

20 November 2019**HRK wants more women in higher management positions in academia**

The more influential the positions in the research system, the lower the proportion of women. This sobering assessment was made by the General Assembly of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) in Hamburg yesterday. "We need to bring an end to this trend once and for all. On these grounds, the HRK has now put forward proposals to counteract the great inertia of the research system in this area," explained Professor Dr-Ing. Petra Maier, Rector of Hochschule Stralsund - University of Applied Sciences and member of the working group that compiled the draft of the paper, to the press today in Berlin.

In its resolution, the HRK stated that gender equality has gained credence in universities in recent years and measures in the area of equal opportunity policy have also been successful. However, the results are still unsatisfactory. The proportion of female researchers in – particularly influential and visible – management positions needs to be significantly increased.

There need to be clearer signals from government, business and academia that more women are wanted in higher management positions. Moreover, given the low proportion of women at higher career levels in academia, they are – more often than their male counterparts – called upon to participate in multiple committees. The HRK therefore believes it necessary that women take on more influential roles in these bodies. The resolution states the following: "This means that women are given higher management positions and they do not, as is often the case, take on second-tier roles that generally involve no less work but significantly less influence." Universities should implement processes and procedures that support such a development.

Beyond the necessary and effective measures that address the specific situation of young female researchers in particular, organisational structures and cultures must be given closer consideration. The HRK acknowledges the key responsibility of university heads. According to the HRK paper, "They are responsible for making sure that gender equality is treated as a cross-cutting issue and a significant part of the university profile".

In this context, the General Assembly warns of the dangers of reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes and roles by exclusively attributing the issue of balancing family life and an academic career to women. "Gender equality affects all genders. We need to systematically raise awareness of this," said Professor Maier.

[View text of the resolution](#)