

**7 July 2015**

**HRK survey reveals: universities are committed to education and training for refugees**

German universities are actively committed to the provision of education and further training for the growing number of refugees in Germany. This was revealed by a recent survey carried out by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) among the 16 State Rectors' Conferences in the German *Länder*.

Over 60 universities reported on their activities, which range from information events on studying at university and preparing for student life to legal advice, German classes, psychosocial support and help with finding accommodation.

The many different forms of support and advice listed by the individual State Rectors' Conferences within the HRK also include financial assistance measures. These include the waiving of semester fees, free student passes for public transport, and access to hardship and grant funds.

"We are concerned to see that people are reacting with uncertainty to the influx of refugees and that in some places xenophobia is increasing. Through activities like these, universities are making an important contribution to the social integration of refugees and sending out a signal for an open, forward-looking society," said HRK President Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler in Berlin today.

"We don't want to deny access to education and doctoral training to individuals who have insufficient evidence of educational qualifications due to their refugee status. I would like to encourage universities to make full use of the scope allowed by law to offer refugees encouraging prospects. This survey shows that in many places this is already happening."

"I'm delighted that refugees can now apply for BAföG support 15 months after their recognition. Universities also urgently need additional funding to safeguard the assistance they are providing in the long term," said HRK Vice-President Prof. Dr. Dieter Lenzen. "Only then can we provide long-term financial and psychosocial support to often highly qualified but sometimes traumatised refugees. I'm pleased that we have been able to decide on a concerted effort by all decision-makers so promptly together with the responsible ministries and funding organisations. This will have the effect of focussing efforts for refugees with study interests, thus making them more effective. German universities are proceeding on the assumption that politicians will make the necessary financial resources for what is ultimately a humanitarian duty available with minimal red tape."

To encourage universities to share ideas on work with refugees and build on available expertise, in September the German Rectors' Conference will hold a workshop for interested institutions.