

THE GERMAN COUNCIL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES PROVIDES ADVICE TO THE GERMAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE LÄNDER GOVERNMENTS ON THE STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH.

PRESS RELEASE 17 | 2013

Berlin, 15 July 2013

## “Future pact” for the scientific system

### German Council of Science and Humanities calls for joint effort to ensure a long-term perspective for science

Following intensive deliberations, the German Council of Science and Humanities has set out its perspective on the future of the German scientific system. The Council is guided by the belief that securing the future viability of the German scientific system benefits society and that investments in science yield a large economic reward. While this demands clear political priorities, it also requires scientific institutions to strengthen their profile, to be geared to competition in the future, to collaborate in a variety of ways from local to transnational level, and to organise their activities and decision-making processes accordingly. The proposals developed by the Council take into account both the requirements of science and the legitimate expectations of society, business and government for an excellent scientific system, which is coming under pressure as a result of demographic change and increasing international competition.

With their numerous “pacts” of recent years – the Higher Education Pact, Excellence Initiative, and Pact for Research and Innovation – the *Länder* and the German federal government have already done a lot for science. The Council urges the heads of the German federal and *Länder* governments to continue their commitment and to agree as swiftly as possible on a pact for the future of the scientific system (“future pact”), to run until 2025, for the coordinated implementation of the measures recommended by the Council. The Chairman of the Council, Wolfgang Marquardt: “We need to be clear about one thing: we cannot keep expecting more from science without making appropriate investments in science. Basically, our recommendations are about the necessary strengthening of higher education institutions through a reliable increase in their basic funding.” This demand is embedded in the proposal for a “future pact” to

1 | 2

**Contact:**

Dr. Christiane Kling-Mathey  
Head Office of the German Council of Science and Humanities  
Brohler Strasse 11  
50968 Cologne, Germany

Phone +49 221 3776-243  
Fax +49 221 3884-40  
kling-mathey@wissenschaftsrat.de

**Press releases:**  
[www.wissenschaftsrat.de](http://www.wissenschaftsrat.de)

restructure the organisation and funding of the scientific system by the German federal and Länder governments.

“The scientific system does not need a revolution. It has impressively demonstrated its capability for development. The excellence initiative in particular created a sense of optimism throughout the system and facilitated the implementation of new ideas,” comments Professor Marquardt on the results of the Council’s analysis. “It is entirely possible to build on what already exists, provided that in future the federal government and *Länder* continue their joint efforts to ensure a cooperatively networked scientific system with capable and active higher education institutions.”

The Council’s guiding idea is to broaden the positive development trend which has been initiated primarily in the field of research: not only in the universities, but also in the universities of applied sciences; not only in research, but also in teaching, transfer and infrastructure-related scientific tasks. This opening to diverse missions will reshape the scientific system in the long term. However, it should not be imposed from outside. Rather, within a culture of enablement, flexible instruments are made available and scope is given in order to promote sustained multi-dimensional differentiation.

With regard to this guiding idea, the Council recommends a package of measures which essentially are intended to strengthen higher education institutions: offering the best possible support and training for people, enhancing the attractiveness of the scientific system, strengthening higher education institutions as centres of the scientific system, establishing suitable instruments and incentives for multi-dimensional horizontal and vertical differentiation, creating conducive conditions that meet the specific requirements of science, allowing creative freedom, transferring the added value of the non-university research landscape to the entire scientific system, and intensifying a wide range of cooperation. Through a modified continuation of the “pacts” and above all through the establishment of “Liebig centres” and “Merian professorships” with a long-term orientation, the aim is to add a component of stability to the dynamism of the system, strategically strengthen higher education institutions, and close remaining gaps in a funding landscape which is already diverse.

**Note:** The full text of “Perspektiven des deutschen Wissenschaftssystems” (Drs. 3228-13) is available online (<http://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/3228-13.pdf>) or can be requested via e-mail ([post@wissenschaftsrat.de](mailto:post@wissenschaftsrat.de)) from the Council’s head office.