

Statement by European Academics in Defense of Academic Freedom

We, the undersigned European scholars, express our deep concern and condemnation for recent actions of the government of the United States that aim to interfere in an unlawful and unjustified manner with academic life, freedom, and independence. The recent suspension of visas for international students and scholars at Harvard University by the U.S. administration is emblematic of a troubling pattern whereby governmental power is deployed to disrupt and intimidate academic institutions and communities.

These actions must be recognized as part of a broader attempt to erode academic freedom and independence through bureaucratic retaliation and political messaging designed to sow fear and enforce conformity. The fact that this latest initiative so directly and callously upends the lives and futures of students makes it even more reprehensible. While we welcome the timely intervention of judicial protections, the damage inflicted by such actions is immediate, destabilizing, and unjust.

Academic freedom is not a professional privilege. It is a cornerstone of democratic societies, and it is essential for scientific and cultural development. When governments target universities, students, or scholars in an unlawful effort to impose political preferences, they endanger the integrity of public discourse and the cultivation of knowledge. Echoes of such actions are tragically familiar from Europe's past, from ideological purges to institutional closures, and they must be resisted with clarity and resolve.

We stand in solidarity with all students, faculty, and institutions affected by these actions. We call on academic communities across the world to remain vigilant and united in defending the autonomy of scholarship against political coercion in all its forms.

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