



BDA, BDI and German Rectors' Conference: Utilising Scope for Access to University for Refugees

Berlin, 23 September 2015. The University/Industry working group of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA), the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) is calling for available scope to be actively utilised to enable access to higher education for refugees. The working group is calling on politicians to speedily resolve problems relating to residency status and financial assistance. The group identified language acquisition and specific course preparation as the biggest challenges facing refugees who wish to embark on a course of higher education in Germany.

Prof. Dr. Holger Burckhart, Vice-President of the HRK, said: "We want to help suitably qualified refugees to commence or continue academic studies. In addition to appropriate advice and support, in most cases the most important obstacle to overcome will be language skills. This is a significant challenge because we are talking about specialist academic language, not just everyday conversation skills. Many institutions have acted very quickly to introduce some initial opportunities. These must be supported and expanded in line with needs."

Dr. Gerhard F. Braun, Vice-President of the BDA, stated: "Many refugees have strong prospects for remaining in Germany in the long term. They often have the necessary school-leaving qualifications and may have started university studies in their own country. Institutions and politicians should make full use of the legal scope that exists to give refugees access to university and therefore give them valuable opportunities. Partnerships between higher education and industry can give university studies more practical emphasis and facilitate the transition from university to work. This has benefits for all students – no matter what their nationality."

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