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HRK: Protecting universities as a free space for discourse

At its meeting in Fulda, the 38th General Assembly of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) discussed in detail the recent protests on the Middle East conflict at universities and the public reactions from politicians and the media. HRK President Prof Dr Walter Rosenthal explains:

"Dealing with anti-Semitism and the recent protests in the context of the Middle East conflict at universities was a key topic at today's HRK General Assembly in Fulda.

Universities see themselves as places of open discussion and dialogue. They fulfil their responsibility to provide a comprehensive academic discussion space wherever possible. Through appropriate standards and procedural rules, they ensure an exchange of ideas even on socially controversial topics and opinions. Universities are able to distinguish between science-led discussions and those that are no longer within the framework of the law and the constitution, and to react appropriately to the situation. Universities offer no space and no stage for anti-constitutional or criminal offences, for violence of any kind, for discrimination, racism or anti-Semitism. Rather, they are taking active steps to ensure that all members of the university can feel safe on campus.

University leaders exercise their discretionary powers responsibly within the framework of university autonomy. They expect trust and support from federal and state politicians. In recent weeks, academics and university leaders have been severely criticised in defamatory terms by individual media outlets. This approach is unacceptable to us."

[View text of the resolution](#)