

**22 April 2009**

**Mobility of academics and scientists: Better provisions for old age**

"The mobility of academics and scientists is one of the prerequisites for science and innovation. However, the pension systems are currently obstructing this mobility in Europe. We urgently need to change this," stated HRK President, Prof. Dr. Margret Wintermantel, speaking to the press in Berlin today. The General Meeting of the German Rectors' Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK) unanimously adopted appropriate recommendations to this effect in Aachen yesterday.

In these, the HRK specifies the tasks to be performed by the universities, by the insurance companies and pension schemes, and by Federal Government and the federal state governments with the goal of promoting the geographical and sectoral mobility (between universities and industrial companies) of academics and scientists.

The universities are recommended to offer more advice and guidance for scientists willing to engage in mobility as well as for scientists from abroad.

The insurance companies and supplementary pension schemes offered by the civil service as well as by employers are called upon to cooperate better throughout Europe. At the end of a career, academics or scientists should receive clear and unequivocal information on their pension rights. Furthermore, pension entitlements finally need to be mutually recognised.

The HRK expects Federal Government and the federal states to take the mobility requirements of academics and scientists into consideration in the coming reforms to the civil servant legislation and so provide for the portability of pension rights and entitlements. A further demand calls for the period required to obtain vested pension rights to be shortened. At the moment, academics and scientists lose their rights and entitlements if they leave academia after less than five years.

Wintermantel: "In view of the ever closer harmonisation of the European Higher Education and Research Area, the necessary reforms have to be addressed with urgency.

The vision of a European Pension Fund for academics, scientists and researchers in the field of supplementary and group pension schemes that is currently being appraised by the European Commission represents the most radical solution".

(Provisional Recommendation Text attached)