



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

## **HRK and DSW: Ensure continued operation of universities and student services during winter term even in the event of energy shortages**

- **HRK/DSW: Ensure continued operation of universities and social services for students during the winter term 2022/2023.**
- **Financial support from the federal government and the federal states required.**
- **HRK President Peter-André Alt: "Students urgently need existential security."**
- **DSW President Rolf-Dieter Postlep: "Don't forget students when it comes to possible relief for tenants and consumers."**

**Bonn/Berlin, 21 July 2022. The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) and the German National Association for Student Affairs (DSW) are appealing to the federal government and the federal states to ensure that university operations and social services offered by student services organisations can be maintained during the coming winter term 2022/2023, even in the event of an energy or gas shortage. Germany's approximately 2.9 million students must also be taken into account in possible state aid against inflation and the energy price crisis.**

HRK President Professor Dr Peter-André Alt said: "Universities are already preparing energy-saving measures for a possible gas emergency in winter, potentially including noticeable restrictions. At the same time, long-term research processes, often linked to qualification objectives, and in-person teaching must be guaranteed as far as possible. The lesson to be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is that a complete fall-back into distance teaching must be avoided at all costs for didactic and psycho-social reasons.

In addition, students need existential security for the coming winter term. They will not be able to cope with the expected substantial energy price increases on their own. Targeted compensation for all students is absolutely necessary. Furthermore, in the event of a gas emergency, care must be taken to ensure that the social services provided by student service organizations, such as canteens and day-care, can be maintained and that student halls of residence can continue to operate as normal.

In addition, universities are in urgent need of support from the federal states to be able to compensate for the enormous price increases in energy, especially in gas. If necessary, the federal government must provide accompanying support through a special programme."

Professor Dr Rolf-Dieter Postlep, DSW President: "Another online-only winter semester in 2022/2023, this time due to energy or gas shortages, would put enormous psycho-social strain on students. In addition, they have existential concerns about price increases and inflation. Students must not be forgotten when it comes to possible relief for tenants and consumers! They are just as affected by rent and price increases, and they usually fall through the cracks of state assistance programmes for employees and jobseekers, such as unemployment benefit.

When politicians are considering assistance for families or people with low incomes, such as rent subsidies, then the approximately 2.9 million students in Germany must be able to benefit from this.

Student unions cannot and do not want to pass on price increases for energy and food to students on a one-for-one basis. Some have already been forced to substantially increase rents in their student halls of residence because of the massive increase in the price of gas. This spiral must be counteracted by political means; student unions absolutely need state help from the federal states in this respect, in the interests of students."