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**HRK President on the situation in Turkey:
Unacceptable encroachment on academic freedoms**

The president of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Prof Dr Horst Hippler, said the following in Berlin today regarding the recent developments at Turkish universities:

"German universities strongly condemn the unacceptable encroachment on the freedom of academia, research and teaching by the Turkish State.

Pressure on universities in Turkey has been growing in recent months. The list of state repressions against our Turkish colleagues is alarmingly long: closure of 15 universities, dismissal of several thousand members of university staff, imposition of travel bans, imprisonment of several hundred members of academic staff, removal of freely elected rectors. I call on Turkey to restore globally applicable academic freedoms. Independent research, teaching and learning free from fear and open dialogue boost social development – in Germany as well as in Turkey – and form the basis for crucial Turkish-German academic relations.

We must pay special attention to the Turkish-German University in Istanbul, which has also suffered politically motivated dismissals of teaching staff in recent weeks. This and other repressions jeopardise the foundation of this project, involving 35 HRK member institutions. A Turkish-German University in which the protection of academic freedoms is not guaranteed is inconceivable.

Since we consider the incidents in Turkey to be severe, we – as the voice of German universities in liaison with our European partners – seek to maintain the dialogue with the Turkish side. We will not abandon our colleagues at Turkish universities."