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**HRK President expresses his protest against treatment of academic staff in Turkey**

“Germany’s universities are shocked by the current developments seen at Turkish universities. The drastic and apparently unscrupulous curtailments of academic freedoms by the Turkish government leave us all speechless. We protest in the strongest terms against such actions”, said Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler, President of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK).

“The news we are getting indicate that such actions constitute systematic intimidation and are aimed at destroying freedom of thought: the dismissal of more than 1500 deans, suspensions, travel bans on academics and recalls of those who work abroad, academic staff under general suspicion, arrests. We empathise with the academic staff affected and assure them of our solidarity.”

There is a long tradition of academic links between Turkey and Germany. During the National Socialist dictatorship a large number of German academics took refuge in Turkey. Today, relations are characterised by close cooperation in the field of university-based research and an intense exchange among students and academic staff alike.

Already in January, HRK President Hippler had criticised the Turkish government’s repressions against academics at Turkish universities. Furthermore, he signed, along with international partners, an open letter to the president of the Turkish state demanding protection for academic freedoms.

The European University Association (EUA), of which the HRK is a member, has also taken a clear stand against the repressions.