

6 March 2019**New HRK publication supports universities in their language policy**

"Language policy is a complex and much discussed topic at our universities," said the President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Professor Dr Peter-André Alt, in light of the publication of the HRK document 'Institutionelle Sprachenpolitik an Hochschulen – Fortschritte und Herausforderungen' ('Institutional Language Policy at Universities – Progress and Challenges'). He highlighted the importance of dealing with this challenge strategically and in consideration of the different cultures prevailing in individual disciplines.

"Universities need to promote language skills and linguistic diversity in a targeted manner," said Alt. "This concerns both institutional and individual multilingualism of all teaching staff, students and employees. This needs to be addressed at a higher level with a view to providing guidelines for the entire institution."

With the booklet, the HRK is supporting its members: It provides examples of the reasons behind an institutional language policy for various institutions and experiences that universities have had in this regard. The issue of the relationship between German and English as an academic language and lingua franca often rears its head. The role of other academic and heritage languages is also addressed.

The HRK President drew attention to the widely differing circumstances in the individual academic disciplines: "Whereas both academic and non-academic communication often takes place in English in the natural sciences, German remains indispensable for direct dialogue in other disciplines." The continuation of the native (academic) language is of particular importance for the language-related humanities. Languages that are completely different from German and English can also move into the focus, not least in the philologies.

"If we provide universities with incentives for establishing a targeted language policy, we must also point out that promoting multilingualism requires considerable resources in terms of staffing and infrastructure. State governments must be called upon to create the necessary framework conditions and properly equip universities for this purpose by providing funding on a sustained basis," said Alt.

The publication 'Institutionelle Sprachenpolitik an Hochschulen – Fortschritte und Herausforderungen' ('Institutional Language Policy at Universities – Progress and Challenges') is available for download [here](#).