

12 November 2015**The HRK says: retain the dynamic of the Excellence Initiative**

The dynamic of the Excellence Initiative must be retained. This will be achieved provided that there is neither a politically specified concentration on a few locations nor a move away from the excellence criterion. This was called for by the General Meeting of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) on Tuesday in Kiel. The HRK has stated its key positions, which were directed at politicians in response to proposals by the CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union) and SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany).

HRK President Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler said: "Politicians would be well advised to reduce specifications regarding the content to a minimum, but nevertheless set very high standards for the scientific excellence of the projects. The dynamic of the Excellence Initiative is fundamentally derived from the involvement of a wide range of universities, irrespective of their region, cooperation partners or range of subjects. This dynamic must not be choked off, for instance by indicating to a large number of universities that they would be unlikely to receive an excellent evaluation because they were in the wrong region, for example, or because they did not have partners which met with the approval of the policy makers. The Excellence Initiative must continue to be a science-driven competition with suitable research-oriented entry requirements. The key point is that the approval of projects is based on the assessment made by internationally renowned reviewers; they, and they alone, are able to grant a rating of 'excellent' that would stand up to international scrutiny."

The universities are also emphatically calling for guaranteed integratability with the existing programme, so that both can be secured: results that have been achieved and projects that will only develop their full potential in the long term.

Professor Hippler said: "That does not in any event mean that current projects are guaranteed to continue. Both options must be possible: to progress current excellent projects and to launch new excellent projects. As a result, only moderate alterations should be made to the design of the competition. A meaningful modification with substantial commitment by the applicant universities and by the universities of applied sciences as possible partners would be to accord future-oriented staff development a high level of importance. This applies to the themed clusters and to more general measures which contribute to developing the German universities as a brand."

Text of the recommendation