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HRK President on the RIAS study: not letting up in the fight against anti-semitism

The Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism (Bundesverband der Recherche- und Informationsstellen Antisemitismus; RIAS) today presented its annual report "Antisemitic Incidents in Germany 2024". The President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Prof Dr Walter Rosenthal, comments:

"The RIAS report is depressing proof that anti-semitism is still widespread in Germany and that resolutely countering it remains a task for society as a whole. The significant increase in anti-semitic incidents at universities in 2024 also shows that we must not let up in our efforts to combat and prevent all forms of anti-semitism.

Behind the figures published by RIAS are personal attacks, threats and insults that place a heavy burden on those affected. If they withdraw from universities, if they hide their Jewish identity in public out of fear, this violates elementary values of our universities and our democratic society. We must all oppose this without any ifs or buts.

In the past year, we have seen that posters, graffiti and stickers with anti-semitic content were frequently seen and anti-semitic chants were heard, particularly at Israel-related protests. Universities became the stage for such actions because they have a special visibility as places of academic education and research. The activists aim to aggressively dominate universities as public spaces and to normalise anti-semitism.

Universities will continue to take decisive action against all forms of anti-semitism. They will do everything in their power to ensure that Jews can feel safe at our universities. Due to their social function, universities have a special responsibility in this regard, even if a relevant proportion of incidents are obviously caused by people who are not university members.

Through research on anti-semitism, Jewish life and the Middle East conflict, through education that is critical of anti-semitism and through exchange programmes with Israel for students and researchers, universities empower their members and also society as a whole to take a stand against anti-semitism in everyday life and at university. Increasingly, universities have also appointed anti-semitism officers who advise those affected and organise preventative measures. The HRK supports this with

the 'Competence Network for the Prevention of Anti-semitism at Universities', which is funded by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR)."