

17 November 2016**Planned copyright law reform very welcome and urgently needed**

"Education and science need copyright law that can hold its own in times of increasing digitalisation. This is also in the interests of academic authors, who are also researchers and teachers. And it is certainly also in the interests of publishers as their partners," said the President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Prof Dr Horst Hippler, today in Berlin.

To maintain the status quo, as some are calling for, would mean putting our heads in the sand, he said. Instead of dragging inherited business models into the future, new concepts must be developed. This would enable publishers to continue as partners of academic authors into the future.

He continued: "Digital teaching, learning and publication formats now play a significant role – the innovation cycles of these formats are becoming shorter and shorter. This is why the German Rectors' Conference considers it a matter of such urgency that copyright provisions be adapted to our technical capabilities.

The HRK therefore expressly welcomes the plan by the Federal Government for a fundamental overhaul of copyright legislation, and the attention it is also paying to the special needs of education and science in this process. It has been clear for some years that the existing provisions tend to create legal uncertainty. This is shown by various legal disputes that could be resolved only by the highest courts. One result is the framework agreement on section 52a of the UrhG, the German Copyright Act, which the universities unanimously oppose."

The HRK proposes

1. that authors should receive fair and commensurate remuneration for the use of their works, also in the context of copyright exception provisions;
2. that such a remuneration should be made as a lump sum payment and not – as provided for in the framework agreement on section 52a of the UrhG – on a work by work basis;
3. that a general education and science exception should, when introduced, always be given priority vis-à-vis licence offers made by publishers, and
4. textbooks should explicitly being included in the planned exception provision.

HRK President Hippler: "I call on the Federal Government to publish its draft for a general copyright exception for education and science in a timely manner, so that its passage may be achieved before the end of this legislative period."