

# Press release

## **Nationwide student protest should give a voice to hundreds of thousands of students in need**

Student representatives from all over Germany will take to the streets on June 8th to protest against the insufficient support measures for students. At 11 o'clock, rallies will take place at the state parliaments and Ministries of Education in Hannover, Potsdam, Dresden, Mainz, Wiesbaden, and in the cities Leipzig and Wuppertal as well as at the buildings of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Bonn and Berlin. The message is clear: to prevent an educational catastrophe, the many students in need must finally be helped. The protests are united by the Hashtag #studihilfejetzt. Following the decentralized demonstrations, a rally will take place in Berlin on June 20th under the same motto.

An initial demonstration planned by the ASStA of the University of Cologne in front of the ministry quickly developed into a nationwide campaign, now the prelude for further actions to come. Student bodies from all over Germany stand together behind this one big goal: Financial relief for students! Initial surveys have shown that 40% of students have lost their jobs in the course of the crisis and around 20% have got into serious financial difficulties.

"Mrs. Karliczek's measures, namely the interest-free KfW loan and the emergency fund, are firstly not sufficient and secondly they come much too late. While the government has been inactive, the university, the ASStA and the Studierendenvorkurs of Cologne have had to step in and provide aid," says Jan Gärtner, heads of division for political affairs at the ASStA. "A maximum of 500 euros in emergency aid, paid out only after a prior needs assessment, is only a drop in the ocean for Cologne students. Rising rents and increased living costs did not stop even before COVID-19.

"The whole situation is strikingly disappointing. Student representatives have warned for months that this exact scenario would take place", says Eugen Esman, chair of the ASStA of the University of Cologne. "And still, Minister Karliczek tries to sell her policies as a success. It is time for her to finally admit that these very policies are endangering a whole generation of university students."

"The protest at the ministries is intended to give a voice to the many hundreds of thousands of students who have lost their jobs and are not entitled to

unemployment benefit II or short-time work benefits," said Katrin Lögering from the Landes-ASten-Treffen NRW. "For three months they have had to make ends meet somehow, borrowing money from family and friends\* to pay rent and food. Many of them have already dropped out of their studies to be entitled to basic support. Anja Karliczek lets all this happen with her eyes wide open. What kind of Minister of Education doesn't care about this educational disaster?"

The protests would, therefore, take place not only in the state capitals but also directly in front of Ms. Karliczek's ministry. In Bonn, our local AStA and the AStA of the University have called for a demonstration, in Berlin a big rally will follow on June 20th. "We don't know how else to help ourselves," says Amanda Steinmaus from the federal student representation fzs. "Anja Karliczek is not only resistant to counseling, but actively prevents students from being helped quickly and unbureaucratically. In the meantime, we not only need quick financial help for the many students in need. In general, student financing in Germany must be reformed to compensate for the extreme educational injustice that has just been exacerbated by the Corona crisis. For dropped out students, offers of help and regulations must be created to enable them to return to their studies".

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