

Resolution by the
39th General Assembly
of the HRK
on 19 November 2024
in Tübingen

**On the current debate on anti-
Semitism in the Bundestag**

HRK German Rectors' Conference
The Voice of the Universities

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On 7 November 2024, the German Bundestag passed the resolution *“Nie wieder ist jetzt – Jüdisches Leben in Deutschland schützen, bewahren und stärken”* (“Never again is now – protecting, preserving and strengthening Jewish life in Germany”). In view of a possible further Bundestag resolution, *“Antisemitismus und Israelfeindlichkeit an Schulen und Hochschulen entschlossen entgegentreten sowie den freien Diskursraum sichern”* (“Resolutely countering anti-Semitism and hostility towards Israel at schools and universities and securing free space for discourse”), the HRK points out that such a resolution is not objectively necessary and is not per se useful against the background of university autonomy and academic freedom. The HRK, however, fundamentally welcomes the fact that the Bundestag recognises the efforts of universities as they have taken a firm stand against all forms of anti-Semitism, and not just since the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on 7 October 2023.

For universities, academic freedom is the basis of everything they do. The universities expect the executive and legislature to recognise this academic freedom as a guiding principle when drafting resolutions on universities. In the current situation, this means:

1. The discussion about the definition of anti-Semitism is the subject and task of academic debate. Political decisions cannot and must not jeopardise or prevent this academic discourse. State intervention in the way in which this academic discourse is organised at universities is not permissible.
2. It must be ensured that state funding for research and teaching is distributed solely on the basis of science-led principles and procedures.

As part of their university autonomy, universities have implemented a variety of measures and will implement further measures to take a clear stance against anti-Semitism. This includes measures to protect Jewish students and staff as well as the enforcement of disciplinary measures on the basis of their rights as property owners in the event of anti-Semitic incidents. Where necessary and appropriate, law enforcement agencies are involved. Through events such as lecture series and seminars, they specifically strengthen discourse and the culture of academic debate. Through research on anti-Semitism and Jewish life, through education critical of anti-Semitism, through exchange programmes with Israel for students and researchers and through the establishment of anti-Semitism and anti-discrimination officers, they enable their members to take a stand against anti-Semitism in everyday life and at the university, and engage in active prevention of anti-Semitism. The HRK firmly rejects calls for a boycott of Israeli academics and academic institutions. Strengthening academic cooperation with Israel is also a sign of solidarity and the expression of a culture of

academic discourse. The HRK therefore expressly shares the Federal Government's goal of expanding academic cooperation with Israel and strengthening the BMBF's funding of anti-Semitism research.

Raising awareness for the threats of anti-Semitism through research and education as well as exchange and cooperation, not political statements, are the means of choice, and the universities fulfil these tasks responsibly.