

7.11.2018**HRK recommendation towards a culture of sustainability at universities**

Yesterday, HRK member universities affirmed their responsibility for sustainable development at their General Assembly in Lüneburg. In doing so, they alluded to the guiding principle of the United Nations that humanity must satisfy its needs without endangering the fundamentals of future generations.

“Universities, in particular, can make a substantial contribution towards achieving this goal,” HRK President Prof Dr Peter-André Alt told the press today in Berlin. “Universities train the educators, the managers and the decision-makers of tomorrow. They not only endow them with specialist knowledge, they also play a decisive role in shaping their attitudes and their sense of responsibility. In their research activities, universities are involved in the search for ecological solutions for the lifestyles and economies of the future. As organisations, they can create structures that act as a role model.”

“The goal must be to develop a culture of sustainability at universities,” said Alt. “At the same time, it must always be borne in mind that the function of the academic and research system and the basic right to academic freedom remain unaffected. Both state and federal governments as well as funding organisations must provide universities with appropriate support for this endeavour.”

The HRK adopted an initial recommendation on sustainable development in 2009. Around one quarter of German universities are already involved in the nationwide collaborative project “Sustainability at higher education institutions: develop – network – report (HOCH-n)”, which has developed a sustainability code specifically designed for universities. Moreover, many universities have made sustainability part of their profile, appointed sustainability officers and set up competence centres or Green Offices based on the Dutch model, which coordinate sustainability efforts.

Text of the recommendation