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**German Federal Employment Agency, Confederation of German Employers' Associations and German Rectors' Conference on the inclusion of people with disabilities:
Towards more self-determination in work and education**

Frankfurt am Main, 5 October 2016. On the occasion of the joint event "Lebensverläufe– Inklusion praktisch" (Lifecourses – inclusion in practice), the German Federal Employment Agency (BA), the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) have expressed their support for greater self-determination and independence for people with disabilities. The three organisations are in agreement that this will be a long-term social process. They are advocates of moving forward with a pragmatic approach, and breaking down ideological barriers.

Frank-J. Weise, Chairman of the Executive Board of the BA, said: "Our society profits from its diversity, and the creativity that diversity engenders. In an ever more connected world, this is a benefit and also an opportunity for everyone. The Federal Employment Agency has been actively promoting inclusion in the workplace for many years, and is a signatory to the Diversity Charter. The promotion of equal opportunity is at the forefront of its policies and its inclusive practices. As a provider of social services in the employment market, and as an organisation, the Agency pursues inclusion in all its actions."

Peter Clever, member of the BDA's executive board, noted: "Over one million severely disabled people are employed, many of them by small businesses with no legal obligation to do so. This demonstrates the degree to which many businesses have already committed to the inclusion of people with disabilities, but it also provides encouragement to those who are not yet on board. When employing people with disabilities, economic benefit and social responsibility go hand in hand. We must start early, introducing as much shared learning as possible even in childcare and schools, but also providing as much special support as necessary. This will also promote the shift in awareness that "disabled" does not automatically mean less able to perform, and that everyone needs and deserves their special chance."

Prof Dr Holger Burckhart, Vice-President of the HRK, stated: "For universities, inclusion and equitable education programmes are responsibilities that are self-evident, and that go beyond implementing statutory requirements. As institutions we are responsible for preparing the appropriate resources and creating a sensitised environment in order to enable students and staff with disabilities to participate fully. Our consistent incorporation of the topic of inclusion into teaching, in teacher education for example, and also our research on inclusion ensure that new insights are disseminated, put to the test in pilot projects and implemented across the board as far as possible."

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