

20 May 2025**Start renovating and modernising university infrastructures now**

The members of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) are calling on the federal government, the Bundestag and the federal states to quickly and decisively initiate the necessary renovation and modernisation of university infrastructures. In a resolution passed in Magdeburg on 13 May, the HRK members refer to the fast-track university construction initiative stipulated in the coalition agreement between the CDU/CSU and SPD. An implementation is proposed which, after immediate infrastructural measures to ensure core research and teaching activities, also provides for a procedure for the long-term resolution of the renovation and modernisation backlog by the federal and state governments.

In view of the critical condition in which a significant part of the university building infrastructure currently finds itself, the first, immediately necessary step must be to maintain or restore its functionality or to keep universities operating by accelerating replacement construction measures. In a second step, the HRK members are also calling on the federal and state governments to conclude a long-term 'Transformative Universities' pact for the future in order to enable urgently needed energy-efficient refurbishment and modernisation measures on a long-term and reliable basis.

"We very much welcome the fact that the new coalition partners are recognising the urgent need to modernise and renovate university buildings in terms of energy efficiency, which has existed for many years due to a lack of funding. The announcements must now be quickly followed by action," says HRK President Prof Dr Walter Rosenthal. "As part of the announced fast-track construction programme, priority is to be given to renovating or replacing university buildings that are already closed or at acute risk of closure and are essential for ongoing research, studying and teaching. At the same time, the federal and state governments must not stop at this emergency aid. We must also gradually make the universities' building infrastructure fit for the future to be able to compete internationally for the best academics and students."

Prof Dr Susanne Menzel-Riedl, Vice-President of the HRK for the Higher Education System and Organisation, explains: "The universities are continuing to develop in a highly active and pioneering manner in terms of construction work, in order to conserve resources with a view to sustainability and to be able to react flexibly to future

demands on university buildings. What we now need in university construction is, firstly, rapid and unbureaucratic provision of funds totalling at least €38 billion from the federal government's special fund for infrastructure investments and, secondly, the start of a continuous, joint commitment by the federal and state governments with transformative investments of €2.6 billion each year."

"The total funding requirement for securing existing buildings and, in particular, the energy-efficient refurbishment and modernisation or replacement of the future structural infrastructure of universities is currently estimated to be at least €90 billion – not including the additional requirements of the digital transformation, university hospitals or student services," Menzel-Riedl explains, referring to relevant model calculations.

In addition to these investments by the federal and state governments, she adds, it is imperative that building regulations are eased at state level in order to make rapid progress in resolving the backlog of renovation and modernisation work in university construction. "Above all, the process time between planning and commissioning must be significantly shortened and planning security increased at the same time. Universities should be more closely involved in the renovation and modernisation of their building infrastructure in all phases," says Menzel-Riedl. A reorganisation of federal and state responsibility for financing university construction would offer an unique opportunity to critically examine the existing building regulations.

[View text of the resolution](#)