

Resolution by the
18th General Meeting of the
German Rectors' Conference
(HRK)
on 12 May 2015
in Kaiserslautern

**The Transatlantic Trade and
Investment Partnership
(TTIP): Exclude Education
from Negotiations**

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Decision:

1. The HRK calls on the European Commission to wholly exclude education from the free trade agreement TTIP.
2. The HRK calls on the federal and state governments in Germany to ensure, by lodging objections with the European Commission, that they retain their powers with regard to both state and private education.

Background:

The European Union is currently negotiating a free trade agreement (TTIP) with the US government. The main negotiator is the European Commission. The purpose of the TTIP negotiations is to harmonise trade, investment and public procurement rules between the EU and the US. In signing the TTIP agreement the member states of the EU will surrender part of their sovereignty, because state regulation will become impossible or limited in sectors where free trade applies. The so-called 'services of general interest' are currently not specifically excluded from the TTIP negotiations. In the logic of free trade agreements, education services are not 'public services'.

Previously the HRK has expressed its views on the TTIP negotiations at European level through the European University Association (EUA) as well as other channels. In January 2015 the EUA drew attention to the risks, particularly in relation to education, in the form of a declaration signed by the presidents of all the European rectors' conferences.

The HRK is now going beyond the EUA declaration calling on the European Commission, the German federal government and the federal state governments to exclude higher education from the negotiations due to culturally anchored conflicting understandings of the role of the state and the individual and their respective responsibilities for education on each side of the Atlantic. While in Germany and many parts of Europe, education, art and culture are recognised as social responsibilities which should be funded by society as a whole, in the USA, higher education is viewed as a private investment by the individual. The incompatibility of these two approaches to education therefore forms the starting point for the demand to exclude the education sector from the terms of the free trade agreement and therefore prevent the increased commercialisation of education to the point where it becomes a service paid for by the individual.

By calling for the education sector to be excluded from the TTIP negotiations, the HRK is expressing its conviction that education should be available to all on the basis of ability. The HRK does not fundamentally oppose private education, which can provide a useful complement to existing state provision. However, the framework for private education providers must be defined through sovereign decisions by state bodies. There must be political means to correct undesirable developments should they occur. This would be impossible in the case of uncontrolled deregulation.