

The university: the foundation of our society's cohesion

We must forcefully reaffirm the fundamental and inescapable principles that guarantee the public service of Higher Education and Research and in particular the influence and excellence of our research and teaching missions.

For many years, we have been implementing university autonomy. But this autonomy should have been made possible. The allocations allocated to the universities for several years have not been commensurate with the expenses that have been transferred to them.

The current financial state of universities is a consequence of the law and not, as some have argued, related to management errors. It is indeed illusory to believe that an organization as cumbersome as a university institution can assume all of its expenses overnight when the government does not pay it the sums related to the transfer of its new powers.

1 - Effective academic research

In order to enable French research to maintain a high world ranking, it would above all be advisable to give it the necessary means, particularly in terms of investment and remuneration of researchers.

To do this, we need to stabilize and secure research funding by combining and optimizing project-based funding and recurring credits. This will free up time for researchers to devote to their research.

Research is, quite rightly, the driving force behind innovation, competitiveness and improving the quality of life of our fellow citizens. But, beyond the effects of the announcement on the importance of research, we also note that researchers have been experiencing difficulties in carrying out their missions since the LRU was created. Today, the National Research Agency (ANR) is essentially responsible for steering research, through project definitions and the allocation of corresponding credits. This has essentially had two consequences:

- First of all, the search for funds needed for project development wastes precious time for researchers who spend almost as much time looking for funding and developing projects that are relatively cumbersome in terms of administrative procedures as they do carrying out their own research. It is essential that the time available to the researcher be devoted to research.
- Then the researchers found themselves in situations of exacerbated competition. Instead of putting in place a system that allows them to work together for more effective research, they find themselves in a truly competitive system. However, it would be appropriate to reflect on Albert Jacquard's reflection "*We must replace the solitary exploit with a united success*".

2 - An adapted training offer

We need to set up a real territorial network in order to allow a balance in the training provided. In order to fight against the university "deserts", the offer of higher education must allow for the presence of the most demanded training in all the regions.

the national territory. This measure also aims to fight against territorial social inequality. Not all families can afford to pay for student housing for their children so that they can access the chosen studies.

By plunging universities into increased competition among themselves, the LRU has forced universities to integrate what is known as the cost-effectiveness of training. Today, some courses are closing because they are not "profitable". Their teaching expenses (hours paid to teachers and specific training expenses) are higher than the equity capital generated by the group (apprenticeship contracts, state endowment linked to the number of students).

This is how we assist :

- or at the closure of training courses that may nevertheless be of social or societal use,
- or the choice not to teach all the lessons in order to save money,
- or the grouping of students to free up more resources.

We must establish a contract of autonomy between the State, the Universities, and the territories. If the university has a public service mission, then this State-University contract must enable it to finance training that is essential for the professional integration of students. It must be possible to affirm that the profitability of training is not a sine qua non condition for opening training courses.

3 - Support for success

Furthermore, we must create equal opportunities and enable every student to acquire a recognized level of qualification that will fully enable him or her to enter the workforce.

The university must therefore contribute to the personal development of students. Teaching higher education must be the place for the democratization of knowledge.

Failure in licensing is regularly highlighted. The reality is that the real selection at the university is at the end of the first year of the bachelor's degree. This is another logic that the university must follow. We cannot consider this failure as a fatality. One cannot be satisfied with excluding so many students from the university system each year by pretending to be powerless. A new plan of action must therefore affirm loud and clear that the role of the public service of higher education is to accompany all students towards success.

In order to compensate for the known dropout rate at the bachelor's level, it seems essential to decompartmentalize the training courses and, following skills assessments, to develop real bridges between diplomas. The reality is that today a student enrolled in the first year of a bachelor's degree knows early enough whether or not the training in which he is enrolled is suitable for him or not. In general, by the end of the first semester, he has a clear idea of his situation.

Currently, most dropouts must wait until the following academic year to consider further enrollment. Some universities and IUTs have set up so-called "staggered" semesters that allow for a start to the academic year in February, just as there is one in September. The virtue of this system is to allow students who drop out in the first semester of L1 not to lose 6 months and to reorient themselves during the year. In the absence of subsidies, this system is struggling to become widespread, or even being undermined.

in some universities. In reality, however, the cost is zero as it is not a question of new students but of "redeployment". The means must be the same.

4 - A central place for alternation

Insofar as the university's priority in the coming years must clearly be the professional integration of young graduates, a central place must be left to work-study programs. Individual training leave must allow employees to participate in training courses of varying length. The rate of work-linked training is only 4% in universities.

By mobilizing in the field of learning, the university will only fully fulfill its role as a player in lifelong learning. Work-study programs are currently relatively well developed for short and technological training (IUT). In fact, it is in fact all types of training that should be concerned. Following the example of what is being done in other countries, particularly in Germany, university-enterprise relations should no longer be a problem. From this point of view, academics must stop fearing to open their doors to companies, which are real partners.

The big difference between France and its European neighbors in terms of vocational training lies in the fact that, to this day, it is within the education system that our apprentices are trained, on the principle of alternation. Many countries trust companies to do this, leaving them total freedom of action within the companies themselves. Not only is it essential to preserve this French specificity, but if we want to perpetuate it, we must develop, generalize, organize and systematize it. This is the price to be paid to bring the university closer to the business world in order to finally make higher education training more relevant to the world of work.

It is therefore important to encourage the resumption of studies for professional baccalaureate holders and technological professionals who already have a first professional experience.

At a time when successive governments regularly question the issue of French industry and the re-industrialization of our country is a major challenge, it is important to underline the central and determining role that can be played by the only university technology stream in the Bachelor's degree cycle. It is then necessary to consider the IUTs as an essential link in the revitalization of our industrial fabric. Access to higher education in the framework of Lifelong Learning (including VAE) must allow each industry to adapt to the new requirements of their sector.

5 - The university at the heart of society

Once again, the French University is at a turning point in its history. At a time when the question of the future of the university is being asked, it seems essential to us to ask ourselves the question of its mission. It is with this in mind and this perspective that we must keep in mind the proposals made in 1947 by the Langevin Wallon Commission.

The Walloon Langevin Plan was drawn up at the Liberation (1945-1946) by a ministerial commission chaired by Paul Langevin, a physicist, and then, after the latter's death, by Henri Wallon, a psychologist.

The aim of this plan was the democratization of schools and equal opportunities. Unfortunately, it has never been applied but remains one of the reference texts in education.

It is resolutely from this text that the University must henceforth draw inspiration at least in its philosophy.

His aim was to give to every person, whatever his origin, the minimum of knowledge necessary to make him a conscious citizen, to enrich his mind and broaden his horizons.

In the image of this declaration, Albert Jacquard also said that it is essential to affirm that "the objective of all education should be to project each person into the adventure of a life to be discovered, to be oriented, to be built".

Before any reform, it is resolutely this French model of higher education that we are calling for, putting the university back at the heart of society, giving it the mission of enabling social progress and promoting the principle of justice and equality in a society too often inclined to divide and exclude.

Following the example of this plan, which clearly affirmed a humanistic vision of the school, the university today must affirm that, in the diversity of its components, it wishes to have a central social role in society, at the service of all and not just a few or just those who manage to evolve in the meanders of its complexity.

As Albert Jacquard said: "Every man has the right to a life that allows him to live a life of self-discovery. build".

This is clearly the role of our university, which, by fully integrating at all levels the great diversity of knowledge, whether academic or technical, must be the foundation of the cohesion of our society.

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