

# Germany steps in to woo international students

## Can stay for a year after completing course to look for jobs

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**CHENNAI:** Faced with competition from other European countries, Germany now allows international students to stay on for a year after completing their course of study to search for “appropriate employment.”

Under the new system, the students can work for four years in Germany in their area of study alone, says Ulrich Podewils, Director, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). “They can stay for even longer if the job they do is very important for the country or seen as economically valuable for Germany ... but of course these are political issues also and they need to be debated.”

Detailing some of the changes in Germany’s higher education system, Mr. Podewils said that in the last one year, the State Governments, which were responsible for education, had been allowed to collect tuition fee for their courses (but with a limit of 500 Euros a semester). Till then education both for local and international students was free in his country.

“Of course there are still issues to be debated, and there are three lines of thought, one for levying fee,



*Ulrich Podewils.* –  
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another – namely those institutions that do not attract many international students – not for levying fee, and the third, which represents some of the State Governments, that wants the issue to be decided by individual universities,” he said.

Mr. Podewils was in Chennai as part of the German Education Fair held in the city on Thursday.

### Academic ties

On the improving academic ties between Germany and India, he told *The Hindu* that the DAAD had signed a memorandum of understanding with the University Grants Commission to en-

- MoU with UGC to encourage research, student exchange

- Focus on humanities

courage research and student exchange in the area of humanities.

Until now, the exchanges had a bias towards those in engineering and applied sciences.

“Of course, we want more Indian talent to come into Germany but it needs to be broad – not only science or engineering but also in areas of humanities,” he adds.

In Germany, there was a significant rise in the number of students entering higher education and that meant the capacity in the 300 universities had to be raised, he said.

### Expansion programme

The State Governments (Laender) had signed an agreement with the Federal government to enable it fund the expansion programme. Until now, Federal funding was only for research and equipment in the universities. But this time, the funding would be for expanding the teaching programmes to match the rise in intake.