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HRK Senate: Making long-term integration of refugees possible

"Higher education institutions require demand-driven assistance to support refugees who are potential students, students and researchers," said the President of the German Rectors' Conference, Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler, after yesterday's meeting of the HRK Senate in Berlin.

"Early careers advice is the crucial initial step towards good integration and a successful education and career and requires regional networking between all relevant players. Language learning is the next step towards integrating refugees apt and eligible to study– including teaching German culture and subject-specific language skills for following studies. And finally, before beginning studies, refugees need specific course preparation, tailored to the individual qualifications of the prospective students. For this purpose it is essential to develop the infrastructure of higher education institutions. We estimate that around €4000 per person per year will be required for language training and preparatory courses alone."

When asked about access and admission to studies, Hippler said: "Higher education institutions will make full use of all legal possibilities. Nevertheless, the same quality and performance standards must apply to all groups of students. That is only fair to all applicants."

For months, German higher education institutions have been actively working for the integration of the large number of refugees currently entering the country. To date, they have financed most measures from their own tight budgets. Staff is choosing to work overtime and a lot of people – including students – are working as volunteers. Higher education institutions are offering trial courses, waiving fees for guest students, arranging for people to accompany refugees when they attend meetings with the authorities and helping them to find accommodation.

At the end of September, 120 representatives of higher education institutions accepted the HRK's invitation to meet and discuss the measures and projects they had initiated. They discussed the challenges they are facing in study preparations, legal framework conditions and financial support.

"In order to successfully continue the work that has been begun, we need appropriate financial support from government, monitoring and scientific follow-up," said HRK President Hippler.

"The HRK will continue to offer a platform for dialogue, networking and support."

"The aim now is long-term integration," said the HRK Senate.

HRK website "Study for refugees"