

15 May 2024**Towards greater gender equality in the appointment of professors – HRK invites universities to make a voluntary commitment**

The German universities united in the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) are committed to further reducing structural gender inequality and achieving appropriate gender representation in professorships at universities. In a resolution passed yesterday in Fulda, the HRK's General Assembly named concrete goals and action areas as well as measures that can contribute to the realisation of institutional cultural and structural change towards more gender equality at universities and have the character of a voluntary commitment.

Despite all the successes to date, the under-representation of female academics in professorships at universities persists, which is why a more determined approach to gender equality is required, explains Prof Dr Angela Ittel, HRK Vice-President for International Affairs, Equal Opportunities and Diversity: "Universities are now invited to adopt the goals outlined by the HRK General Assembly and to agree as institutions to take further measures that can enable an equal distribution of all genders in professorships at German universities in the medium to long term."

For more gender equality in professorial appointments, the HRK resolution recommends above all a more active recruitment of women in early academic career phases in order to expand the pool of candidates for such appointments. Further measures include the establishment of more gender-equitable appointment procedures and remuneration structures as well as the institutionalisation of gender sensitisation. In addition, consistent monitoring of these measures is necessary in order to ensure that the objectives are realised.

The areas of action covered by the voluntary commitment and the related proposed measures have been developed in recent months by a working group of university leaders appointed by the HRK General Assembly in Trier in May 2023. The consultations were based on the HRK resolution "On the situation of women on career paths at German universities" adopted in 2022.

The President of the HRK, Prof Dr Walter Rosenthal, explained today in Berlin: "Universities have undeniably made great progress in terms of equal opportunity, gender equality and inclusion over the past decade. Nevertheless, much remains to be done. Both at a centralised level and within faculties and departments, we will take the necessary steps to achieve and ensure appropriate gender representation across all subjects and levels in the long term."

Recent research studies have shown that women are not appointed to professorships less frequently than men. The decisive factor is that a sufficiently large number of female candidates can be presented to an appointment committee for selection, explains Angela Ittel: "So the good news is that the various equal opportunity measures at universities are working! Against this background, we can feel confident that the proposed measures and voluntary commitment are well chosen. We are on the right track."

As an accompanying measure to the voluntary commitment, the signatory universities are asked to enter their institutionally established instruments in the publicly accessible database of the Center of Excellence Women in Science (CEWS). CEWS is to be commissioned to evaluate the measures at system level at regular intervals. The HRK will support the process by organising events on specific topics.

[View text of the resolution \(in German\)](#)