

**11 May 2022****HRK appeal to federal policy-makers:  
Implementing the coalition agreement, strengthening the innovative power of  
universities**

Before the second reading of the 2022 federal budget, the General Assembly of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) yesterday expressed concern that the annual increase in funding for the "Zukunftsvertrag Studium und Lehre stärken" (Future Contract for Strengthening Studies and Teaching) agreed in the coalition agreement between the SPD, Bündnis90/Die Grünen and FDP might not be implemented. There is even a fear of cuts to the Innovation in Higher Education Teaching programme, which is already unable to fully meet the high demand from universities. The General Assembly noted that consistent federal support for digitisation is absolutely indispensable.

In the discussion with Federal Minister of Education Bettina Stark-Watzinger at the HRK Annual Assembly the previous day, university leaders had encouraged the minister in her efforts to stabilise the financing of universities, especially in difficult times, including through federal funding, in the interest of Germany's and Europe's future viability.

HRK President Prof Dr Peter-André Alt said: "In the course of the formation of the government, a special appreciation for the work done by German universities has become clear. The coalition agreement has drawn good conclusions from this, the implementation of which must not be delayed now despite the admittedly difficult overall situation. The dynamisation of the Future Contract must be implemented in 2022 if the goals defined in the coalition agreement are to be achieved. In order to make a lasting contribution to innovation and progress, we need the promised annual increases and the financial contribution of the federal states. Without the dynamisation of the Future Contract, the urgently needed innovation boost will fail to materialise. Investing in higher education is investing in the future viability of our society."

The General Assembly also pointed to the great importance of the funds promised in the coalition agreement for quality development within the framework of the Innovation in Higher Education Teaching programme and for digitisation through a corresponding federal programme. "The universities have successfully tested new teaching formats in the conditions of the pandemic, and additional funds are now urgently needed to develop these further," Alt explained. "A cutback or delay in these programmes would mean that we would not be able to take advantage of the opportunities for university teaching that exist right now. That would be criminal and would set us back in international competition."