



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

BAföG draft misses the target of urgently needed structural reform

- **Draft for a 29th BAföG amendment by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research inadequate**
- **German Rectors' Conference (HRK) and German student union call for further reform steps**
- **HRK President Walter Rosenthal: "BAföG must once again become an effective instrument for equal access to education"**
- **DSW President Beate Schücking: "The financial framework set by the Budget Committee must be fully utilised"**

Berlin, 19 January 2024. The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) and the German National Association for Student Affairs (DSW) are appealing to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) to finally and resolutely tackle the urgently needed structural reform of the German Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG), which has been made possible in principle with funds from the Bundestag Budget Committee. Although the present BMBF draft for a 29th BAföG amendment contains some positive innovations, it once again falls short of the goal of a comprehensive reform of the BAföG funding architecture announced in the coalition agreement. In particular, the two organisations are calling for a regular and appropriate increase in the requirement rates and for BAföG to once again become an effective instrument for equal access to education by formulating the funding entitlement in line with needs.

HRK President Prof Dr Walter Rosenthal explains: "A truly fundamental reform of BAföG is more important than ever. There are still too few talented young people from lower income groups, or from families in which neither parent has a university degree, entering higher education. Yet we are dependent on an academically trained workforce drawn from all parts of society. Lowering the barriers that can stand in the way of studying at university by providing reliable support to cover the cost of living is of great importance here. Those who have serious financial worries cannot concentrate on a demanding course of study.

BAföG must once again become an effective instrument for creating greater equality of opportunity in education. A significant increase in the current requirement rates and the number of recipients is essential for this objective. The current draft does contain some positive elements. I expressly welcome the one-off payment for particularly needy first-semester students and extended income limits for parents. Overall, however, the draft clearly misses the target of an urgently needed fundamental structural reform. In addition to an increase in the requirement rates and the introduction of a regular increase

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1/2024

mechanism, the proposed reform in its current form lacks the inclusion of a funding option for part-time students who, for example, are unable to study full-time or work part-time due to caring responsibilities."

DSW President Prof Dr Beate A. Schücking said: "This planned BAföG amendment falls short of what is possible in terms of content and funding, it lacks power. Food and energy prices are rising rapidly and rents are skyrocketing. Many students are up to their necks financially. And yet the BMBF still wants to freeze the BAföG requirement rate and the flat-rate housing allowance. However, around 33 per cent of students live in precarious circumstances. They must be helped with BAföG, otherwise they risk dropping out due to lack of money. Our society cannot afford that. What's more, there is still no regular adjustment of the BAföG requirement rates. While MPs' salaries, housing benefit, pensions and citizens' allowance are regularly adjusted, this does not happen with BAföG. Of all things, a central instrument for educational equity is thus being decoupled.

Contrary to the coalition agreement, the federal government now wants to increase the loan amount from €10 010 to €11 550. However, many studies show that debt in particular discourages students from poorer families from studying. This step is therefore counterproductive. The €150 million earmarked by the Budget Committee is not being fully utilised. The BMBF has the opportunity to do more and more sustainable things for those students who need this support the most."

Statements on the draft bill for the 29th BAföG amendment:

[HRK statement](#)

[DSW statement](#)

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