

**Joint Declaration of the Greek Rectors' Conference – HRK Consultative Meeting
Bonn, Germany, 18 June 2002**

A delegation of the Greek Rectors' Conference and representatives of HRK met for a joint seminar in Bonn (Germany) on 17/18 June 2002. The discussions concentrated on how to modernize study programmes in higher education in view of the European Higher Education Area and how to intensify the academic cooperation between Greece and Germany.

The subjects discussed were directed towards a critical overview of the steps taken by both countries after Bologna and Prague. Emphasis was given to quality assurance, in view of the tendency for increasing autonomy of Universities, where the experience from the already working German system might be helpful to the system to be introduced by Greek authorities.

The participants in the seminar agreed on the need for structured programmes and exchange on all levels of higher education. Contacts and exchange of academic staff are fundamental in order to develop common study programmes and promote the European dimension in Higher Education. The long tradition of exchange of staff should be maintained and strengthened. In addition, more effort has to be given to student mobility in both directions.

One important condition for closer cooperation is the mutual recognition of academic degrees. The negotiations between KMK (Kultusministerkonferenz) and the corresponding Greek authority (DIKATSA) about mutual recognition of degrees should be accelerated with a possible involvement of representatives from both conferences. The signing of a bilateral framework agreement could be a signal for cooperation in Europe and an important step in preparing the Berlin conference in 2003.

HRK expressed its interest to strengthen the links between the Greek *TEI* and the German *Fachhochschulen/Universities of Applied Sciences*. To clarify the status of the Greek *TEI*, HRK and KMK propose the creation of a bilateral experts' commission to evaluate in a reciprocal way the programmes, staff, and infrastructures of the respective institutions and to forward recommendations on this issue.

The rectors of both countries underlined the necessity of better mutual information about changes concerning higher education. For that purpose a common working group, including experts of DAAD, will be established. Furthermore, the HRK offers its recently introduced newsletter as another medium to keep the Greek side informed about developments in Germany and to give the Greek colleagues the possibility to inform German universities about developments in Greece.

In order to assure the political support for further discussions, a meeting of Greek and German rectors and representatives of the embassies in both countries should be prepared.

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