

7 November 2024**HRK President on the end of the governing coalition in the federal government**

In a recent reaction, Prof Dr Walter Rosenthal, President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), commented as follows on the break-up of the 'traffic light' coalition between the SPD, the FDP, and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen:

"The end of the coalition government is a turning point. In times of extensive challenges at national, European and global level, education and research policy needs also to be clarified quickly. This applies directly to the next federal budget and also to the work of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) until a new, stable governing majority is in place. We cannot afford a prolonged phase of uncertainty and of simply continuing the administration. The issues that need to be addressed are too big and urgent.

Against this background, the balance sheet of the 'traffic light' government is rather mixed from the universities' point of view. For German universities, efforts to energise the Future Contract for Strengthening Studying and Teaching in Higher Education were of fundamental importance. We also welcomed the commitment to sustainable and diverse universities and science communication. However, the coalition agreement with its many ground-breaking plans has not yet been sufficiently implemented.

A support programme for the digitalisation of universities has not materialised. We are still waiting for a fundamental structural reform of the Federal Training Assistance Act (*BAföG*) and a joint federal and state programme for 'permanent positions' alongside professorships. The planned Research Data Act, the further development of capacity law, the increase in programme allowances from the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG, German Research Foundation) and an academically appropriate amendment to the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act (*WissZeitVG*) have not made decisive progress. The concept of the German Agency for Transfer and Innovation (*DATI*), which was launched following lengthy discussions, is still subject to a funding proviso by the Budget Committee.

In the long term, the role of the federal government in university construction needs to be reassessed. And the BMBF will have to strengthen trust in academia, which has suffered as a result of contemporary considerations regarding a possible funding-related assessment in response to opinions expressed by individual academics."