

23 June 2017**HRK President on copyright law reform:
Digitalisation without compromise**

"If Members of the Bundestag genuinely want to advance digitalisation and promote German research, they must not cross the red lines drawn by the universities," said President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Professor Horst Hippler, referring to the planned passage of the Urheberrechts-Wissensgesellschafts-Gesetz (Copyright Knowledge Society Act) this coming week. "I once more call on them most emphatically to pass the legislation in the version tabled by the Government."

For the universities, there are two "no-go areas" in relation to the draft legislation, Hippler said.

First of all, the usage of copyright-protected works for academic teaching must be adequately compensated in a lump sum payment. "This is the only conceivable arrangement consistent with the dynamics of academic teaching. Recording each individual use is simply not feasible in the academic teaching context."

Secondly, explicit primacy of the planned exception provisions over contractual provisions is indispensable. Hippler says this will ensure universities do not first have to laboriously verify whether there is a reasonable offer from a publisher before they use materials that have already been licensed. "The value of lump sum payment would be lost if a case-by-case review of publishers' offers had to be performed first," the HRK President said.

He appealed to Members of the Bundestag to "make sure that students can rely on digital course materials again this coming winter semester. If the Bundestag does not pass the legislation as planned, the universities will most probably have to shut down their digital teaching programmes. That would send a disastrous signal about Germany as a research location."