

## Ana Botín urges the future Government to prioritise educational reform

- The Group executive chairman of Santander and Universia, Ana Botín, was in Madrid to meet university rectors from throughout Spain and 150 Santander Erasmus scholars in the context of the 19th General Shareholders' Meeting of Universia.
- "It seems likely that we shall now have a reasonably stable Government in Spain that will be in a position to adopt forward-looking policies and introduce necessary reforms. Education is undoubtedly one of the priority areas," stated Botín.
- Ana Botín: "Excellence must be inclusive and support fairness and the public interest."

### Madrid, 6 June 2019 - SANTANDER NEWS

The Group executive chairman of Santander and Universia, Ana Botín, this morning presided over the 19th General Shareholders' Meeting of Universia at the new headquarters of Santander Spain, alongside the chairman of Crue Universidades Españolas, José Carlos Gómez, the chairman of Santander Universities, Matías Rodríguez Inciarte, and the CEO of Universia, Javier Roglá. The event included a meeting with rectors and academic representatives from all universities in Spain and part of Latin America, and 150 beneficiaries of the first Santander Erasmus Scholarship programme.

In her speech, Ana Botín said, "It seems likely that we shall now have a reasonably stable Government in Spain that will be in a position to adopt forward-looking policies and introduce necessary reforms." She urged rectors to advocate "firmly" for the need to prioritise educational reform. "We need a more open framework that allows for streamlined management, enhancing our ability to make the University's mission a reality. We need more autonomy and accountability so as to take on higher responsibilities and greater commitments," she said.

The chairman of Universia stated that "a desire to reach consensus must not lead us into paralysis and inaction... Now is the time to move forward and act decisively." She underscored that "If we do not act, we shall fall behind and fail to achieve our goals for sustainable and inclusive growth."

Ana Botín reasserted the bank's commitment to higher education. Among other initiatives, that commitment will take the form of more than 70,000 scholarships this year. Botín also expressed her hope that Universia will become "a leading platform that provides the best services, the best content and the widest reach, not only for universities themselves but also for members of the university community."

Botín also discussed cybersecurity as one of the most important challenges we face, and announced that the next meeting of the Board of Universia will be held in León in partnership with INCIBE, Spain's National Institute of Cybersecurity.

Ana Botín then considered the employability of graduates in an environment where, recent research suggests, artificial intelligence and robotics will replace 40% to 50% of jobs within 15 to 20 years: this may affect the employment of 400 to 800 million people. In her view, the digital revolution will create new roles that require "new knowledge and skills that are to be acquired throughout the range of educational cycles, and enhanced and expanded at university, in an ongoing dialogue with the wider community and business, industry and the economy."

### Meeting with Santander Erasmus scholars

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After the General Shareholders' Meeting of Universia, the Group executive chairman of Santander held a group discussion with five of the 150 beneficiaries of the first Santander Erasmus Scholarships programme who attended the event. This enabled Botín to become closely acquainted with the experiences and hopes of Paula Rodríguez, a Santander Erasmus scholar (Brussels), Almudena Álvarez and María Alonso (Paris), Alejandro Villaluenga (Bologna), and Rafael González, who is a Santander Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley.

The students asked Ana Botín about her views on whether they should become entrepreneurs or join a large company, about the bank's role in the fight for equality and inclusiveness, and about women's role in business.

Botín highlighted the potential role of banks and the educational system in changing the world, and encouraged young people not to be afraid of failure and to find their own sources of motivation. She argued that everyone should have access to education and excellence. This, Ana Botín explained, is the bank's goal in its support for universities, one of its key vectors of action as a socially responsible bank.

As to Santander's efforts to foster equality and inclusiveness, the Group executive chairman stated that "it has been proven that companies with the most widely diverse people are the strongest performers." She encouraged women to "have more confidence, be more proactive and talk straight."

#### Banco Santander and its Commitment to Education

Banco Santander is the only European bank in the 2018 'Change the World' ranking of businesses that are helping to make the world a better place (Fortune magazine) through its positive impact on the community, among other metrics. Its firm commitment to higher education, as materialised through Santander Universities and Universia, also recognized Santander as the company that invests the most in education in the world (Varkey Report / UNESCO / Fortune 500). This is now one of Santander's hallmarks: it has 1,200 partnership agreements in place with universities and institutions in more than 20 countries, and has awarded more than 350,000 scholarships and grants since 2005 - 73,000 of them in 2018 alone - with the aim of helping people, businesses and society to prosper.

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