

Ana Botín announces €400m Santander investment in education, employability and entrepreneurship by 2026

- Spain's prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, presided over the opening ceremony of the 5th Universia International Rectors Summit. The summit is attended by 700 rectors who come from 14 countries and represent 14 million students.
- Ana Botín says higher education systems must be "increasingly *more flexible and open, capable of change rapidly to new competitors in very different environments*", stressing the need "to focus on what students of all ages really want".
- As part of its commitment to universities, Santander has invested €2.2 billion in higher education in the form of scholarships, lifelong learning and aid to more than a million students and professionals in the past 26 years.

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Today, Spain's Prime Minister, **Pedro Sánchez**, has presided over the opening ceremony of the 5th Universia International Rectors Summit in Valencia, Spain. He was joined by the executive chair of Banco Santander and Universia, **Ana Botín**, and the rector of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and chair of the Summit's International Committee, Enrique Graue. Other dignitaries in attendance include **Ximo Puig**, president of the *Generalitat Valenciana* (the regional government); **Joan Subirats**, Spain's minister of Universities; **Joan Ribó**, mayor of Valencia; **Andrés Allamand**, secretary-general of the Ibero-American General Secretariat; and universities ministers from Portugal, Uruguay and Argentina.

The 5th Universia International Rectors Summit has welcomed 700 rectors who come from 14 countries and represent 14 million university students in Europe, the US, Latin America and the UK. From today, it will be a unique forum of debate under the theme "University and society". Guests will delve into how universities can make progress in three areas — lifelong learning, entrepreneurship and innovation, and networking and interconnectivity — for the betterment of society.

During the opening ceremony, Botín reaffirmed Banco Santander's continued support for universities "with a pledge to invest an extra 400 million euros between 2023 and 2026 in education, employability and entrepreneurship". She added that "there is no better social investment than education. This is why, Santander, decided 26 years ago to focus our efforts on supporting universities". Santander's commitment to universities has seen it invest over €2.2 billion in higher education in the form of scholarships, lifelong learning and aid to more than a million students through agreements with more than 1,500 institutions in 25 countries. "When we support universities, the entire community — more than a billion people in the countries where Santander operates — reaps the reward. If universities make progress, so does society", Botín said.

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"When society invests in education, it grows sustainably, is more open and diverse, creates opportunity for everyone, and can tackle the conflicts and challenges of the future", explained the Santander and Universia Executive Chair, who called on rectors and experts at the summit to "think with ambition" when it comes to the purpose of universities in a constantly-changing society that "works like a network: interconnected with ever fewer and removing barriers between the digital and physical world". "Lifelong learning is in demand in society and among businesses; it's not a luxury, but rather a necessity", she remarked in reference to the timely skills and knowledge universities should impart and to continued education in life.

The resolutions from the Universia International Rectores Summit will appear in the Valencia Declaration, to be announced tomorrow. The declaration will reflect rectors' commitment to universities' progress in areas to help society move forward.

The summit will build on its previous iterations in Salamanca, Spain (2018), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2014), Guadalajara, Mexico (2010) and Seville, Spain (2005). Organizer Banco Santander is firmly committed to progress and inclusive, sustainable growth. Through Santander Universities, it has been a pioneer and stalwart in education, employability and entrepreneurship (www.santander.com/universidades).

The summit can be live-streamed on Banco Santander's [corporate website](#) and on Santander, Santander Universities and Universia's corporate social media profiles.

#SantanderUniversia2023