

20 November 2020**Blockade of EU financial framework: creative solutions are now needed**

The veto by the Polish and Hungarian governments yesterday evening has caused the collapse of negotiations on the next financial framework of the European Union. The compromise previously reached by the EU member states and the European Parliament, which would have defined the EU budget for the next seven years up to and including 2027, for the time being is off the table. Among the areas affected are the European Union's investments in research and education.

In an initial response, the President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Professor Dr Peter-André Alt, called on all participants to keep all negotiating options and communication channels open while looking for new ways to ensure the EU's capacity to act: "It is extremely regrettable that the European institutions have been unable to agree on a financial framework," said Alt. "Europe is a community based on shared values, and I expressly support the European Parliament, which is seeking to reinforce these values by combining shared funds with a constitutional state mechanism," the HRK President went on to add. He further stated that it was unacceptable for the governments of Poland and Hungary to seek to evade this responsibility.

"Until recently, the research sector in Germany and Europe has wavered between satisfaction and disappointment with the outcomes of negotiations in the European institutions. We are grateful to the European Parliament, which has managed to ensure that the envisaged budget cuts for education, student mobility, research and innovation are €6.2 billion less than originally planned. There is also disappointment that in spite of an additional €750 billion in funding for the coronavirus recovery fund, there is to be less funding for education, research and innovation than originally proposed by the European Commission in 2018. This disappointment is now giving way to the bitter realisation that the scope for action has essentially been blocked."

This would make the last month and a half of Germany's presidency of the Council of the EU very challenging, said Alt. He expressed the hope that it would still be possible for the European Union to reach a satisfactory consensus, while noting that it was also necessary to consider how governments who aimed to make shared values and the rule of law binding could build a successful EU with sufficient financial resources if there were states which no longer wished to continue along such a shared path. "Political creativity and flexibility are now needed more than ever," the HRK President added.

“No matter what the eventual outcome, German universities will continue to work constructively with their European partners in the EU programmes for education, research and innovation to help shape the future of Europe.”