

25 November 2021**HRK: Recognition for the coalition agreement
Focus on universities as key agents of change**

According to the coalition agreement, the parties of the traffic light coalition intend to strengthen universities and universities of applied sciences as the heart and backbone of the research system. "It is a gratifying and important statement! We now hope that it will be followed by action," said Professor Dr Peter-André Alt, President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), in Berlin today.

"The coalition partners are addressing key issues related to Germany's future viability and clearly recognise the decisive importance of universities in finding necessary solutions in teaching and research, including innovation and transfer. It is logical step to increase general government spending on research and development to 3.5 percent of GDP," says Alt.

The coalition agreement between the SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen and FDP implements important core demands of the German Rectors' Conference: In **teaching**, the financial volume for the Future Contract for Teaching and Learning will be boosted. In addition, there is a federal programme called Digital University, which is also designed to promote the expansion of digital infrastructure across the board. In **research**, the importance of basic research, application-oriented research and transfer is emphasised. "The planned German Agency for Transfer and Innovation must be open to all types of universities; it is an indispensable building block in the successful establishment of this institution," says Professor Alt. "In central future areas, German universities are key drivers of research and innovation in fields ranging from quantum technology to issues of social cohesion, democracy and peace."

"The announced fundamental reform of the BAföG, support for open access, a more science-friendly copyright law and the federal-state process for the further development of capacity law are urgent and important projects in which the HRK is happy to stand by the future federal government. We have made sound proposals on these issues," Alt continued. "We also consider the planned federal-state programme for best-practice projects to be promising in terms of the necessary improvement of working conditions in science. This includes, not least, the upcoming improvement of the appeal of the civil service."

Alt expressed concerns with regard to the renewed exclusion of federal participation in environmentally friendly university construction: "The transition to sustainable practices in construction and renovation must be initiated in the next four years so that universities can do their part to help achieve climate neutrality."