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Latest OECD figures confirm deficits in higher education funding

Prof Dr Horst Hippler, President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), commented on the OECD figures published today:

“The figures confirm the good overall performance of the German education system, in particular its universities. However they also uncover its deficits. There is one conclusion in particular that any future Federal Government must draw from this data: the need for a great deal more investment in education. The basic funding of the universities must be consolidated at long last.

According to the OECD, expenditure in the area of higher education is stagnating at 1.2 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This means that the Federal Republic of Germany continues to lag far behind not only the USA and Canada, but also Great Britain, Japan, France and Russia. Germany spends \$9,300 per student without research and development; the average of the OECD states is \$10,300, and the USA, the frontrunner, spends \$23,000. The OECD points out quite rightly that expenditure on tertiary education has not kept pace with the increased number of students.

This means that Germany continues to have significant funding deficits vis-à-vis comparable nations. We cannot afford to let this continue – for the sake of both economic and social development. With regard to the Bundestag election, we are forced to conclude that to date the parties' plans do not even begin to do justice to this task. Indications are that adequate, ongoing and hence reliable funding growth for the universities cannot be relied on after the election. The latest data should prompt the parties to give concrete form to their non-binding statements. Clear decisions will need to be made, say in favour of the continued development of the Higher Education Pact, with the goal of strengthening basic funding.”

Responses of the Parties to the HRK Election touchstones (in German only)