

Resolution by the 27th  
General Assembly of the  
German Rectors'  
Conference (HRK)  
on 19 November 2019  
in Hamburg

**No place  
for anti-Semitism**

## **HRK** German Rectors' Conference

The Voice of the Universities

Leipziger Platz 11 10117 Berlin, Germany	Tel.: +49 (0) 30 206292-0 Fax: +49 (0) 30 206292-15	post@hrk.de www.hrk.de
Ahrstraße 39 53175 Bonn, Germany		post@hrk.de www.hrk.de

The General Assembly of the HRK is appalled at the terror attacks that took place in Halle/Saale on 9 October 2019, the date of the Jewish Day of Atonement, and the growing number of anti-Semitic incidents in Germany (at least 1,799 in 2018 alone). It is opposed to all forms of anti-Semitism.

There is no place for anti-Semitism at German universities. The General Assembly of the HRK supports the resolution 'Gegen BDS<sup>1</sup> und jeden Antisemitismus' (Against BDS and All Forms of Anti-Semitism) of the Youth Forum of the German-Israeli Society, the German Union of Jewish Students, the Free Federation of Student Unions, the AStA of the Technical University of Darmstadt and the AStA of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt as well as university groups with party affiliations, such as the Working Group of Young Socialists in the SPD, the Federal Association of Liberal Students Groups, Campus Grün - Federal Association of Alternative and Green University Groups and the Association of Christian Democratic Students.<sup>2</sup>

German universities are centres of democratic culture, locations for dialogue and places of diversity.<sup>3</sup> With the campaign 'German Universities Open to the World', universities have set a standard and called for clear commitments and decisive action in support of a tolerant and open-minded society.<sup>4</sup> Universities in Germany also have a special historical responsibility to take a decisive stand against all forms of anti-Semitism.

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<sup>1</sup> BDS stands for boycott, divestment and sanctions; by adopting the motion Ds. 19/10191 'Standing firm against the BDS movement – combating anti-Semitism', the German Bundestag has decided to condemn the BDS movement and the call to boycott Israeli goods and companies as well as researchers, artists and athletes (17/05/2019).

<sup>2</sup> This resolution supports the resolution 'Gegen BDS und jeden Antisemitismus' (Against BDS and All Forms of Anti-Semitism) of the Youth Forum of the German-Israeli Society, the German Union of Jewish Students, the Free Federation of Student Unions, the AStA of the Technical University of Darmstadt and the AStA of Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt as well as university groups with party affiliations, such as the Working Group of Young Socialists in the SPD, the Federal Association of Liberal Students Groups, Campus Grün - Federal Association of Alternative and Green University Groups and the Association of Christian Democratic Students. See <https://www.fzs.de/positionen/feminismus-antidiskriminierung/gegen-antisemitismus/> (available in German only)

<sup>3</sup> Resolution of the Senate of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) on 13/10/2016: Universities as organisational centres of the research system and key players in society Key considerations on the role of, and challenges facing, the universities (status 2018), p. 1f. As a partner of the European association Universities for Enlightenment, the HRK has already resolutely affirmed its commitment to condemning anti-Semitism. See the statement of 13/12/2018 at <https://www.u4e.eu/viennastatement>

<sup>4</sup> German Universities Open to the World: Nationwide campaign by HRK member universities, <https://www.hrk.de/press/press-releases/press-release/meldung/universities-for-openness-tolerance-and-against-xenophobia-nationwide-campaign-by-hrk-member-unive/> accessed on 15/10/2019

The definition of anti-Semitism provided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)<sup>5</sup>, which is also recognised by the Federal Government<sup>6</sup>, provides a clear foundation for recognising hatred towards Jews and is therefore a valuable tool in combating it. Anti-Semitism directed towards Israel is also taken into consideration. The member universities of the German Rectors' Conference emphatically welcome this definition of anti-Semitism and would like to see it take root in all universities. It is used in their institutions and is communicated to members. Jewish life on the campus must not be endangered, and Jewish researchers, teachers and students must feel safe at all universities. Research on anti-Semitism, its genesis and effects, relevant studying and teaching options as well as knowledge transfer to advocates and decision-making authorities are essential for successfully combating anti-Semitism.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism> accessed on 20/09/2019

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/themen/kulturdialog/-/229928> accessed on 20/09/2019: "Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community organisations and religious facilities. Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity."