Parlament Studencki
Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego
w Krakowie

Mrs. Prime Minister,

Ministers,

Your Excellency,

Members of the University's Senate,
Members of the University's Council,
Your Magnificences,

Dear Professors,
Deans of Colleges and Directors of Institutes,

Dear Guests,

Dear Staff and Pensioners,
Dear Doctoral Students and Students,

of the Cracow University of Economics,

The last few years have proven to be a challenging time for our University. The new Law on Higher Education have made it necessary to restructure our University and to constitute new bodies, the recent electoral campaign for Rector has allowed us to re-examine our University's potential, and the time of the epidemic has necessitated a need to quickly adapt to the new reality. It is this last aspect that has most significantly influenced the circumstances in which we are now, during this solemn celebration.

Despite these realities, I believe that we students are ready to commence this new academic year 2020/2021 with utmost dedication to our tasks. I am well aware of the fact that the present situation requires our entire academic community to show an even greater than usual sense of responsibility, ambition, optimism and mutual understanding, which I sincerely urge all students to exhibit.

I am also aware that the distant learning regime under which we have been working for several months now results in an increasing longing for traditional classes in our Alma Mater. Let me take this opportunity to thank all of the University's faculty and staff that have engaged in and are still engaging in activities aimed at improving the quality of the education process, both in terms of content and organization.

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I do trust that this new academic year, and certainly the next few months, will prove to us that our University is not stagnant, but that it is adapting to the difficult, albeit interesting, reality.

I would like to thank the present Rectoral Authorities for the steps they have taken during the first month of discharging their newly assumed functions, in particular for their kind cooperation based on constructive dialogue and mutual understanding.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Victor Hugo said: "There is nothing like a dream to create the future". These words seem to resonate with extreme relevance, especially today, in times of uncertainty, change and challenge. I am convinced that none of us here have recently been thinking about their future as intensely as the first-year students, whom I welcome warmly to our University.

I am aware that you had an exceptionally difficult secondary school-leaving examination when in the midst of the COVID-19 epidemic you were forced to take it in more stressful, uncertain conditions, preceded by even greater than usual amount of self-study bolstered by your own motivation.

This makes me even gladder that you will be our fellow students. You have every reason to be really proud of yourselves. You have been through a very difficult recruitment process, preceded by stress related to uncertainty and a change in the form of the final examination. But you have lived up to the challenge as shown by the results of your exams, which earned you a place at our University.

From now on, you will be students of the Cracow University of Economics.

The University's name incorporates and emphasizes the place to which most of you have come from various parts of Poland. So welcome to a city that is witness to numerous changes, a city which is steeped in both tradition and modernity. Welcome to the former capital of Polish kings, with the Wawel Castle, a city where history has shown that integration triumphs over division. Finally, a city of large foreign financial and IT companies. I hope that you will not only notice, but also appreciate and immerse yourselves in this combination of tradition and modernity. You will also see them at our University: in the buildings – the historic Lubomirski Palace – known as the Main Building, built during the previous system and the modern F, S and G buildings – but also in our University's intangible potential, where numerous academic customs intertwine with the ever more modern forms of education.

As President of our joint Student Council, I view the fact that you have trusted our University as a great obligation, which I hope we will fulfil together. I am happy to know that such exceptional

people are joining our team of students. So do not be afraid to take up challenges and face them bravely.
Do not be afraid to challenge us, representing yourselves and the entire Academic Community.

I encourage you to get involved in whatever is in the line of your interests and plans for the future. Tens of student societies give you the opportunity to develop your interests, broaden your knowledge and shape yourself as a young researcher. Other student organizations can help you develop, e.g. your project management skills. Despite the current unfavorable circumstances, we all try to create space for development. We await you with open arms in the Student Parliament, where we will not only try to help and support you, but where we can also as students undertake many initiatives, including those aimed at even better education, which in turn will contribute to the development of our entire University. Therefore, do not hesitate to come and visit us with your ideas and comments, including those that relate to ourselves.

Dear First-Year Students, you are also exceptional for one more reason.

Most of you were born after the year 2000, which is a breakthrough moment for all of us. In four years' time, when most of you are probably in your final year of studies, you will be participating in the inauguration of the 100th academic year, which will open a new chapter in the history of our University. With this idea in mind, I want to wish *you* – and also all of us – that you spend your university years combining tradition with modernity, and help our University enter this new chapter. Remember – "There is nothing like a dream to create the future".