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HRK President comments on the relaxation of the ban on cooperation: a triumph of sensible thinking

The President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Professor Dr. Horst Hippler, has described today's agreement by the Bundesrat to amend Article 91 b of the Basic Law and thus relax the so-called ban on cooperation as "a triumph of sensible thinking".

Professor Hippler said:

"The year is ending on an encouraging note for the universities. The obstacle to cooperation between the federal and state governments on higher education which began with a change to the constitution eight years ago has now, after long discussion, finally been removed.

The change to the constitution now permits long-term involvement of the federal government, which is crucial. The universities are currently in a situation where they receive intermittent support under time-limited programs such as the Higher Education Pact, but these do not permit planning and decision-making in the medium to long term. We therefore need institutional commitment on the part of the federal government together with the federal states.

I call upon the federal government and the federal states to use the new options offered by the constitution wisely and to address the most urgent problems in higher education, permanently and without delay.

The HRK will urge the federal states and the federal government to work together on renovating and constructing buildings for teaching and research, modernising the infrastructure, particularly in the area of information technology, and supporting early career researchers, for example by increasing the number of professorships and non-professorial teaching positions.

All of these are tasks of national importance. Sensible and sustainable collaboration between the federal states and the federal government to tackle them will determine the prospects of hundreds of thousands of students and thousands of early career researchers and will decide the quality of future research performance, indeed of the whole of the German research system."