

Welcome address for the annual conference, RedOTRI 2018: “The OTRI as an agent in the new innovation ecosystem”

Vèrtex building, UPC

Honourable president and friend, director-general,
vice presidents,
directors of Spanish research results transfer offices,
and president,
thank you for having us.

As an online university we do not have such excellent venues or as much seating as this, but we do have friends like you.

This year’s annual conference of the Network of Research Results Transfer Offices, the RedOTRI, clearly shows that the commitment of the Conference of Spanish University Presidents to bring the knowledge generated in our centres to society is constant.

We have made it a cornerstone of our future project. Although today research and innovation can also be found in hospitals, museums, businesses and a wide variety of other places, they continue to be fundamental to our concept and definition of the university.

Our institutions protect a legacy and, at the same time, channel our social commitment to knowledge, which we understand as the main resource for meeting present and future challenges.

Far from viewing it as self-interested and self-serving, the European Commission has also joined this commitment to promoting research.

This can be seen in its new programme for R&I funding for the 2021–2027 period. Horizon 2020 will be replaced by Horizon Europe, with a total budget allocation that exceeds €100 billion.

More funding, but, at the same time, it is increasingly competitive and more clearly oriented towards making a real, direct impact on society.

This is a necessity and, I would even go so far as to say, our obligation.



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We need to make a firm commitment to understanding research as an integrated, social concept along the lines established by open science.

This term defines a new way of defining and conducting work in the field of science.

Science must be open because, if it is not inclusive, research stops being useful, it becomes isolated from its immediate environment and endangers its ultimate goal: advancing knowledge and being socially useful and relevant.

This desire for openness is logical and closely linked to new, and not so new, technologies.

As an online university we have been aware of this for over 20 years and it is reinforced on a daily basis by the device in our pockets. It serves as an encyclopaedia, travel agency, bank office, diary and so much more all at one. At times it's even a telephone...

Today, our world is the web, and this is true of universities too. A web designed as a lever for knowledge to multiply our potential and open new fields of work such as e-health.

However, all this still requires researchers, projects, funding, ideas, knowledge... and a structure and framework.

And this is where the research results transfer centres come into play, as agents that are both relevant and necessary to boosting the flow of innovation among multiple stakeholders and in multiple directions.



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Innovation is not a department, or an area; it is a cross-cutting issue. I am convinced this “omnipresence” will become clear over the sessions and activities planned for today and tomorrow.

Those of us who have taken part in organising this annual event, and I speak now in my dual role as president of the UOC and chair of the Catalan Public University Association (ACUP), are convinced that this exchange of experiences will give rise to analyses, solutions and useful proposals to maintain and strengthen this momentum in favour of research and knowledge transfer.

And here I would like to make special mention of the sponsors who have made this event possible, and who I imagine are familiar with the words of Benjamin Franklin, who said, "an investment in knowledge pays the best interest".

To all of them, and all of you, thank you.

