

1 June 2026**"A completely wrong signal in terms of educational policy": HRK criticises the possible scrapping of the BAföG reform**

The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) has criticised surprising comments made to the media by the Federal Minister of Research Dorothee Bär, which suggest that the fundamental reform of the German Federal Training Assistance Act (Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz; BAföG) announced in the coalition agreement may be scrapped. Recent statements from the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the Bundestag point in the same direction. Even the increase in the BAföG housing allowance, recently agreed upon by the governing parties and due to come into effect from the 2026/2027 winter semester, is therefore now in doubt.

HRK President Prof Dr Walter Rosenthal said: "The shift in political sentiment that is emerging here is absolutely baffling and sends out a completely wrong signal in terms of educational policy. BAföG is a key tool for promoting educational equity and thus helps to ensure a supply of skilled labour. In contrast to other forms of state financial support, BAföG funding rates have been increased only marginally over the years. In view of rising housing and living costs, fewer and fewer eligible students can make ends meet on the current funding rates. This discourages people from taking up a degree programme and jeopardises their chances of graduating."

HRK Vice-President Prof Dr Susanne Menzel-Riedl: "Education is Germany's key resource. Investing in this area secures the future. This applies in particular to the BAföG. In Germany, the decision for or against an academic education has traditionally depended heavily on whether parents are able and willing to fund their children's studies. BAföG, on the other hand, also enables talented young people from less well-off backgrounds to take up a degree programme. This isn't about a 'comprehensive cover' mentality, it's a matter of equal opportunities. At present, BAföG reaches only 12% of students, and many of those receiving support are granted only partial funding, even though their parents are unable to finance their studies. We cannot afford to make access to higher education more difficult by imposing financial barriers, thereby leaving untapped potential for science, business and society."

The HRK continues to call for a "major amendment" to the BAföG scheme, with the aim of creating a structurally new, transparent, digitally manageable and reliable federal system of support for education and training through genuine reform. BAföG must reach more students again. In the HRK's view, this includes, amongst other things, direct payment of child benefit to students as a basic form of support independent of parental income, adequate funding rates, an increase in the proportion of students

receiving support through a needs-based expansion of funding entitlement, supplemented by reliable student loans and the full digitisation of procedures.

Background:

HRK resolution "Equitable academic education without the risk of poverty" of 13 May 2025 (in German only)