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## Press Release

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### Universities call on G7 leaders to prioritize and advance peace and security

**More than 75 members of the international university alliance U7+ met this week prior to the G7 summit in Japan / University of Mannheim in leading role**

As the G7 prepares to convene in Hiroshima, the world faces significant challenges to peace and security. Armed conflict or threats of conflict in many regions have resulted in violations of human rights and, for the first time in a generation, there is an open threat of nuclear warfare.

Within this context, more than 75 university leaders from 16 countries convened at Keio University in Japan this week. In a statement, they called on G7 leaders to invest in peace and security education at all levels, incorporate the latest research into policy on peace and security, diversify the set of stakeholders involved in high-level policy discussions on peace and security, lower barriers to student exchanges that foster cross-cultural understanding, and defend academic freedom.

“The world has seen significant innovation in warfare; it is now time for innovation in peace and security,” the [U7+ Tokyo Statement: Universities as Engines of Innovation for Peace and Security](#) reads. In the statement, U7+ members call for “comprehensive, long-term and complex understandings of the patterns and processes that lead to sustainable peace, including strong institutions, economic stability and social inclusion.”

The motto of the Tokyo meeting was "The Pen is Mightier than the Sword." Accordingly, members of the U7+ Alliance pledged to provide students with learning opportunities on the causes of conflict and methods of peacebuilding, as well as to share research findings on peace and security issues with policymakers and the public. In addition, they will provide opportunities for students and researchers who were displaced by conflict, persecution, and humanitarian crises to teach and learn at their universities and collaborate with G7 and United Nations bodies working on conflict prevention.

The presidents of the U7+ universities adopted the statement unanimously. The statement was delivered to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Wednesday, 15 March, in his capacity as 2023 host to the Group of Nations (G7).

From the University of Mannheim, President Prof. Dr. Thomas Puhl and Prof. Dr. Thomas Fetzter, Vice President for Strategic Planning, Internationalization and Equal Opportunity, took part in the meeting in Japan. Since last year, Puhl, who has been involved in the Alliance since its formation, has been one of eight members of the Presidential Steering Committee, which represents the Alliance to the outside world. "The statement represents not only the shared commitment, but also the absolute conviction of the U7+ members that peace and freedom are the highest goods to be protected. Therefore, especially in light of the global political situation, we must unite our efforts and universities must act as a united front against violence, discrimination and aggression of any kind," Puhl says about the statement, which he signed on behalf of the University of Mannheim. "Research and teaching can and must work for a more peaceful and safer world since we act as engines of innovation. As educators of future leaders and political minds, it is the universities' duty to guide the next generation to maintain – or restore – peace and security globally," Puhl continues. "Transnational university networks are valuable for exchanging ideas and knowledge among each other – the University of Mannheim benefits enormously from them, whether at the level of students, researchers or administrators. But the networks are also an important means of ensuring that different national perspectives and concerns are reflected in the insights we provide to policymakers and society to help them address major challenges," adds Fetzter.

[See the full statement of the U7+ Alliance](#)

### **About the U7+ Alliance**

The U7+ Alliance is an international coalition of universities primarily from the G7 member states that aims at making a scientific contribution to help solve the major social and political issues of our time. Alliance members meet annually to set a common agenda and identify key areas for coordinated action. Together, the presidents of the U7+ universities commit on behalf of their institutions to concrete measures to address the world's most pressing challenges at the local, regional and global levels.

General information about the U7+ Alliance and past declarations:

<https://www.uni-mannheim.de/en/about/international-cooperations/u7/>

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