

7.12.2017  
Joint Press Release

## **The rare disciplines: HRK and KMK determined to facilitate survival and further development**

In this year's meeting, the Executive Boards of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) addressed numerous issues currently affecting research and universities. In particular, there was intense discussion about the significance of, and future prospects for, the rare disciplines. In a joint statement published today, the organisations agreed to secure the survival of these disciplines and to do even more in future to facilitate their development through mutual dialogue.

The rare disciplines are essential for the preservation of relevant, subject-specific competences, contribute to the preservation of our cultural heritage and facilitate the international profiling and networking of German universities. With this in mind, the Office for Research on Rare Disciplines at the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, which is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the State of Rhineland-Palatinate's Ministry for Education, Science, Continuing Education and Culture, has set out to observe and analyse the development of the rare disciplines. The states and the universities represented in the HRK aim to retain the Office and also to call upon the expertise and experience in other states, gained for example as part of the Baden-Württemberg Science Ministry's "Rare Disciplines" initiative, when making decisions in relation to the rare disciplines.

The HRK and KMK are also introducing the theme in the European arena. The HRK has been conducting discussions to this end for some time, which demonstrate that interest also exists on the part of individual countries, such as France and Poland, in addressing the matter. A cross-border perspective would then be possible, and could help to create synergies.

The KMK President and Baden Württemberg's Minister for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Dr Susanne Eisenmann, said: "The rare disciplines at German universities are a core component of higher education. Their survival, and hence the preservation of our culture, is of great importance to the states and the universities represented in the HRK. We therefore declare our support for facilitating the further development of these disciplines

### **German Rectors' Conference**

**Berlin** Leipziger Platz 11 10117 Berlin  
T: +49 30 206292-0  
**Bonn** Ahrstrasse 39 53175 Bonn  
T: +49 228 887-0  
**Brussels** Rue d'Alsace-Lorraine 44 B-1050 Brussels  
T: +32 2 7810061

[www.hrk.de](http://www.hrk.de)

### **Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK)**

Taubenstraße 10 · 10117 Berlin  
Postfach 11 03 42 · 10833 Berlin  
Tel.: +49 30 25418-499

Graurheindorfer Straße 157 53117 Bonn  
Postfach 22 40 · 53012 Bonn  
Tel.: +49 228 501-0

– many of which are world-renowned – and hence for preserving the richness of disciplines in the German academic system.”

HRK President Prof Dr Horst Hippler noted: “Diversity is an important feature and a great strength of the German higher education landscape. The rare disciplines make a great contribution to that diversity. It is important, therefore, that the states and the universities represented in the HRK pull together to safeguard them. We have been lobbying for years for the scope of these disciplines to be recorded, and for them to be preserved through smart structural measures that also secure the next generation of researchers. It is a mistake to brush aside rare disciplines as “exotic”. They are important pieces of a valuable mosaic. Currently there is extraordinary demand, for example, for input from Islamic Studies – a discipline that barely gained any public attention for many years.”

**Joint Statement of the Executive Boards of the German Rectors’ Conference and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany on the situation of rare disciplines.**

Contacts:

Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK)

Press Officer: Torsten Heil

Tel.: +49 (0) 30 25418-462

Mob.: +49 (0) 172 139 21 20

torsten.heil@kmk.org

www.kmk.org

German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

Deputy press officer: Ralf Kellershohn

Tel.: +49 (0) 30 20 62 92 27

Mob.: +49 (0)160 96 98 53 19

kellershohn@hrk.de

www.hrk.de

**German Rectors’ Conference**

**Berlin** Leipziger Platz 11 10117 Berlin

T: +49 30 206292-0

**Bonn** Ahrstrasse 39 53175 Bonn

T: +49 228 887-0

**Brussels** Rue d’Alsace-Lorraine 44 B-1050 Brussels

T: +32 2 7810061

www.hrk.de

**Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany**

Taubenstraße 10 · 10117 Berlin

Postfach 11 03 42 · 10833 Berlin

Tel.: +49 30 25418-499

Graurheindorfer Straße 157 53117 Bonn

Postfach 22 40 · 53012 Bonn

Tel.: +49 228 501-0