Resolution of the 207th Plenary Assembly of the German Rectors’ Conference  
(Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK)

Bonn, 21 March 2006

on the Communication of the European Commission to the European Council  
„Developing a knowledge flagship: the European Institute of Technology“

The European Commission has submitted, in its Communication of 22 February 2006 entitled  
“Implementing the renewed partnership for growth and jobs: developing a knowledge  
flagship: The European Institute of Technology (EIT)” to the European Council an important  
initiative for the strengthening of European research for further decision by the Council.

The HRK, in its capacity as the representative body of German universities, welcomes the  
significance attached by both the European Commission and the European Council to  
universities and their role for the future economic and social well-being of Europe. The  
Communication again underlines this. It focuses on the close networking of existing excellent  
universities with industrial research, while at the same time justly pointing to deficits of the  
European science system in this realm.

In this context the Plenary Assembly of the HRK directs attention to and stresses five issues:

- The HRK welcomes the basic idea of the EIT concept to give a new quality to the  
  networking of European universities. The HRK considers the intended intensification  
of research cooperation between universities and industrial research as the real added  
value inherent in this concept. However, the HRK rejects a European networking  
based on a legal detachment of the most well-performing units of existing institutions.  
The HRK advocates networking that is based on deepening the cooperation between  
European universities and enterprises. It has to be accompanied by additional state  
funding and private investments to foster financially more attractive conditions as well  
as more binding forms of cooperation in institutional terms than so far the case in the  
EU supported Networks of Excellence (NoE).

- Two things have to happen in Europe at the same time: The strengthening of basic  
research and the accelerated transfer of research results into innovative products. The  
HRK is demanding, however, that no new initiative should be allowed to put in  
question the start of the European Research Council ERC), long awaited for by the  
European research community or to threaten its adequate financing in accordance with  
its pan-European task.

- The HRK is in agreement with the major German science organisations and with the  
Federal Ministry for Education and Research that the selection of participating  
research institutions should follow a strictly science driven competitive procedure. The  
German Excellence Initiative could well serve as an example.

- The HRK expects that such an important initiative towards setting up an EIT should  
be accompanied by a convincing and sound financial concept, which is not hampering  
other valuable EU-programmes in the area of education and training and research.  
Such concept has so far not being presented.

- The EIT should, at least in its initial phase, not take over duties in the field of  
education and training and orient itself along the well-established lines of European  
network programmes, like Erasmus Mundus.