

**15 November 2017****HRK General Assembly: 'Transfer and cooperation' as tasks of universities**

Yesterday's General Assembly of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) in Potsdam addressed the subject of cooperation between universities, industry and society. HRK President Prof Dr Horst Hippler said: "We are consciously avoiding the term 'third mission', as it is frequently referred to. That is because we have never regarded 'transfer and cooperation' as separate from our core tasks in research and teaching, but rather as building on activities in those service areas. It is only on this basis that universities were and are able to act as a driving force in society and the economy and to contribute to technical and social innovation."

The resolution treats 'transfer and cooperation as one. HRK members confirm that they are actively involved in a multitude of areas – from technology transfer to the provision of social services – for the benefit of the economy and society. However they understand these activities as a continual process of exchange; by examining economic and social problems and issues the universities further develop teaching and research on a continuous basis.

At the same time, however, the universities also warn of the dangers of focusing research excessively on those projects that promise short-term social or economic benefit. Accordingly, courses of study at universities that promote civic engagement should supplement broad subject-based and methodological qualifications.

Vice-President Prof Dr Ulrich Radtke, whose committee prepared the resolution, emphasized the importance of exchange between universities and all areas of society. "At present it is particularly clear how much we are called upon to contribute not only to technical and economic progress, but to the whole diverse range of social and political issues – from debates about the shaping of our immediate living environment to fundamental debates on values. It is evident in this context, too, how important dependable and adequately funded universities are for the entire country, because good cooperation requires time and resources."

[Text of the resolution](#)