

**19 July 2017****EU budget: Universities condemn plans to cut investment in research**

Last week, the finance ministers of the EU member states met to discuss the European Union budget for the coming year in Brussels. Amongst the points covered on the agenda was the call for investments in research and innovation to be cut by €491.47 million next year.

Prof Dr Horst Hippler, President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), criticised the decision, calling it a "step in completely the wrong direction". "It is tragically ironic that the finance ministers want to cut future investments in research within Europe by around €0.5 billion just as the EU Commission publishes a report that points out just how important research is for prosperity in Europe and calls for increased investment," explains Hippler.

In its report – titled "LAB – FAB – APP. Investing in the European future we want" – an independent high level group appointed by the EU Commission revealed that research and development account for two-thirds of the growth we have witnessed over the past 20 years within developed countries. The report also suggests that Europe is at risk of being overtaken by South Korea, Japan and the USA when it comes to investments in research. In those countries, a much higher proportion of the current revenue is put into research and development.

"As part of the unfolding election campaign, the governing parties in Germany claim that they want to increase investments in the future," says Hippler. "From this, it does not seem plausible that Germany agrees to the cuts planned by the European finance ministers. I really hope that the federal government reassesses its position again after the summer break as the EU budget negotiations continue."