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für Bildung
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Speech of

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Higher education in Europe in the 21st century faces a number of challenges: Both science and economy work in a global context. Technological change affects both the content of science and research and the ways in which knowledge can be distributed and taught. Demographic change affects the number of students at our higher education institutions. The increasing diversity of our student population creates new opportunities of learning with and from each other, but also asks for additional efforts from institutions and staff.

In addition, we have to face the fact that higher education is a market today. We are good partners to developing countries and are very conscious of our responsibilities, but there is no reason why we should not compete with USA or Australia and of course this competition happens also in developing countries. Our universities should be attractive to people all over the world.

Institutions in a higher -education -system where the state largely controls the universities as we had it twenty years ago would not be able to compete with many of our competitors in Europe and worldwide, but more autonomous universities can. We want them to compete. They need more autonomy, better framework conditions and much time, because for really being competitive we need a change of thinking and of culture. This change is happening, but obvi-

ously not by a short and simple decision of governments. Another fact is: for European students today Europe is normal. Their parents talked about Europe, they live it. They really consider to study in another country, to work there and perhaps even to live there for longer periods. Europe is a reality, not a vision anymore. What we always desired, now really happens with all the real problems for our national education and social welfare-systems. That is not a danger. It's great, but it asks for additional efforts. Adapting the higher education systems in Europe to these different challenges has to take place on all levels, institutional, national and international. I think, in particular on the institutional level – that is why we audit the institutions. However, we can only be successful, if we address our common challenges and act on an international level as well. It is for this reason that we welcome very much the EU initiatives for the modernisation of higher education or the „Youth on the move“ campaign. But we also have to think beyond the European Union. The Bologna process, with its 47 member states, reaching from Portugal to Russia, and from Iceland to Azerbaijan, is a forum which has brought about many changes and which has attracted attention outside Europe. A common structure of higher education degrees, common instruments from ECTS to diploma supplement, and qualifications frameworks for higher education have contributed to more transparency in Europe. Common

goals, standards and guidelines and institutions in the field of quality assurance help to build trust in higher education in our neighbouring countries. And of course increasing mobility of our students is at the core of the Bologna process as well as of the EU initiatives. One important expression of our joint efforts to increase mobility is that ministers of the European Higher Education Area have agreed on a mobility target: By the year 2020 at least 20 percent of the graduates in this area should have had a study or training period abroad. In order to reach this goal, we are presently working on a mobility strategy for the European Higher Education Area, which shall be agreed by the Ministers at their next ministerial conference in Bucharest in April 2012. In this strategy a number of proposals for action in the many fields relating to mobility are being made. Of particular importance, also in the context of our topic tonight, is that we need mobility strategies also for our countries and our institutions.

One of the challenges for the future is also that we must pay even greater attention to ensuring that the professional perspectives opened up by a study course are clearly set out. Mobility of students is an important aim in itself, but we also have to ensure that higher education graduates can be mobile and take up work in a regulated profession abroad. For most students the professional recognition is more im-

portant than the academic recognition. The Frenchman or - woman who studies architecture in Germany wants to get the German master's degree and hopes it will be recognised by French universities, but even more he wants to be able to work as an architect in Germany and in France without further recognition procedures or additional exams.

The process of reformulating and updating the EU Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications that has been taken up is therefore important for higher education as well. In order to use existing expertise and avoid double work we should explore possibilities of integrating existing institutions such as the European quality assurance register EQAR and its registered agencies for confirming whether the aims of the directive are being met. That is also a chance to make EU-Standards applicable to all Bologna-countries and probably more countries - on a voluntary basis.

Not long ago, critics still claimed that the international competitiveness of German universities continued to leave a lot to be desired and that Germany was not taking the situation seriously enough. Now, there is always room for improvement and we certainly know that we still have some homework to do, but in my opinion, however, these allegations fall short of the mark, and they are also outdated.

They do not take into account the enormous dynamism triggered by the Excellence Initiative. Roughly 4,200 researchers have been recruited under the funded projects so far, about a quarter of them from abroad. Most of the professors and postdocs who go to excellence clusters and graduate schools come from the U.S. and the U.K., followed by Italy, France and Switzerland. Many of the researchers recruited abroad are German nationals taking advantage of the Excellence Initiative to return to Germany. Even more important than all these numbers – the Excellence Initiative has changed attitudes. More universities are realizing the competition, now, not only in the field of research, but also in the field of teaching and in administration of the institution. And you are much better in a competition, if you know that it happens and you compare yourself with others.

German universities enjoy a good reputation abroad. The number of international students who come to Germany for study purposes has increased from about 100,000 to more than 180,000 since 1997. In a recently published study by the British Council, Germany scored particularly highly in ranking because of policies that encourage domestic students and academics to spend time abroad, as well as its success in attracting international students. It is also said that Germany has the best political

and financial support in place to encourage international study.

The Federal Government takes the topic very serious. I would like to mention the Internationalisation Strategy, which is our overarching policy approach; the manifold exchange and cooperation programmes of the German Academic Exchange Service and the Alexander von Humboldt foundation, but also marketing initiatives and the German Houses of Science; programmes such as EURAXESS, which is based at the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and promotes mobility among scientists from across the world; and lucrative incentive programmes for international top researchers.

One thing is certain: We will not be able to solve tomorrow's problems and there can be no excellence without international cooperation, networks, and exchanges.

Universities need to become more international and more professional if they want to fulfil their key societal roles in teaching and research.

But our experience is that international commitment at universities is often based only on the initiative of individual people, departments or international offices. Let's be honest – this type of internationalisation *at* universities is not necessarily an internationalisation *of* universities. In my opinion, universities therefore need a concerted in-

ternationalisation strategy. and of course one which is adapted to its particular profile.

This would require university administrators to put this topic right at the top of their agenda and make it a priority for the entire university. They need to ask themselves: Where do we stand? What do we want to achieve, and what steps do we need to take? Comprehensive internationalisation includes all areas of a university: teaching, research, service, administration, marketing and public relations work.

That's why we started the "Internationalisation of Universities Audit" together with the German Rector's Conference, the HRK. The audit focuses on offering advice and support in defining a university's own internationalisation profile. This is not about a "one size fits all" approach, or about telling a university what to do, or about introducing top-down requirements.

We are breaking new ground with this instrument, and it was clear from the start that it would only work if it met the actual needs of universities. That is why I am so pleased about the high demand for the audit and the positive response it has received so far. That is to a large extent a result of the excellent work and great commitment of the audit team of advisors and of the HRK staff,

to whom I would like to express my thanks and appreciation.

But as I do not want to anticipate what **Professor Prömel** will talk about, I stop right here and would like to concentrate on the BMBF's views on the internationalisation of universities.

What do we ask universities for?

As I have said: Any university can be international, but not all universities have to be international in the same way. But I would like to point out some aspects which in my mind are of overall importance in Germany:

- ✓ International qualifications for German students. Universities should encourage their students to get to know other countries and universities in the course of their studies – particularly in the new Bachelor courses - by providing suitable programmes! Our vision is that in two to three decades, half of all German students will spend some time abroad as part of their studies.
- ✓ Integrated degree courses leading to joint or double degrees. I think that this is the future, also with a view to structured mobility support in the Bologna area. Such programmes significantly reduce delays and recognition problems for students, encourage work on joint projects, and foster a sense of community.

- ✓ Internationalised and international teaching. Teaching programmes need to become even more international in order to be attractive to foreign undergraduates and graduate students. There is good scope for development here and it is also certainly desirable to continue to increase the number of foreign teachers at German universities, which is currently at about nine per cent.
- ✓ A strategic research concept and a local presence. An international university needs to have a strategic research concept that focuses on cooperation with excellent partners from across the world, receives funding from international sources, and thus increases international visibility.
- ✓ Internationality and intercultural expertise across all parts of the university. This applies to professors, for whom it is already a matter of course in certain disciplines and universities. But international training and personal experience of living abroad are equally important for administrative staff. Administrators play a key role in oiling the wheels of universities.
- ✓ A welcoming culture. We have all noticed that the global competition for the brightest minds is becoming increasingly fierce. We want students to come into contact with Germany at an early stage, so that they then go on to become friends of Germany who work together with us across the world. At the same time, we want to attract

the best graduates, doctoral students and young researchers who can contribute to the development of science and research in Germany. We need to create attractive conditions to attract international talents.

This means cutting red tape, providing support in day-to-day life, and offering career prospects for their partners. At the end of the day, our efforts to attract foreign students and researchers are changing the attitudes of our universities towards all students and researchers and they become more attractive in general.

To come back to what I said at the beginning of my speech: Ladies and Gentlemen, the university of the future will be international. Internationalisation does not just enrich the culture of a university; it also enhances creativity and innovation in research, teaching and academic studies. It is a central element in developing an institution's profile and also a driver of university reform. It not only promotes scientific cooperation, but also encourages dialogue between cultures, particularly at a time when we are seeing an increase in cultural, ethnic and religious conflicts and when we need to find ways to stabilize our relationship with the Islamic world on a long-term basis. The BMBF will continue to be a reliable partner to universities. We will continue to offer them our full support in their internationalisation efforts. Now we

will hear about and discuss our experiences so far with the “Internationalisation of Universities” Audit presented by Professor Prömel.

Thank you.