

World Science Forum 2024

MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE IV

FREEDOM AND SAFETY OF SCIENTISTS

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ALLEA and its priorities



Academic freedom - *As broad as important a topic...*

- Groundbreaking research depends strongly on the ability of researchers and scientific institutions to **work without undue external interference** and to freely design their research agendas.
- Protecting the freedom of research is vital to **ensure scientific quality and to maintain public trust** in scientific institutions.
- As such, academic freedom and **institutional autonomy** are of fundamental importance and value to society and must be protected.
- The **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights upholds** the freedom of academic research and the autonomy of scientific institutions as existential rights.
- Democracies enshrine protections for academic freedom and institutional autonomy in their **national legislation**, recognising their crucial role in advancing research.
- Despite these protections, **academic freedom and institutional autonomy are under threat in Europe and globally**, with grave consequences for scholars, science, and society.



International Reference Frameworks

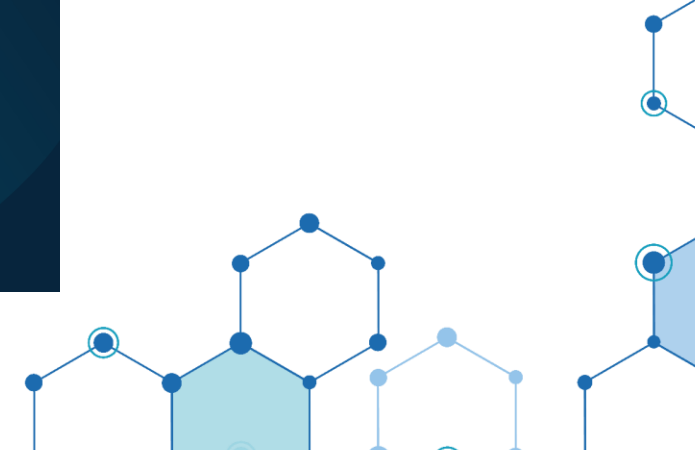
Global

- UNESCO's Programme on the Promotion of Scientific Freedom and the Safety of Scientists / Call to Action, 2024
- ISC Principles of Freedoms and Responsibility in Science, 2024



Europe

- Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research, 2020
- European Parliament resolution on promotion of the freedom of scientific research in the EU, 2024



Principles / Dimensions

(excerpt from ISC-Statutes, 2024)

The right to share in and benefit from advances in science and technology is **enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, as is the right to engage in scientific enquiry, pursue and communicate knowledge, and associate freely in such activities.

[...]

The freedoms necessary for science to flourish are:

- i. freedom to access science education, training and mentoring;
- ii. freedom to participate in knowledge production;
- iii. freedom to promote and communicate science for the good of humanity, other life forms, ecosystems, the planet and beyond.



Principles / Dimensions

(excerpt from ISC-Statutes, 2024, continued)

These freedoms are constrained by certain responsibilities, including:

- i. Responsibility to **promote** science in ways that are equitable and inclusive of human diversity;
- ii. Responsibility to **ensure** that research designs meet the standards of scientific validity and satisfy established ethical norms;
- iii. Responsibility to **share** accurate scientific information generated through theoretical, observational, experimental and analytical approaches;
- iv. Responsibility to **contribute** to the effective and ethical governance of science.

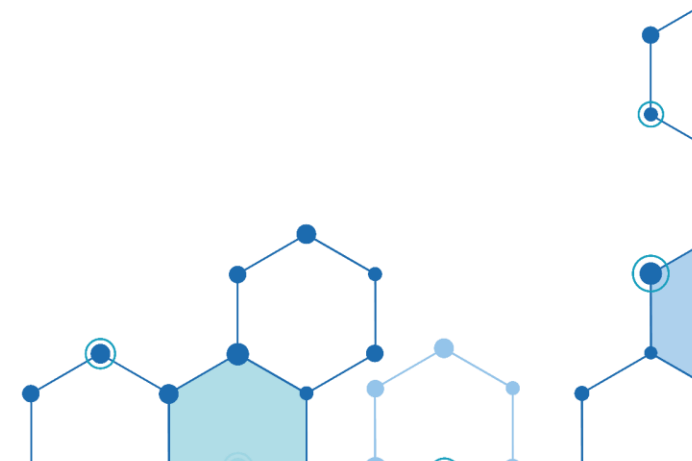


Actors

(European Parliament resolution on promotion of the freedom of scientific research in the EU, 2024)

“The freedom of scientific research provides

- rights to individual scientific **researchers**,
- rights and obligations for **scientific research organisations**, and
- obligations for **public authorities**.”



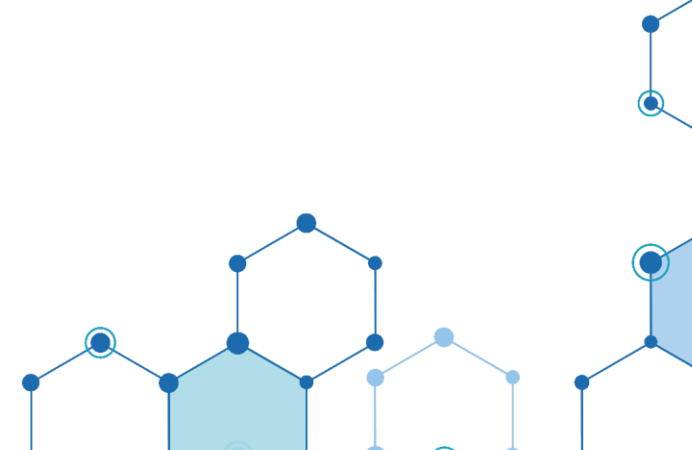
A Perspective on Europe

Academic freedom continues to face challenges in Europe. Universities, academies, and individual scientists continue to be targets of **political pressure**. Recent cases demonstrate how **legal reforms have compromised institutional autonomy**.

ALLEA has stood firmly by our members and other academic institutions in Europe facing **undue interference in their activities and structures**.

With Russia's war on Ukraine, there is an urgent and massive need for Europe to act in **solidarity with and provide support to Ukrainian scholars**.

How to respond to these challenges?



Academic freedom and institutional autonomy: Commitments must be followed by action

Joint statement by ALLEA, EUA and Science Europe

Joint call to:

- governments and public authorities to **protect academic freedom and safeguard the institutional autonomy of higher education and research institutions**, by providing them with clear and consistent regulatory frameworks, refraining from interference in their internal affairs and engaging in a continuous trust-based dialogue with the sector;
- governments and public authorities to guarantee scholars and students the rights that constitute academic freedom, including the **rights to freedom of expression, opinion, thought, information and assembly as well as the rights to education and teaching**;
- governments and public authorities to guarantee the **autonomy of funding decisions by research councils and funding bodies and the diversity of the research** that is funded; while funding can be prioritised, **no discipline can be excluded for political reasons**;
- universities, funding agencies, academies and other research organisations to **ensure that all researchers, teachers and students are guaranteed academic freedom**, by fostering a culture in which free expression and the open exchange of opinion are valued and by **shielding the research and teaching community from sanctions for exercising academic freedom**.

Raising awareness and fostering collaboration

ALLEA strives to ensure that the public and policy makers are aware of the importance of safeguarding academic freedom. We engage with partners in a variety of public and other activities.

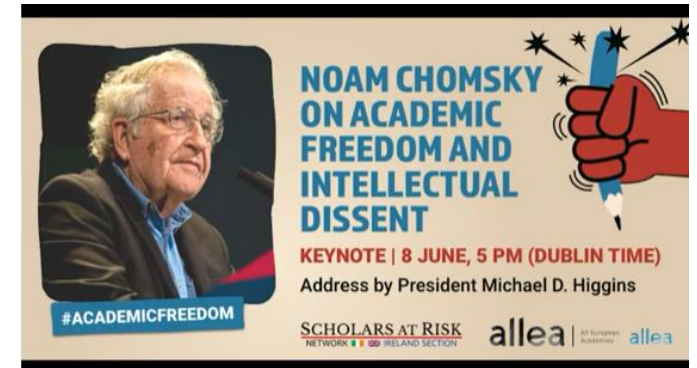
Advocacy and advisory work

As a member of the European Parliament's STOA Sounding Board, ALLEA contributes to annual studies on academic freedom.

As part of the ERA Forum, ALLEA advises the European Commission on its ERA Policy. We welcome that 'Promoting and Protecting Freedom of Scientific Research in Europe' will be a key policy action in the future, a decision we have long advocated for.

Providing solidarity and support

ALLEA and our partners stand against unjustified infringements and intervenes with mediation, statements and open letters, in support of academic institutions under threat.



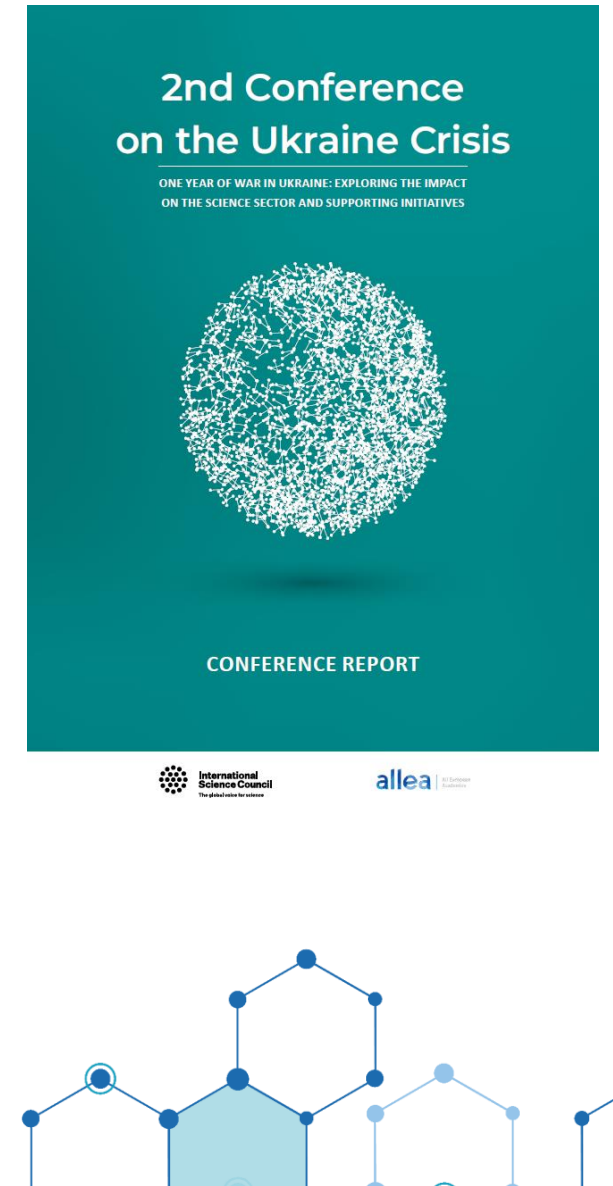
Supporting Ukrainian Science

European Fund for Displaced Scientists (EFDS)

- Programme to support scientists affected by the Russian attack on Ukraine, funded through \$1.5 million grant from Breakthrough Prize Foundation (BPF)
- Benefits more than 160 scientists from across Ukraine and other European countries

Best-practice sharing and further activities

- One of the very first support initiatives, EFDS served as a blueprint for others, especially regarding support to Ukrainian institutions
- Successful practices were widely shared with the broader scientific community and co-shaped ensuing actions, including:
 - ALLEA-ISC conferences on the Ukraine crisis
 - 10 points action plan, by ALLEA and the National Academies from Denmark, Germany, Poland, UK, Ukraine, and the US
 - the Ukraine Science Stakeholder Group



Thank you for your attention!