

National Symposium on Micro-Credentials: Ecosystems and Alliances

UOC Campus, Barcelona

Minister, Director-General, President and Director of the AQU, vice-rectors, professors.

Good morning and welcome to Barcelona and to the UOC Campus.

Last weekend, Theodor Kallifatides said in an interview that our main challenge in life is to "*build ourselves up*"¹. For the Sweden-based Greek writer, the lessons of yesteryear are of little use to us, as **every generation needs to find its own path. It must learn to build itself up and, if at all possible, to do so through culture and knowledge.**

For many years, universities have played a key role in 'building' successive generations of citizens. However, as the small print in ads for investments warns, 'past performance is no guarantee of future results'.

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Indeed, our surrounding environment has undergone – and is still undergoing – profound changes. The education ecosystem is accruing new technological variables, new production requirements, new public needs, new structurings of knowledge... and new institutional players. These changes call for new alliances to allow us to reinvent our role – not out of a selfish or self-interested thirst for prominence, but **in line with the academic principles of universities: its commitment to knowledge, its desire for social impact and its mandate towards its host society.**

¹ Jesús Ruiz Mantilla, "Theodor Kallifatides: 'La emigración es una forma de suicidio'" [Emigration is a form of suicide], *El País Semanal*, 19 March 2023, <https://elpais.com/eps/2023-03-18/theodor-kallifatides-la-emigracion-es-una-forma-de-suicidio.html>.

In this regard, micro-credentials appear to be one of the possible ways to ensure both continuity and updating: **continuity with regard to our founding mission and updating with regard to changes in the ecosystem and in alliances.**

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As has been made clear in previous work and can be seen from today's event, micro-credentials allow us to remain in sync with a world experiencing evolution and with a knowledge society experiencing (re-)evolution. What's more, in the specific case of the UOC, its pioneering e-learning strategy and the experience it has gained in student-centred flexible and personalized education make it a benchmark in this field. Those here today will understand that this statement is by no means a self-satisfied patting ourselves on the back, but rather **an invitation to share trials and errors, advances and concerns.**

The personification of this wish to participate and connect, to build together, can, to a great extent, be found in the figure of Dr Àngels Fitó. She has long played the leading role in this project and now, as president, it will be her responsibility to provide programmes such as the micro-credentials programme with the necessary strategic, political and institutional strength. The fact is that both pilot experiences and European policies alike have made clear their potential.

So, and if I may be so bold, Minister, Director-General, AQU President, we seek to be a participant in and **a part of the solution... and micro-credentials are one of the possible ways forward.**

If 'lifelong learning' is now firmly established as a new paradigm that has overturned previously deep-rooted premises such as the age for education, the content of programmes and how universities are organized, it is only logical that its impact should also embrace certification and credentials. To this end, there is a vital need for forums such as this event, where the different sectors involved can come together to agree on future actions, where there can be debate on their implementation, where new consensus can be reached, and where we can work on converging with the rest of Europe.

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Going back to Kallifatides, our main challenge is to build ourselves up, and, to this end, micro-credentials represent a great starting point – to build a better tomorrow and to build a better version of ourselves.

Thank you very much.