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KU first German university to be awarded “EMASplus” certificate

The KU is the first university in Germany which has been awarded with the “EMASplus” certificate. This award honors institutions which establish a holistic sustainability management that takes into account ecological, social and economic factors. Already back in 2015, the KU was the first university in Bavaria to apply for the EMAS (“Eco-Management and Audit Scheme” of the European Union) review of its environmental management system – now, it has gone one step further: EMASplus adds a social and economic perspective to the KU’s environmental management. In exchange for the certificate, the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt commits to have its economic, ecological and social impact checked in regular intervals and continually optimize this field. “Like this, the KU takes into account that every institution has an impact on others through its actions and understands sustainability as a comprehensive concept”, explains Prof. Dr. Ingrid Hemmer, sustainable development coordinator at the KU. Preserving creation and promoting sustainability for future generations has been one of the KU’s key principles for many years.



(f.r.) KU Chancellor Thomas Kleinert, Sustainable Development Coordinator Prof. Dr. Ingrid Hemmer, Johannes Baumann (Head of environmental management at the KU) and Ina Limmer (research associate for Prof. Hemmer) as representatives for the steering group “Sustainability”, presenting the EMASplus certificate the KU has been awarded for the first time. (Photo: Schulte Strathaus/Press Office)

Education for sustainable development as a fixed component in the KU's research and teaching practice as well as an active contribution to environmental protection have been important topics for the KU for many years. For example, the University has introduced intelligent technology for heating control to lecture theaters and seminar rooms which regulates energy input depending on how many students are in the room. All standard printing and copying jobs are exclusively printed on recycling paper. The KU's power is generated from 100 per cent renewable energies; its heat is produced of a mixture of biogas and district heating – which means that the KU almost entirely refrains from using fossil fuels.

However, additional factors from the field of social responsibilities are taken into account for an EMASplus certificate: A special procurement directive ensures that human rights are respected. When purchasing office supplies, furniture or technical equipment, the KU carefully chooses its suppliers and contractual partners in order to be able to adhere to ecological and social standards. In this context, the KU is also showing great commitment for the fair trade initiative. Another pillar within the field of human rights is the KU Center for Flight and Migration. It investigates causes and effects of flight and migration, offers educational opportunities for refugees and promotes dialog between academia, teaching and practice. Furthermore, the topic of human rights is constantly approached and incorporated in different ways by the University's Amnesty International student group or the working group 'Shalom'.

Another prerequisite for the EMASplus certification is good working conditions for KU employees. This is why the KU has committed to being a family-friendly university in addition to observing statutory occupational health and safety provisions and is actively working towards facilitating the balance of work and family life for its employees. Furthermore, the institution is currently implementing a corporate health management system.

Fair business and working practices are also a prerequisite for the EMASplus certificate. In 2015, the University has already implemented an equal opportunity concept with the aim of equal participation of women and men in the academic field. The KU also approaches questions surrounding the topic of inclusion in research and teaching. Furthermore, there is a KU regulation for standards of good scientific practice the adherence to which is monitored by an offer for scientific self-regulation.

In order to also pay attention to students' interests and concerns, the KU participates in the annual study quality monitor and also carries out ongoing teaching evaluations. As far as involvement with and development of society – which is another component of the certification process – is concerned, the KU sees itself as committed university which gets active in promoting mutual transfer between research and society. A good example for such transfer activity is the "MenschINBewegung" project which is run in collaboration with the Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt and deals with questions surrounding sustainability, digitalization, social engagement and mobility.

For more detailed information on the KU's commitment in the field of sustainability, please refer to the current sustainability report (available in German) www.ku.de/nachhaltigkeit.

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