

16.11.2021**HRK on the ongoing coalition negotiations in the field of science:
praise and clear warning**

The signals from the coalition negotiations at the federal level indicate that the future governing coalition is genuinely concerned about promoting science and, in particular, universities. This is the impression of the General Assembly of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), which met today in Stuttgart. "Although the final agreement still has to confirm this, it is very encouraging overall and deserves great recognition," said HRK President Professor Dr Peter-André Alt. "Investments in research and development as defined by the 3.5 percent target are essential factors for Germany's future viability. Increasing investment in teaching at German universities is also indispensable in this context."

The HRK reacted with concern to plans that have come to light for the federal government not to initiate the sustainability transition in university construction and renovation that is key to protecting the climate. "There is a basic consensus among all political parties that the renovation backlog in university buildings must be urgently resolved, taking climate protection standards into account. This must be recognised and implemented jointly by the federal government and the federal states," the HRK President admonished.

The General Assembly made another critical point. Failure to strengthen the important promotion of application-oriented research at universities as a whole and instead limiting it to parts of the higher education system would be misguided. "If it turns out that the coalition partners do not want to take into account universities with more than 25,000 students, they will be excluding institutions with a total of more than one third of all students in Germany by drawing an arbitrary line, and this discrimination will affect all federal states and different types of universities. Most importantly, however, I can only warn against uncoupling the huge application and transfer potential of large institutions – at the national and regional level – from the planned funding. Application and transfer are the responsibility and current practice of all universities without exception," said Alt. "The future government is addressing an important and forward-looking field and can be sure of the universities' support in this. However, it should develop this field to achieve maximum impact, and this can only be done in cooperation with all universities, taking into account their diverse and different funding potential."