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Contribution to the Panel

“The changing role of universities in the knowledge triangle”

1. How is, in your view, the role of universities changing in the developing knowledge based European society?

Universities are and will be the basis for education. There is no other institution which could replace its function within the educational and scientific system.

However universities have to – and this is probably a German perspective – get back to the old virtues such as regaining formats where teaching is a prime and essential part of university professor’s obligations.

In my opinion this can only be achieved if the burden, the time-load concerning teaching is reduced in favour of quality measures to improve lecturing. More direct contacts between students and professors at least in the core disciplines must be achieved. A coordinated approach with tutorials, lecturers and e-learning seminars in direct interactions with the professors should give opportunities to improve. Lecturing must be rewarded appropriately.

2. How can universities in Europe stimulate better interaction between education, research and innovation?

There must be enough room for serious research work. The system of sabbaticals for research can and should be enlarged; however sabbaticals must be earned for examples by excellent lecturing.

3. Can universities in Europe meet these new demands – and still preserve and strengthen their autonomy?

Collaboration between universities in Europe should and could be enhanced.

In this respect, there are two goals to achieve: The first goal is to enhance cultural learning, to enhance language capabilities and thereby benefit from teaching and learning attitudes within Europe. This means that we need more joint curricula amongst partnering universities in Europe.

But there is also a second goal of these interactions and this should be a specific program of “*partnering agreements*” between established universities in the old member states of the European Union and those who became partners only recently.

Such an approach where teachers and students would be exchanged for a certain period of time, the member states of the European Union would be better prepared to give their students an improved basis for the competitive situation for young people and scientist in Europe.

4. How can/ should politicians on different levels in Europe stimulate and support stronger integration of the elements in the knowledge triangle?

Similar partner agreements should also be enhanced in the area of research. In this case the goal would be to enable the universities in the new member states to apply more effectively (first together with the partner, later on alone) for European grants. It would be detrimental if you would establish different quality standards for European grants. We should rather enable universities of new member states to take part with similar chances in the race for European money.

I would like to call this program “**EEE**” – that means: “*Europe Enables Europeans*” – which should and could also be read “Europeans Enable Europe”.

Finally, I would like to add a comment specifically addressed to the humanities: We have seen emerging quite a few European networks and even research institutions in natural sciences within Europe.

However, we haven’t seen this kind of development in the humanities to the same degree. We will not be able to build Europe based only on national scientific concepts. If you really want to build Europe also in an intellectual way, we have to think about what is needed to create more and effective European networks for research in the humanities.

And my clear and firm proposal is that we need one or two European institutions where research in the humanities is conducted as one part, where research is coordinated in a network

and where probably also financial programs for certain research projects in the humanities are sponsored. It is also important to include graduate schools.

In this case, “*EEE*” which I have mentioned before, should clearly read first as “*Europeans Enable Europe*”.