

## KONFERENZEN

### **German and Taiwanese leaders in higher education sign agreement to co-operate**

Berlin, 12.07.2001

On July 12, 2001, members of a delegation from Taiwanese universities and representatives of the German Rector's Conference (HRK) signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" concerning bilateral co-operation on the university level. The document was drafted on the occasion of a seminar on reforms in the higher education sector, in Berlin, hosted by the HRK.

The general purpose of this act is to promote the internationalisation of higher education institutions and the exchange of related information between the scientific and academic institutions in Taiwan and Germany, taking advantage of the framework of autonomy of the higher education institutions involved.

Among the delegates from Taiwan were attending the presidents of National Taiwan University, National Cheng Kung University, National University of Kaohsiung, Tamkang University, and Fu Jen Catholic University. The HRK was represented by its president, Prof. Dr. Klaus Landfried.

Taiwan and Germany are currently taking pains to reform their respective educational sectors. In Taiwan, among the reform priorities are the deregulation of educational policy, quality assurance in education, easier accessibility of higher education, and the establishment of life-long learning. Taiwan acknowledges the importance of educational reform by setting up a budget of approximately DM 850 million (13 billion NT\$) by the Ministry of Education for an "Academic Excellence Plan", designated for quality improvement for those universities that have reached an international level of competitiveness in certain fields. An urge for a similar development is expressed through the key issues in higher education in Germany, as defined by the new Framework Act for Higher Education (Hochschulrahmenrichtlinien) of 1998, namely calling for more "deregulation, competition, quality assurance, and internationalization".

The agreement includes specific items as follows. The Taiwanese university presidents and the HRK

- "will support the mobility of students and scientists, and especially the mobility of post-graduate students,
- promote the further training and the exchange of professors and lecturers within the framework of visiting professorships, workshops, seminars and short-term exchange programmes,
- maintain exchange on the level of university management,
- intensify the cooperation with regards to developing new forms of teaching and university organisation,

- strengthen the cooperation with regards to developing new accreditation procedures and joint degrees, and
- support research collaboration.

To attain these goals it is agreed to

- facilitate the access to useful information for both sides, and
- to exchange respective publications and make use of information on the internet."

Additionally, in order to facilitate further co-operation, both groups agreed to form a joint group in charge of supporting collaboration, e.g. by proposing guidelines for the recognition of degrees and for new ways of co-operation. According to the seminar's concluding statement by Prof. Dr. Ronald Mönch, on behalf of the HRK, Taiwan and Germany share common challenges in the area of higher education systems. "Reforms in higher education are much needed. Higher education is running short of resources. International co-operation is an important factor in future development. Universities aim at reducing governmental interference and demand more autonomy."

However the two most noticeable differences between the respective situations are indicated as well. "Private education plays a much more prominent role in Taiwan than it does in Germany. Federal structures make the German higher education system more complex and varied."

This document might express an increased German concern about the competitiveness of its educational system in an international arena, in particular as compared with the predominant USA, who attract the lion's share of Taiwanese students keen on studying abroad. This initiative comes at a time of a low tide in the enthusiasm of Taiwanese students to study in Germany. It was noted that demand from Chinese mainlanders, on the other hand, continues to be high. Taiwanese delegates, however, expressed a prevailing high esteem in particular of the quality of German education in the arts and humanities.

Ole Döring

### **Expertengespräch: "China im 21. Jahrhundert – Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer regionalen Großmacht"**

München, 20. Juli 2001

Die Rolle der Volksrepublik China in der Weltpolitik zu analysieren und adäquat mit dieser umzugehen, ist nach wie vor eine Herausforderung für die Internationale Politik. Aktuelle Anlässe, sich dieser Herausforderung zu stellen, hat es in den vergangenen Monaten ausreichend gegeben, so z.B. den Luftzwischenfall über dem Südchinesischen Meer vom 1. April 2001, die Unterzeichnung des russisch-chinesischen Freundschaftsvertrags im Juli 2001 oder auch die im selben Monat erfolgte Entscheidung des Internationalen Olympischen Komitees, Peking zum Austragungsort der Olympischen Spiele 2008 zu machen.