und Technologie in Zukunftsgebieten zu etablieren. Auszüge aus seiner Rede lesen Sie hier:**

Governance reform: Government should provide the framework of rules and policy objectives, leaving universities free to set their own priorities. Universities need autonomy and accountability to take their own decisions. They should be able to develop their own profile and emphasize their strong points.

Funding reform: If universities are to establish a strong profile, they should be encouraged to broaden their funding base and attract private financial support…

»Vor mehr als zehn Jahren startete Deutschland eine Internationalisierungskampagne, um den Hochschulstandort Deutschland für Studierende aus aller Welt attraktiver zu machen. Weitere Reformprojekte kamen hinzu, die darauf abzielten, die Steuerung und Finanzierung der Hochschulen zu modernisieren und die Hochschulen den gewandelten Erfordernissen des 21. Jahrhunderts anzupassen. Bei all diesen Initiativen war die Technische Universität München von Anfang an tatkräftig beteiligt und machte anderen, bedächtigeren Universitäten vor, wie eine selbstbewusste und dynamische Hochschule ihr Geschick selbst in die Hand nehmen kann. Nicht zufällig darf sich die Technische Universität München heute mit dem Titel ›Exzellenzuniversität‹ schmücken...

Universities must be able to maintain their independent academic values and profile. On the other hand, there is growing pressure on the practical relevance and implications of university programmes, in terms of not only today's labour market but also of the jobs of the future…

The EU has been supporting mobility for two decades. Erasmus – our best-known programme – is a European success story. It has had a strategic influence not only within Europe but also by reaching out to the world beyond with its sister programmes Erasmus Mundus, Tempus and so on, and has inspired the recommendations of a high level expert forum, which the Commission will take as a starting point for giving further impulse to mobility…«