

26. September 2024**HRK ADVANCE: Thinking strategically about international university cooperation – organising cooperation in a legally secure and sustainable way**

Strategies and ways to shape the further internationalisation of German universities in a changing world in a legally secure and sustainable manner were the focus of the virtual HRK ADVANCE autumn conference "Governance & Processes of Internationalisation at Universities: Sustainable strategies – diverse impulses", which took place from 23 - 26 September. Active multilingualism, cross-border mobility, including that of teaching staff, joint virtual teaching formats, a more active orientation of appointment processes towards international career paths and more forward-looking risk management for institutional cooperation in degree programmes or doctorates each have the potential to significantly advance international university cooperation in the coming years.

"There is great interest at universities in the strategic further development of international cooperation," said Prof Dr Angela Ittel, HRK Vice-President for International Affairs, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, at the end of the conference today. "The discussions over the past few days have shown that cross-border cooperation and internationalisation not only require a clear commitment to an international academic landscape and an intercultural campus culture. The continuous development of the relevant legal framework is also crucial to success. Many things are already possible today, but the full range of internationalisation processes should be taken into account more systematically, especially in state higher education legislation."

HRK President Prof Dr Walter Rosenthal said: "Universities need long-term prospects in order to remain globally competitive. In addition to a cosmopolitan attitude and a favourable legal basis, this is also expressly linked to the reliable provision of the necessary resources. Over the past three years, the HRK ADVANCE project has discussed what is important today and what is likely to be important in the future with respect to the further internationalisation of universities. The dialogue with the universities has made it possible to integrate their specific needs. This has resulted in five groundbreaking sets of guidelines that contain many valuable insights and starting points. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this with their commitment."

Background:

The project "HRK ADVANCE – Optimising Governance and Processes of Internationalisation" aims to drive forward the further development of internationalisation at universities in a targeted manner and to make it more dynamic in key areas of activity. In a total of three thematic cycles up to summer 2024, project participants have examined the organisational and legal framework conditions and potential for the internationalisation of teaching, academic staff and risk management in international collaborations. Based on legal expertise, internal surveys of HRK member universities and in-depth discussion in confidential expert roundtables, a total of five sets of guidelines have been produced, outlining options for action for universities and external university partners at federal, state and local level. HRK ADVANCE has been funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) since July 2021 and will continue to be funded until December 2024.

The results of the autumn conference "Governance & Processes of Internationalisation at Universities: Sustainable strategies – diverse impulses" as well as additional information on the topics dealt with there – such as examples of good practice at universities and a topic-by-topic evaluation of the 16 state higher education acts – will also be publicly accessible shortly on the project website www.hrk.de/advance.