

## *Preface by Italian Universities*

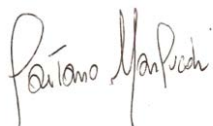
For years now, universities and companies have undergone significant transformations that have led to new forms of collaboration to help face the challenges of the current economic and technological context. Bearing in mind that collaboration between academic and business worlds is a driver of success with mutual benefits for all actors involved – and more generally for society, in 2014 the Fondazione CRUI (Foundation of the Italian Rectors Conference) established the University-Business Observatory.

The University-Business Observatory aims to promote partnerships, support synergies, and foster mechanisms that enable cooperation between the labour world, research institutes and youth. To reach its objective, the Observatory has set up six Working Groups that handle issues of particular interest to Italy: Apprenticeship in Higher Education and Research; Industrial Doctorates; Professional-oriented Degree Courses; Transversal Skills; Life and Health Sciences and Agri-food Systems. Each of these topics undergo in-depth analysis so as to provide concrete solutions to help face both the challenges identified as well as bureaucratic red tape that can often hinder the implementation of joint university-business projects.

In view of its activities the University-Business Observatory is delighted to be part of the HEInnovate Country Review which aims to sustain and enhance the entrepreneurial and innovative capacity of the university system in different European countries. In June 2018, representatives of the OECD and the European Commission presented the objectives and methodology of their project to all Italian Rectors in CRUI. Over that year, the Observatory provided its support to the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) by contributing to the drafting of the Italy Background Report and, with the involvement of academics and business representatives, providing feedback on the Final Report.

Looking ahead, the Observatory aims to continue its engagement in all activities promoted by the European Commission through HEInnovate. In this way, innovative activities can be implemented within universities (digitalisation), entrepreneurship can be developed for students and staff, collaboration with stakeholders (public authorities, companies and civil society) can be strengthened to seize new opportunities, and the role of universities in the exchange of competitive knowledge can be recognised and enhanced.

On this occasion we would like to thank the MIUR and, in particular, Daniele Livon for involving us, and we would also like to thank the Steering Group and all those who supported the Observatory in this initiative. We would also like to express special thanks to Marzia Foroni and Francesca Trovarelli for their precious competence and enduring commitment.



Gaetano Manfredi  
President of CRUI

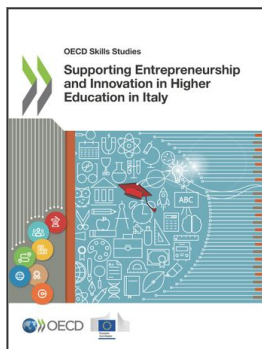


Alberto Felice De Toni  
President of CRUI Foundation



Angelo Riccaboni  
Coordinator of the University-  
Business Observatory





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