

## **The Differentiation of German Higher Education and the specific impact of the „Exzellenzinitiative“ – preliminary results and possible future scenarios**

**Stefan Bienefeld, Head, Quality Management Project, German  
Rectors' Conference**

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# Structure

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- III The „Exzellenzinitiative“
- IV Excellence, Diversity, Differentiation : Consequences of the „Exzellenzinitiative“, nationally and internationally
- V Future scenarios

# I Diversity and Differentiation – Terminology

(1) Diversity: Level of Variety in a system

- (1) External: Between entities in a system
- (2) Internal: Within entities in a system
- (3) Systemic/Structural/Institutional: Types of HEIs
- (4) Programmatic: Types of programmes

(2) Differentiation: Process in which the diversity of a system increases

Diversity and Differentiation have historically been a feature of the European Higher Education System and gain new impetus through the European policy initiatives in the recent past

## II Diversity in the German HE & R system

- (1) The German HE & R system has traditionally been conceived as a rather uniform one with little diversity
- (2) While this might be true with regards to some aspects of diversity, institutional diversity and the diversity of missions has always been high:
  - (1) Universities
  - (2) Universities of Applied Sciences
  - (3) Colleges of Arts and Music
  - (4) ...
- (3) In recent years the diversity has increased and new models are developing

## II Diversity in the German HE & R system

### (1) Recent trends:

- (1) Overall differentiation process speeding up in terms of institutional and external diversity in the system (link between HEIs and research institutions, Berlin „Einstein foundation“) and the diversity within and between the subsystems (i.e. between the universities, between the UASs)
- (2) General thrust towards „excellence“, „quality“, etc.
- (3) Increasing competition: public funding, performance allocation, etc.
- (4) At the same time the types of degrees become LESS differentiated
- (5) Number of students bound to increase heavily over the coming years – how to handle „quality access“?

### III The Excellence Initiative

- (1) Goal: To promote a development of peaks (Gipfel/Leuchttürme) on the one hand and the overall and broad increase of the quality of the German HE & R system.
- (2) Joint Initiative of the Federal government and the federal states
- (3) Funding: 1,9 bn € (75 % Bund, 25% Länder) from 2006/07 – 2011/12
- (4) Three funding lines:
  - (1) Graduate schools
  - (2) Excellence clusters
  - (3) Future concepts („Elite Universities“)
- (5) Focus on research excellence

### III The Excellence Initiative

(1) Two application periods (2006/2007), selection based on informed peer review process

(2) RESULTS:

(1) 39 graduate schools in 37 universities (funding of 1 mio € p.a.)

(2) 37 Clusters (funding of 6,5 mio. € p.a.)

(3) 9 future concepts (funding of 10 mio. € p.a.) : Technical University of Aachen, Free University of Berlin, University of Freiburg, University of Göttingen, University of Heidelberg, University of Karlsruhe, University of Konstanz, University of Munich, Technical University of Munich

## **IV Excellence, Diversity, Differentiation : Consequences of the „Exzellenzinitiative“**

- (1) Peaks of Research Excellence become (more) visible
- (2) Co-operation between universities and the non university research institutions (Max Planck, Helmholtz, etc.) has been strengthened in the process
- (3) Differentiation process to speed up further
- (4) Big international interest in the initiative and its results
- (5) Internationally discussion about similar initiatives (Sweden but also India, China)
- (6) Diversity to increase further both between the institutions as well as within institutions in terms of profiles and missions



## IV Excellence, Diversity, Differentiation : Consequences of the „Exzellenzinitiative“

BUT

- Some concerns about the long-term impact and the sustainability
- Lack of focus on education has led to many discussions, including an initiative to focus on excellent teaching
- Funding will need to increase in the future
- Discussion about the relationship between competition and co-operation

## V Future Scenarios

- (1) The sustainability of initiatives to foster differentiation needs to be ensured
- (2) In the long run, the unity of teaching and research needs to be readjusted and preserved in this process
- (3) Different aspects of excellence and diversity make it necessary to evaluate the performance of an institution on a variety of scales, summary judgements about entire institutions are of little help
- (4) Diversity and differentiation can only be further developed if institutions are granted real autonomy

## V Future Scenarios

- (1) The development of a competition model applicable to HE needs to be supported
- (2) Development of a classification system to provide transparency and orientation within an increasingly diversified system? Is this an appropriate answer to rankings?



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Thank you very much for your  
attention

[bienefeld@hrk.de](mailto:bienefeld@hrk.de)  
[www.hrk.de](http://www.hrk.de)