



**Joint Memorandum
of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP)
and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK)**

The Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) held a joint meeting at Poznań University of Technology on 10 March 2011. The meeting followed the tradition of regular meetings of German and Polish rectors. The participants exchanged views on developments in the field of higher education policy and discussed a number of issues of common interest.

The discussion revealed that – despite differences in organisation of national higher education systems – the higher education institutions of both countries and their representations are faced with many common challenges and that they work on similar ideas how to deal with these challenges.

The participants of the meeting share the view on the organisation of quality assurance at universities. Quality assurance should rely on the following principles:

- Responsibility for the quality of teaching, learning and research lies with the universities themselves, and they must be able to exercise this responsibility, i.e. to decide on how they intend to maintain and continuously improve the quality of the tasks they perform in the context of their strategic objectives.
- External quality assurance should be more frequently carried out as an institutional audit that assesses whether the implemented internal quality assurance and development structures and processes are suitable for achieving the objectives chosen by the institution.
- The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) are decisive in the assessment and review of institutional quality assurance.
- For external audit the universities are free to choose any agency listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The participants strongly endorse the main ideas presented in the document “Opinion of four European Rectors' Conferences on the Future of European Cohesion Policy” developed by the representatives of the university rectors' conferences of Germany, Austria, Poland and Hungary. As a contribution to the current debate about the future of the Cohesion Policy of the European Union and available tools for the next EU budget period (2014-2020) several demands have been formulated concerning:

- Coordinating the political and administrative characteristics of Structural Funds with the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, and the support for innovation,
- Implementing the knowledge triangle,
- Avoiding applying the co-financing mechanism to the detriment of the universities,
- Starting the simplification process,

- Allowing innovation-friendly procurement policies,
- Strengthening competition, impartial decision-making and quality assurance – excellence and capacity building.

Furthermore, the participants believe that the exchange of experience regarding the financing of higher education and, in particular, attempts to introduce tuition fees will help in solving the problem of sustainable and adequate funding of universities.

In addition, the Polish side is particularly interested in learning from the experience of the German Excellence Initiative and other programmes intended for strengthening excellence in research at higher education institutions.

The presented examples of successful cross-border cooperation in teaching and research at the regional and the institutional level have shown both benefits and high potential for future initiatives in German-Polish cooperation in higher education.

The participants strongly believe that meetings of German and Polish rectors should be continued and possibly intensified to the benefit of German, Polish and European higher education systems.