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**European Research Area must allow room for individual strengths**

"The European Research Area must promote better collaboration between and integration of the 28 national research systems, not centralisation and standardisation," said the President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler, in Bonn today.

In a letter to German MEPs on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), Hippler expressed his concerns in advance of tomorrow's consultation in the European Parliament on "The European Research Area - from Framework Programme 7 to Horizon 2020".

He states: "To give one example, the EU is developing a set of Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training, which contain some very sensible considerations. However, we want to avoid European standardisation at doctoral level. In Germany there are many engineers in technical disciplines carrying out doctoral research alongside working in industry. We see this as a successful model of partnership between universities and industry, which is also an unusual one in Europe. We should not jeopardise or surrender such models in exchange for one-size-fits-all European solutions.

I have therefore appealed to MEPs not to back a centralist model of the European Research Area that sacrifices the individual strengths and unique traits of research systems on the altar of uniformity.