



**Embargoed - for release on 17 December 2008**

**LATIN AMERICAN AND BRITISH UNIVERSITIES ROUNDTABLE  
DEBATES GLOBAL ALIGNMENT  
SPONSORED BY BANCO SANTANDER**

**-The Roundtable of Vice-Chancellors aims to achieve a greater level of alignment between international university systems.**

**- New initiatives will be developed in the areas of technology transfer and mobility for university students and staff.**

**- 'Santander Universities' in the UK will provide funding for 350 new scholarships and grants for British and Latin American students and staff in 2009.**

**Emilio Botín, President of Banco Santander comments: "*The conclusions reached as a result of encounters like this will help to consolidate the university's role in the future development of our societies. Higher education is the most important investment for the future in any country.*"**

**London, 17 December 2008.** University students and staff from all over the world are now able to achieve a more thorough level of training by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by internationalisation and the resulting co-operation between universities. To increase these benefits, Vice-Chancellors of eight of the most important Latin American universities and ten British universities met today under the auspices of Banco Santander's Santander Universities Global Division.

Emilio Botín, President of Banco Santander, addressed the attendees, along with António Horta-Osório, Chief Executive of Abbey National plc, Banco Santander's UK subsidiary, which hosted the meeting. The Roundtable was co-ordinated by Juan Ramón de la Fuente, President of the International Universities Association.

During the roundtable, under the theme "Internationalisation: Opportunities for Cooperation", the 18 attending Vice-Chancellors reviewed their respective university systems with the view to establishing new areas of joint action. The academics analysed existing initiatives, in particular those concerning national and international mobility for university students and staff, projects developed for promoting the transfer of knowledge and networking possibilities for academic institutions. Following the debate, the attendees committed to establishing a joint effort for implementing new projects in these fields in the future, to further enhance the programmes already developed by their respective universities.

Emilio Botín, President of Banco Santander, said: "*This encounter reinforces our commitment to higher education, which we initiated twelve years ago with a clear objective: supporting the university sector through its challenges. The conclusions reached as a result of encounters like this one will serve to reinforce the role the university will play in the future development of our societies.*"

*"Banco Santander's commitment to the university sector is long-standing; through our Santander Universities Global Division, 1,300 professionals of our bank dedicate their daily work to the universities we have co-operation covenants with. We adopted the conviction that investment in education constitutes the most efficient means to advance towards more open, socially more*

*balanced and economically more dynamic societies in the medium term. Higher education is the principal investment for the future in any country."*

António Horta-Osório, Chief Executive of Abbey said: *"Academic success should not be limited by national borders nor by access to finance. Today's event aims to boost the sharing of knowledge and cultural understanding amongst the 700 institutions that participate in the 'Santander Universities' scheme. To that end we are proud to announce 350 new scholarships and grants which will be made available in 2009 for British and Latin American students and staff at these top institutions."*

Professor Juan Ramón de la Fuente, President of the International Universities Association commented: *"Equitable access to, and successful participation in higher education for all members of society promotes social justice and cohesion, enhances personal development and facilitates sustainable development. Organisations such as Santander Universities are essential to promoting international cohesion within Higher Education."*

Since 1996 Banco Santander has channelled almost half a billion euros into academia through co-operative agreements with 709 universities in China, Latin America, Morocco, Portugal, Russia, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. The network includes universities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The Vice-Chancellors' conference will be preceded by a meeting of the Universia International Advisory Board (CAI). Universia is the largest network of universities in the world, promoted by Banco Santander through its Santander Universities Global Division. The CAI is a consultative body comprised of 10 Vice-Chancellors from university members of the Universia network and Banco Santander executives. Its mission is to evaluate and propose new areas of development for Universia in the 11 countries where it has a presence: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Spain, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela.

**Ends**

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Meeting Attendees - UK Universities**

- Rick Trainor, Principal of King's College London and President of Universities UK
- Alison Richard, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge
- Bill Wakeham, Vice-Chancellor of Southampton University
- Glynis Breakwell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bath
- Timothy O'Shea, Principal of The University of Edinburgh
- Janet Beer, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University
- Colin Riordan, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Essex
- Stephen Hill, Principal of Royal Holloway, University of London
- Brenda Gourley, Vice-Chancellor of The Open University
- Julian Crampton, Vice-Chancellor of University of Brighton

### **Meeting Attendees - Latin American University Attendees**

- Pedro Pablo Rosso, Rector of Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
- Carlos Angulo, Rector of Universidad de los Andes (Colombia)
- Ángel Gabilondo, Rector of Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and President of Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades Españolas
- Antonio García Padilla, President of Universidad de Puerto Rico
- Carolina Scotto, Rector of the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (Argentina)
- José I. Moreno, Rector of Universidad Metropolitana (Venezuela)

- Fernando Seabra, Rector of Universidad de Coimbra (Portugal) and President of Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Portuguesas
- Luis Bustamante, Rector of Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas (Perú)

#### **Information about 'Santander Universities':**

##### **'Santander Universities': Committed to Higher Education**

Banco Santander, one of the largest banks in the world, created 'Santander Universities' in 1996 to support the Higher Education sector in areas such as teaching and research, international cooperation, knowledge and technology transfer, entrepreneurial initiatives, student mobility and innovation.

Santander Universities Global Division has signed co-operation agreements with 709 universities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Mexico, Morocco, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Russia, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, Uruguay and Venezuela.

'Santander Universities' was introduced in the UK in 2007 through Abbey National plc and the bank is already collaborating with 31 British universities and Higher Education Institutions, with agreements focused on promoting international exchange, entrepreneurial activities and the mobility of students and researchers within the network.

'Santander Universities' initiatives include:

- the granting of over 12,000 scholarships a year to promote study, research and initial professional work experience and bursaries to facilitate student and staff mobility between universities in the network
- aid to 2,500 research groups
- the issue of 3.7 million university smart cards in 185 universities, with a high level of functional and financial features for teachers and students
- support for two major global projects: the 'Miguel de Cervantes Virtual Library' ([www.cervantesvirtual.com](http://www.cervantesvirtual.com)), the largest of its kind for Hispanic works; and Universia ([www.universia.net](http://www.universia.net)), the biggest university co-operation network in the world, that includes 1,070 universities.

For Banco Santander, investing in education is the most powerful means of promoting the development and prosperity of society.

#### **For further information contact:**

Lara Lipsey, Abbey Media Relations  
 + 44 (0) 20 7756 4209  
[lara.lipsey@abbey.com](mailto:lara.lipsey@abbey.com).