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Translating the amendments to the Basic Law into action

HRK calls for investment in higher education by the federal government and the federal states

The federal government and the federal states must now translate the amendment to the Basic Law that was made a year ago into action and bring about agreement on the areas they will finance jointly. This was the demand made yesterday in Kiel by the General Meeting of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK).

Basic funding, overhead flat-rate funding and construction of higher education facilities were proposed as suitable points at which to start this process.

Directors of universities demanded a sustainable and reliable increase in basic funding to match the financing provided to non-university research institutions.

Overhead flat-rate funding to cover the indirect costs of publicly funded third-party projects also needs to be raised substantially and secured for the future, they said. Studies have shown that these costs amount on average to over 40% of the total costs of the project, but currently only 22% is covered. "This is an untenable situation," said HRK President, Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler. "It is becoming increasingly necessary to use basic funding to secure the financing for research projects. Research is being funded at the cost of teaching."

The General Meeting also made an urgent demand for more financial commitment from the federal government to construction, renovation and technical infrastructure.

Due to the high demand for higher education, a dramatic situation was developing around the availability of spaces, and the conditions for studying were deteriorating rapidly. Furthermore, it was said, digitisation required major investment of a magnitude which could only be realised in the long term by a joint commitment from the federal government and the federal states.

The payments from the federal government to higher education facilities to compensate for construction costs, a joint task which was abolished in the federalism reform, will come to an end in 2019. They amounted to €700 million per annum. "This will cause further deficits where construction and infrastructure are concerned," said HRK President Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler today in Berlin. "The federal states will be unable to make up this shortfall. It constitutes a massive threat to the competitiveness of German universities."

Go to the text of the resolution