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The dispute between the federal states and the federal government is putting research at universities at risk

The HRK Senate is calling for financing to cover the real costs

The Senate of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) has emphatically urged the federal government and the federal states to put aside their dispute over financing of what is called the "overheads" of research projects.

"If the dispute between the federal government and the federal states were really to result in no further financing of overheads, research and higher education policy would go to the wall and it would spell the demise of many important research projects," said HRK President Professor Dr. Horst Hippler. Today in Bonn, the HRK Senate therefore urged for the state financing of overheads to be safeguarded.

The universities already lack the funding to provide the required framework conditions, whether suitable premises or administration personnel, for research projects they have attracted. Currently, 20% of the funding for projects financed through the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (*DFG, German Research Foundation*) is earmarked for overhead costs of this kind. However, the real indirect costs are between 40% and 70%, depending on the discipline.

"It is incomprehensible why the universities should be indirectly punished for their steadily growing success in attracting research projects," continued HRK President Professor Hippler. "Each new project places an additional burden on the normal university budget as it has to finance any costs that subsequently arise.

Nobody understands why the cost of research at non-university institutions is financed in full, but research at universities has been discriminated against for some time and its actual existence is now even jeopardised."

To remedy this discrimination and safeguard university research for the long term, the HRK Senate called again for an incremental increase in overhead financing. It asks that every new project initially receive at least 25%, equivalent to the amount of funding offered under EU funding programmes. The aim should be for costs to be fully financed by 2020.

The steady increase in third party funding in comparison to the simultaneous stagnation or reduction of basic funding, has fundamentally changed the structure of university financing over recent years. The proportion of third party funding has risen from 11% to over 20%. Third party funding even represents more than a third of the total financing at some universities.

Text of the HRK Senate Resolution