

**3 May 2018****HRK President comments on position paper by the German Council of Science and Humanities:****clear divide between capacity safeguarding and quality assurance following Higher Education Pact**

The President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Prof Dr Horst Hippler, made the following comments on the position paper "University Education Following the 2020 Higher Education Pact" by the German Council of Science and Humanities:

"In very challenging times for higher education policy, the German Council of Science and Humanities has presented a paper offering a framework for further shaping the opinions of federal and state governments. The HRK welcomes the opinion that financing after the Higher Education Pact must at least take place at the previous level and on a sustained basis; we consider this to be imperative. The same goes for the stable and predictable parameters required by the German Council of Science and Humanities, which are used to allocate funding to universities. In light of this, the possibility boldly presented by the German Council of Science and Humanities of linking financing to all enrolled students points to an interesting path. Ultimately, we wholeheartedly support the recommendation for a dynamic financing component; the HRK has demanded similar things in the past.

In the view of the HRK, the fundamental suggestion of the German Council of Science and Humanities, according to which there should be no competitive relationship between capacity preservation and quality enhancement, is key. It is indeed vital for universities that a primarily capacity-based funding procedure succeeds the Higher Education Pact. To this end, the German Council of Science and Humanities fortunately very clearly states that it is the safeguarding of capacity that increases quality because only then can highly qualified teachers be acquired in the long term. I view the position of the German Council of Science and Humanities as a rejection of the idea of awarding some of the funding required for preserving capacity on a competitive basis. The HRK has already stressed on several occasions that a competitively organised contribution towards quality assurance in teaching is only sensible outside of actual capacity safeguarding, for example in the course of consolidating the Quality of Teaching Pact. Otherwise, universities would need to reduce their capacities to the extent calculable.

The German Council of Science and Humanities has unfortunately partially revoked its key message that capacity preservation and quality enhancement should not compete in the position paper by contemplating qualitative distribution parameters and positioning these alongside capacity-based ones. Should communication between federal and state governments

move in this direction, universities would consider this as having very problematic consequences.

The suggested parameters are not appropriate with regards to the quality of teaching. What's more, their combination produces inconsistencies because the suggested criteria are not positioned on the same timeline and are, to some extent, subject to fluctuation. This would again lead to a lack of planning security in universities and thus prevent consolidation of the capacities kept available thus far. This complex combination would also entail immense administrative and financial costs for calculating, reporting and monitoring for universities as well as the federal and state governments. In the view of universities, such a planning set-up would not be perceived as a particularly contemporary expression of public policy interests and, consequentially, as a weakening of university autonomy. In this case, the important clarification of the German Council of Science and Humanities that distribution of funding to universities in line with certain criteria should not lead to regulation of the use of funds would be strongly devalued."