

**6 February 2025****"When it comes to promoting research, teaching, innovation and study conditions, the federal government plays an important role" – Calls for participation in the Bundestag elections**

The German Rectors' Conference (HRK), the German National Association for Student Affairs (Deutsches Studierendenwerk – DSW) and the Free Association of Student Organisations (freier Zusammenschluss von student:innenschaften – fzs) welcome the package of demands made by the science ministers of the federal states to the future federal government. The organisations believe that increased cooperation between the federal and state governments and a greater financial commitment from the federal government in the new legislative period are vital for the promotion of science, universities and the social infrastructures of higher education.

The position paper of the Conference of Science Ministers (KMK) emphasises the central demands of the HRK, DSW and fzs for a future-proof German higher education system, better study conditions and greater educational equity. Education and research policies must play a key role in the actions of the new federal government to secure economic prosperity, social cohesion and liberal democracy. The parties currently in the election campaign with aspirations and prospects of government responsibility have set different priorities in this respect.

The HRK, DSW and fzs are jointly calling on all university members – employees in research, teaching, technology and administration as well as students – to exercise their right to vote on 23 February.

HRK President Prof Dr Walter Rosenthal said: "In their position paper on the science, research and innovation agenda, the science ministers of the federal states have included and reaffirmed key demands made by the HRK to the incoming federal government. When it comes to promoting research, teaching, innovation and study conditions, the federal government plays an important role. Targeted investment in university buildings and infrastructure, reliable funding for basic and applied research, the continuation of the Future Contract for Strengthening Studying and Teaching in Higher Education, the reduction of bureaucracy and a reorganisation of the Federal Education and Training Assistance Act (Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – BAföG). All of this is essential to maintain and strengthen Germany's future viability as a place

for research and innovation. As pillars of democracy and the rule of law, universities and research require reliable framework conditions that safeguard their autonomy and academic freedom. Only in this way can universities be places of free discourse in research and teaching in order to develop and apply science-based answers to the major questions and social challenges of our time."

Prof Dr Beate Schücking, President of the DSW, added: "It is good and important that the science ministers of the federal states are focussing on the social situation of students and the social infrastructure of higher education. Excessively high rents, inflation and rising food prices are a burden on students. Federal financial aid under the BAföG-scheme is too low and reaches too few people. Affordable housing is in short supply. The science ministers are rightly calling for adequate BAföG at the level of basic income support, together with a permanent continuation and significant increase in the joint federal and state government programme 'Young Housing' – that's a good thing! And a future joint federal and state programme for the renovation of university buildings must also take into account the dining halls and cafeterias; here we have a renovation requirement of at least four billion euros."

Lisa Iden, fzs board member, commented: "The nationwide body of student organisations supports the science ministers' calls for significant investment in university construction, adequate student financing including a genuine BAföG reform, and improved working conditions at universities. According to the Federal Statistical Office, student poverty has risen dramatically compared to previous years. As a result, young people decide not to apply to university or have to drop out because they cannot afford it. The overall social importance of good study and training conditions for young people has previously been underestimated: good education is indispensable for ensuring social cohesion and democratic development."