

8 May 2024**"Study without borders. Choose Europe!" and "Universities choose Europe": calls for participation in the European elections – HRK touchstones on higher education and research policy published**

Under the motto "Study without borders. Choose Europe!", the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), the Free Association of Student Organisations (fzs) and the German National Association for Student Affairs (DSW) are jointly calling on voters to take part in the elections to the European Parliament. The appeal to make use of your right to vote on 9 June 2024 is not only aimed at students, but at all university members. The three associations are also calling for a fair, respectful and peaceful political campaign.

The "Universities for Enlightenment" network, to which the HRK belongs along with nine other European rectors' conferences, is also campaigning for as many university members as possible to vote in the European elections. In the recent statement "Universities choose Europe", the network recalls key achievements of the EU in the higher education sector and links this with the call to work for a strong Europe in which cooperation in education and research is further expanded and academic freedom is firmly protected.

Regarding tomorrow's Europe Day, one month before the European elections in Germany, HRK President Prof Dr Walter Rosenthal explains: "Science in particular shows how beneficial the idea of European integration is. Exchange programmes such as Erasmus+, EU research funding and the European University Networks – all of this brings universities and researchers in Europe closer together and moves them forward. German universities and their students, teachers, researchers and supporting staff often benefit from this on a very personal level. We may think we can take this for granted, but we cannot.

Unfortunately, this also applies to the freedom of research. The fact that populist, nationalist and illiberal anti-democratic forces, which take the easiest possible path with protests and simplistic proposals for solutions, emphasise the divisive or pursue destructive plans, are on the rise all over Europe must worry us. Limiting their influence can be achieved through objective opposition and a high voter turnout of democratically-minded citizens."

"European politics is shaping our lives more than ever. Students and all young people can and must use their vote to express their current and future interests. We must not leave Europe to the backward-looking. Use your right to vote, go and vote!" adds Sascha Wellmann, member of the fzs board.

Prof Dr Beate Schücking, President of DSW, affirms this: "Students from all over Europe come to German universities and many German students spend one or two semesters with our European neighbours. The bonds that are forged in this way support the European idea, which is further developed and formulated in the European Parliament. The future of the current generation of students can only be a European future. That's why it's important to vote on 9 June."

The ideas and goals of the major parties running for office in Germany on higher education and research policy can be seen, among other places, in the answers to the HRK's [election touchstones](#). The answers to eight questions have been placed side by side to enable direction comparison between them. The HRK asked all the major parties currently represented in the Bundestag, which agreed to a standardised procedure for answering such questions.