

Tuition Fees in Baden-Württemberg - discriminating & unfair...

Dear Students,

The ministry of Mrs. Theresia Bauer from the green party is exploring new financial resources to meet the requirements of a restrictive fiscal policy.

For now it may be disregarded whether such a restrictive fiscal policy is sensible in times of quantitative easing and low interest taxes....

However, the crucial question in such a situation is: where is the money taken from? Is it taken from the well-off people, from those who can contribute but have a strong lobby to defend their interests, or is it taken from those who own only little and need to work to gain a living? In the case at hand it is taken from the latter group, from you, the students.

How a government behaves in such a situation, is in my view the difference between left-wing and right-wing policy. And what this government is doing is for sure no left-wing policy...

Even worse: a small minority of students is selected and extremely high sums will be charged. A tax for foreigners! Discriminating and outrageous especially today, with so much xenophobia and racism in Germany.

Without governmental benefits, without much support from home, often without scholarship many foreign students need to work besides their studies. Because of less language skills, because of less social connections and because of a lack of alternative opportunities, international students often work in badly-paid, precarious and highly exploitative jobs. They are working at fast food restaurants, as warehouse worker, they are delivering newspapers, work as cleaners and many similar jobs.

I am wondering: does the Minister know how much hours it takes at the counter of Kentucky fried chicken to earn 1500 Euro? Does she know what you pay for a 12 square-meter room in Stuttgart? Moreover there is the financial burden of showing huge amounts of cash when applying for visa-extension...

Students that come from a less wealthy background will be most affected by the tuition fees. It will be hard to find anyone who can afford to study at a university in Baden-Württemberg without being in the lucky situation of having wealthy parents. Many won't be able to afford studying here anymore. If they still try then they will face: more work, less spare time for study and research, more stress and less chances to graduate successfully, and in some cases also indebtedness.

As far as the second degree is concerned things are similar: people decide for a second degree because they want to extend their knowledge, because they want to get insight also into related subjects. But foremost, seeking a second degree is result of economic necessity. If people were not able to find a job in their profession what else can they do than change profession?

A second degree is a measure of vocational retraining with the purpose to improve the chances to find a job. Therefore it is wrong to charge 650 Euro per Semester from someone who is choosing this way to

organize his or her life, moreover it is senseless from an economic point of view.

So all in all the key thing is this: tuition fees increase and perpetuate social inequality.

Therefore we oppose tuition fees! No matter whether they affect everybody or just parts of the students! No matter which sophisticated arguments are put forward for their justification. Free tertiary education is a progressive element in this society and progressive elements need to be defended. Tuition fees are a step to the wrong direction. Education must be free for everyone and no commodity! Students are no 'cash cows' to fill up the holes in the budget.

And because of that it is a good thing that students from Germany and international students are demonstrating here together today. The governments plan that nobody would react, and nobody would care about the fate of their international and second degree colleagues is apparently not working.

You are right to react: the earlier you do something against this the higher the chance to stop this.

Analyze your situation: the government has already decided for the fees, but still the law did not pass the regional parliament. So there is some time that can be used.

For the green party the issue might become more uncomfortable than they expected. They still own the reputation of a party that is left-wing-liberal, progressive, anti-racist and socially responsible etc. Many younger people and many students are among their electorate. Let them feel that they have a reputation among students that can be lost!

The media seems to be open to the critical arguments against the plans of the government, as far as I can see.

And not least: you are a lot of intellectual, critical and creative young people. You know how to give speeches, you know how to write articles and letters and how to manage modern means of communication. I can't see why you shouldn't go far if you don't give in and continue to protest...

Apparently you will have the occasion to address the minister personally later. But may be you could invite Minister Bauer to a public discussion at your university. So she would have the possibility to discuss in person with students who will be affected by her plans? Make sure the press is there too...

May be you find some allies among your professors?

Or what about the employees of the universities: they will be bargaining and come out on strike for higher wages in January. May be they are happy if you would stay away from the lecture rooms while they are on strike? There is some synergistic effects I could think of here...

I am sure that you will have lots of wonderful ideas...

However, we from Die LINKE are supporting your initiative and we wish you the necessary endurance, patience and – of course – success!

Thank you for your attention and good luck.

Stuttgart 13th January 2017