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After today’s cabinet resolutions on BAföG and scholarship programmes:
HRK President calls for revisions

“The resolutions adopted today by the Federal Government show the serious willingness to provide stronger support for students. This deserves to be recognised. The Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG) must remain a central element of the student financing, while the scholarship programme still needs to be clearly revised in the following parliamentary consultations,” stated the President of the German Rectors’ Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK), Prof. Dr. Margret Wintermantel, speaking in Bonn today.

The underlying idea of the scholarship programme is good. “We need a greater civil commitment on the part of companies and private individuals for our young academics. We need the programme to be a success. However, the current status still leaves too many questions unanswered:

- Industry and its associations have not yet confirmed the aspired millions. The signs so far tend to be reticent, but we need a clear statement. After all, it is all about raising 300 million euros from private sources in the long term.

- The effort put into raising and administrating the private sums amounts, as we know from other countries, such as the United Kingdom, to more than one third of the raised funds. This has to be taken into consideration when designing the programme.

- The programme impedes student mobility, because the students will not be able to simply take their scholarships or grants with them.

- Universities located in areas with only few financially strong companies and with few affluent sponsors will lose some of their appeal among students, because they will only be able to raise fewer scholarships and grants. A solution has to be found here.”

Wintermantel referred to the experience gained in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), where such a programme has already been introduced. Despite their great endeavours, the universities have so far only been able to raise scholarships and grants for just 0.33% of the students. While the new programme sets a much higher target of 8%. “The goals of the programme cannot be reached with the planned arrangements. The programme will not be able to fly under these conditions.”