

20 November 2018**Federal/State Government programmes: progress and setbacks for universities of applied sciences**

"The fact that the Joint Science Conference agreed on two programmes specially tailored to universities of applied sciences in the last week is a good sign given the important role of these universities in the German higher education system," said the President of the German Rectors' Conference, Prof Dr Peter-André Alt, today in Berlin.

"We are delighted that a programme aimed at facilitating the recruitment and development of professors at universities of applied sciences has now been adopted after long negotiations and some delays," commented the Spokesperson of the HRK Universities of Applied Sciences Member Group, Prof Dr Karim Khakzar. The Federal/State Government programme with €430 million in funding over a period of eight years addresses the issue that the demand for studying at universities of applied sciences has risen sharply, yet it has become increasingly difficult to find suitable applicants for professorships at universities of applied sciences.

HRK President Alt added: "It is encouraging that the Joint Science Conference followed the recommendation of the HRK and provides for various funding instruments such as focus professorships, tandem programmes and the establishment of cooperative platforms and is also open to the development of new concepts that are yet to be tested." However, according to Vice-President Khakzar, the funds remain below the sum hoped for by universities of applied sciences. He also claimed that a preparatory phase of around two years must be anticipated, which means that positive effects could not be expected before then.

Both HRK representatives regretted the fact that the "Research and development at universities of applied sciences" programme, which was extended by five years, increased only slightly (by €4 million) to €60 million per year. The HRK had requested an increase of €20 million per year as this programme acts as an important stimulus for innovation. "It is disappointing that State Governments were unwilling to help promote research at universities of applied sciences, even though all state higher education legislation stipulates that research is a duty of universities of applied sciences," said HRK President Alt. "The Coalition Agreement speaks of supporting universities of applied sciences and increasing federal project funding for research at universities of applied sciences. In the view of universities of applied sciences, the outcome of the Joint Science Conference negotiations on research funding falls far short of expectations," added HRK Vice-President Khakzar.