

Press release

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KMK and HRK give clear commitment to European Study Reform

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) have stated their firm commitment to the European Study Reform. In a joint declaration issued on Friday, the two conferences gave a generally positive summary of the results of the reform process launched in Bologna in 1999. The key objectives of the European Higher Education Area, agreed on to date by 48 countries, have been established to a great extent at universities. These objectives include in particular the two-tier degree structure with bachelor's and master's degrees, quality assurance based on common standards and guidelines, as well as shared instruments of transparency for the recognition of academic achievements.

The KMK and HRK refer to the impressive reform efforts on the part of universities thanks to which the Bologna Process has now been implemented virtually everywhere in Germany. In 2009/2010, the German federal states had responded to criticism from students and academic staff with a review of the common structural guidelines of the Länder for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses. The primary aim of the review was to improve the feasibility of completing a degree programme and the quality of teaching, and to increase support for mobility.

With regard to further developments, the two conferences state several steps they both deem to be appropriate.

- To further improve mobility, universities are called to be more transparent in organising and standardising recognition procedures in practice, according to the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and on the basis of a broad understanding of skills – in case that they have not already done so.

- The KMK and HRK explicitly speak out in favour of refining existing capacity legislation. The objective should be to grant universities more flexibility in designing study pathways and to take into account the additional costs for qualified teaching, given an increasingly heterogeneous body of students.
- The KMK and HRK expressly welcome the fact that system accreditation is being applied by increasing numbers of universities. Previous and international experience should be included in any refinements. Nevertheless, programme accreditation should also remain available as an option, fulfilling its role as an instrument of re-accreditation better than in the past, while taking more account of the greater level of university autonomy.
- The common structural guidelines and accreditation have contributed to the creation of an institutional quality culture, especially with regard to teaching, while maintaining universities' autonomy. The HRK and KMK are in agreement that both instruments must be developed further. They point out, however, that the common structural guidelines already provide leeway that should be taken advantage of by universities to a greater extent.
- In addition to absolute grades, bachelor certificates should include a grade distribution table of all grades awarded. This will improve transparency and fairness towards students, university institutions and potential employers.

[View the joint declaration](#)