

**9 May 2016**

**HRK Annual Meeting at the Freie Universität Berlin**

The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) focuses on the topic of "Universities and Industry - Scope and Limitations of Partnership" at its 2016 Annual Meeting. This and tomorrow's General Meeting of the HRK are taking place at the Freie Universität Berlin.

At the opening of the meeting, HRK President Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler emphasised the importance of partnership between universities and industry: "Products and services with a large research component account for 45% of value added in the German economy. For their part, universities benefit from impetus and sources of funding for applied research. Students benefit too, because anyone who later wants to work in industry needs to know how it operates."

Industry provides €1.8 billion annually in project funding and donations, compared with third-party funding of €6 billion from public sources and basic funding from the state of around €23 billion. Professor Hippler said: "In relative terms, the proportion of third-party funding provided by private funds is falling. So universities are certainly not unilaterally dependent on industry. On the contrary, the potential for cooperation has not yet been exhausted. If we want to address the pressing issues of our times, we must further expand the collaboration between universities and businesses."

However, in spite of the basically positive situation and the tasks and prospects facing us, he added, it must continually be examined whether there is a risk of undesirable dependencies or of research being too skewed towards immediate applicability. Questions from the public in this regard have called for transparent answers.

The Federal Minister of Education and Research, Prof. Dr. Johanna Wanka, addressed all these aspects. The HRK Executive Board had invited her to comment on the topic from the perspective of her broad experience as a mathematics professor, former university rector, science minister in two federal states and current federal minister.

The Annual Meeting will end with an evening concert by the vision string quartet from Berlin, winners of the first prize at this year's Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Conservatory Competition.

The topics on the agenda for tomorrow's HRK General Meeting, which is not a public event, include the successor programme to the Excellence Initiative, accreditation, university medicine, the safeguarding of good scientific practice and the election of three Vice Presidents.