

**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.