

11 July 2013**More financial, legal and creative leeway for higher education institutions:
HRK responds to EU Commission Communication on Internationalisation**

"German higher education institutions have to become even more international. We must not lose sight of this goal despite the record numbers of home students. The statement given today by the European Commission emphasizing the importance of the strategic internationalisation of European universities confirms this view," according to President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Professor Horst Hippler.

"Over the past decade, German universities have been extremely successful in advancing their internationalisation policies. They have won recognition as host institutions for international students and scholars, and as partner institutions for universities and research institutions all over the world," Hippler explains. "The strategy for internationalising German higher education institutions that was recently adopted by federal and state ministers for education and research shows that we are on the right track: internationalisation is an ongoing process that must be pursued by universities and supported by politics."

Professor Dieter Lenzen, HRK Vice-President for International Affairs, points out that the federal government has actively promoted the internationalisation of universities for a number of years now. Since 2009, for example, it has invested around 2.5 million euro in the HRK 'Internationalisation of Universities' audit. Nevertheless, he claims that there are significant differences between the various federal states: "Some states are failing to place enough emphasis on the issue. The EU is now encouraging its member states to create the conditions for integrating internationalisation into the universities' development planning as a strategic priority. Since the German federal states have responsibility for their respective higher education institutions, they are being asked to take a more active role than previously."

To be able to develop and implement institutional internationalisation strategies, the HRK argues that universities should be given greater financial, legal and creative autonomy. Funding programmes should provide sustainable support for the universities' strategy development by ensuring that institutions receive the necessary autonomy in terms of content, as well as sufficient financial assistance to cover the overhead costs.

"We need to offer appealing job and scholarship opportunities at every level of the academic ladder to attract international scholars. They are essential for ensuring the long-term intellectual and creative success of German universities," says Lenzen. In order to draw international students, more scholarships and suitable support structures must be made available. Innovative ideas and additional resources are also required to achieve the desired level of institutional multilingualism and the internationalisation of curricula.

“The HRK will support the universities in their efforts, especially within the framework of the audit ‘Internationalisation of Universities’, which will be offered in a next phase from autumn 2013, partly funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research ,” according to Lenzen.

The communication given by the EU Commission, “European Higher Education in the World”, is available [online](#).