



Union for the Mediterranean  
Union pour la Méditerranée  
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط

## Panel 2

### Structural Changes and Reforms in Higher Education – Objectives, Measures and Methods

Higher education has undergone considerable structural changes and reforms over the past few decades with the goals of raising access, enhancing quality, and guaranteeing that graduates are more equipped for the workforce, which demands changes from the institution itself right down to the degree. This may include governance structure, business models, personnel, funding/financing schemes, pedagogical methodologies, examination, degree awards, and linkages with society and business. The emphasis of education is on what students should be able to do after completing their studies. This combines customised education, active learning, and group work. Quality control has received more attention to guarantee that universities adhere to strict criteria for student success, research, and academic rigor.

In this panel, we shall explore whether universities are putting more emphasis on research and innovation to solve practical issues and enhance knowledge in various sectors. We will discuss how technology enabled the expansion of online and blended learning, increasing accessibility and the adaptability of education. We aim to provide ideas on whether universities internationalise their campuses more intensively by bringing in both faculty and students from around the world, forming relationships with other countries, and providing study abroad opportunities. We aim to emphasise how improved relevance of education, its accessibility, and effectiveness seem to be the main drivers for reforms in higher education and discuss whether universities are aware that rigorous structural reforms will be needed to achieve that.

In this panel, important questions related to university reforms will be addressed by a diverse group of experienced panellists who shall provide their valuable opinions and offer applicable ideas and solutions for the implementation of the needed reforms.

Potential questions:

1. What must the university do to continue its role in socioeconomic transformation? What reforms should be introduced? And how?
2. What measures will ensure the right sequencing and gradualism of these reforms? What shall be the main courses of research performed at the universities for the future? What shall be the main objective of this research? Is it sufficient that research excellence is the main criterion for teachers' promotion in higher education?
3. How important is internationalisation of higher education? Is it adequate? Shall it be intensified and diversified into inter-continental international ventures?
4. Does higher education adequately address the future challenges of the labour market? Does it possess the capacity to build future flexible individuals with cautious ability of lifelong self-education to follow the demands of the labour market and other markets?
5. Is the balance between more theoretical knowledge and practical skills duly achieved? Are soft skills still too neglected? Shall there be more opportunities introduced to account for more on-the-job achieved skills in formal education?
6. Do you support the more rigorous systems of quality control and accreditation in higher education? Is there a threat of over-bureaucratisation of higher education at the expense of creativity and education?