
No to tuition fees for students from non-EU countries in Bavaria

Higher education funding

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Deutsches Studentenwerk (DSW – German Student Welfare Service) criticises Bavarian State Government move. Introduction of fees planned as part of the new Bavarian Higher Education Innovation Act. DSW General Secretary Matthias Anbuhl: Tuition fees are poison for equal opportunities and poison for internationalisation;

The Deutsche Studentenwerk (DSW – German Student Welfare Service), the association of Germany's 57 Student Services Organisations, has spoken out against the introduction of tuition fees for international students from non-EU countries, which the Free State of Bavaria intends to introduce in the course of the new Bavarian Higher Education Innovation Act.

DSW General Secretary Matthias Anbuhl states:

Tuition fees represent a social hurdle in access to higher education; they are poison for equal opportunities. This is almost unanimously agreed on in politics and society. In Bavaria, the State Parliament voted in favour of abolishing general tuition fees in 2013, following one of the most successful Bavarian petitions for a referendum having opted for this.

Against this background, it is all the more hard to understand why the Bavarian State Government should now opt for this instrument for the group of international students from non-EU countries. It should refrain from such a move.

Financing studies is among the main problems which Germany's roughly 325,000 international students have to cope with; this is borne out again and again by our regular social surveys of their economic and social situation. Although they have to provide proof of financial means totalling 10,300 euros in order to enrol, the true costs of a study stay create big problems for them, especially what they have to pay in rent. In the bridging aid provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, which was distributed by the Student Service Organisations during the pandemic, a disproportionately high share of 30% of funds went to international students!

The tuition fees planned in Bavaria are also poison for the internationalisation goals of the Federal and State Governments, and they are not a suitable means to consolidate a State budget because they put a considerable strain on university management.

This can be demonstrated by the example of Baden-Württemberg, where the introduction of the fees has led to a decline in the number of international students from non-EU countries. The State of North Rhine-Westphalia has decided against introducing such fees, also because of the enormous administrative effort such a measure entails.

Being free of tuition fees is a key strategic advantage for Germany in the process of internationalising our higher education system. This is also a reason why Germany has once again become the most important non-Anglophone host country for international students world-wide, and across all host countries, fourth after the USA, Australia and the United Kingdom. In no

circumstances should we forfeit this locational advantage.â€

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