



EP Academic Freedom Monitor 2023

STUDY

Panel for the Future of Science and Technology



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EP Academic Freedom Monitor 2023

Academic freedom is widely acknowledged both as a fundamental value of present-day higher education and science, and as a prerequisite for well-functioning democratic societies. Yet in recent years, major concerns about the state of academic freedom in the European Union have been raised by various stakeholders. The European Parliament launched an annual EP Academic Freedom Monitor in 2022, aimed at helping to strengthen the protection of academic freedom in the European Union. This report presents the 2023 edition of the EP Academic Freedom Monitor, consisting of two studies and their joint key findings and proposed policy options.

The first study, entitled 'Systematising existing measurements of academic freedom in EU Member States', has used various monitors and other measurements across the EU Member States to identify the main challenges and threats to, and worries about, academic freedom in the EU.

The second study, entitled 'Academic freedom across the EU 2023: Latest trends analysis', has analysed the main threats to academic freedom and their impacts in ten EU Member States. The study is conducted as a qualitative analysis of several data, with input from stakeholder organisations and academic experts.

On the basis of the two studies, this report proposes EU-level policy options for legislative and non-legislative initiatives to support academic freedom in the EU.

Authors of study 'Systematising existing measurements of academic freedom in EU Member States. Synthesis Report': Daniela Craciun, Barend van der Meulen

This study has been undertaken by Daniela Craciun and Barend van der Meulen of the University of Twente at the request of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) and managed by the Scientific Foresight Unit, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament. Research support for the data collection has been provided Bernardo Sfredo Miorando during his internship at the University of Twente.

Authors of study 'Academic freedom across the EU 2023: Latest trends analysis': Mari Elken, Peter Maassen, Jens Jungblut, Dennis Martinsen, Rachel Griffith.

This study has been completed by a team at the University of Oslo at the request of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) and managed by the Scientific Foresight Unit, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament. Mari Elken, Peter Maassen, and Jens Jungblut are responsible for the overall findings and synthesis. Research support for collecting and systematising data on the incidents has been provided by Dennis Martinsen and Rachel Griffith at the University of Oslo.

Authors of 'Key findings and policy options': Daniela Craciun, Mari Elken, Peter Maassen, Barend van der Meulen and Jens Jungblut.

The key findings of both studies are presented in this report by Daniela Craciun and Barend van der Meulen of the University of Twente, and Mari Elken, Peter Maassen and Jens Jungblut of the University of Oslo. These authors are also responsible for the joint proposed policy options presented in this report. The key findings and joint policy options were produced at the request of the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) and managed by the Scientific Foresight Unit, within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament.

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Eszter Fay Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA)

To contact the publisher, please e-mail stoa@ep.europa.eu

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Table of contents

Part 1: Key findings and policy options.....	1
1. Introduction	2
1.1. Core dimensions and conditions for academic freedom.....	2
2. Key findings.....	5
2.1. Approach in the two studies	5
2.2. Key findings: Synthesis study.....	6
2.3. Key findings: Latest trends analysis study.....	6
3. Joint policy options.....	8
4. References.....	12
Part 2: Synthesis report: Systematising existing measurements of academic freedom in EU Member States	13
1. Introduction	16
1.1. Academic freedom and the European policy context.....	16
1.2. Aims and structure of the synthesis report	19
1.3. References	20
2. Research design.....	22
2.1. Methodology.....	22
2.2. Data sources.....	23
2.3. References	25
3. Country reports	26
3.1. Austria.....	26
3.2. Belgium.....	29
3.3. Bulgaria.....	31
3.4. Croatia.....	33
3.5. Cyprus.....	36
3.6. Czechia	39
3.7. Denmark.....	41
3.8. Estonia.....	44
3.9. Finland.....	47
3.10. France.....	50
3.11. Germany	53
3.12. Greece.....	56
3.13. Hungary.....	59
3.14. Ireland.....	62

3.15. Italy.....	64
3.16. Latvia.....	67
3.17. Lithuania.....	70
3.18. Luxembourg.....	73
3.19. Malta.....	75
3.20. The Netherlands.....	77
3.21. Poland.....	80
3.22. Portugal.....	83
3.23. Romania.....	86
3.24. Slovakia.....	89
3.25. Slovenia.....	91
3.26. Spain.....	94
3.27. Sweden.....	97
4. Developments of academic freedom in the EU.....	100
4.1. State of play of academic freedom in the EU according to Academic Freedom Index.....	100
4.2. Conditions for academic freedom.....	102
5. References.....	105
Annexes.....	106
Annex 1: Academic Freedom in EU Member States according to the Academic Freedom Index (2023).....	106
Annex 2: Institutional Autonomy in EU Member States according to the EUA Autonomy Scorecard IV (2023).....	107
Part 3: Latest trends analysis.....	109
1. Introduction.....	112
1.1. Objectives of this study.....	114
1.2. Report outline.....	114
2. Study design and methodology.....	115
2.1. Definition and contextualisation of academic freedom.....	115
2.2. Five factors affecting academic freedom.....	118
2.3. Methodological approach.....	119
3. Synthesis of research findings.....	124
4. Country reports of latest trends analysis.....	127
4.1. Austria.....	127
4.2. Cyprus.....	133
4.3. Denmark.....	137
4.4. Estonia.....	147

4.5. France.....	151
4.6. Hungary.....	159
4.7. The Netherlands.....	165
4.8. Poland.....	174
4.9. Portugal.....	180
4.10. Romania.....	183
5. References.....	189

Part 1: Key findings and policy options

1. Introduction

Academic freedom is a fundamental value and principle in higher education and science throughout the world. It is also a necessary condition for attaining high quality and relevant education and research at universities, colleges, and research institutes. Nevertheless, while there is a general acknowledgement of the fundamental importance of academic freedom, there is less understanding on the current state of play of academic freedom, and agreement on how to appropriately safeguard academic freedom against traditional and new threats and violations. While recognizing that academic freedom is a global value in higher education and science, this report is focused on the state of play of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union.

A key issue to address is the relationship between *de jure* and *de facto* academic freedom. *De jure* protections of academic freedom exist in several settings. Academic freedom is, for example, protected in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. In EU Member States, academic freedom is included in national constitutions, laws and/or institutional regulations. Nevertheless, several studies (see, for example, Beiter et al. 2016; Kinzelbach 2020; Matei 2020; Beaud 2022) point out that *de jure* protections may be insufficient in protecting academic freedom effectively. Moreover, while academic freedom in the EU Member States seems to be in a relatively good place compared to most other countries across the globe, there are strong indications that academic freedom is also under threat in the EU Member States (Maassen et al., 2023). As a result, the development of new monitoring approaches, including further empirical studies, for getting a better understanding of the state of play of academic freedom across the EU Member States is warranted.

This report represents the first iteration of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor. The report presents two separate but complementary studies: the 'Synthesis report: A structuring of existing measurements of academic freedom in EU Member States' that provides a review of various measurements to assess academic freedom in 27 EU Member States and beyond, and the 'Academic freedom across the EU 2023: Latest trends analysis' study that provides more detailed qualitative analysis of recent trends in ten EU Member States. This report presents findings from both studies.

The establishment of the EP Academic Freedom Monitor is an important step towards more effective and insightful approaches for monitoring current developments. Furthermore, this Monitor can be expected to contribute to identifying appropriate measures to be taken on the European, national, and institutional level to strengthen academic freedom in the European Union. It complements initiatives taken by the European Commission in the context of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA).

The two studies presented in this report have been conducted at the request of the European Parliament's Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA Panel). They are built on two pilot studies initiated by the STOA Panel: a review of methods and procedures for monitoring academic freedom (Kováts & Rónay, 2023) and a pilot study of the *de facto* state of play of academic freedom in the 27 EU Member States (Maassen et al. 2023).

1.1. Core dimensions and conditions for academic freedom

The pilot studies for the STOA Panel conducted in 2022/23 (Kováts & Rónay, 2023; Maassen et al, 2023), identified key dimensions that allow for an examination and discussion of the current state of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States. The interpretation of academic freedom used in the two pilot studies relates to the 2020 Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research and the Rome Ministerial Communiqué of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), as well as academic studies in this area.

As argued in the two pilot studies, while there is no generally agreed upon definition, there is wide acceptance of three central dimensions of academic freedom: the freedom to research following the scientific method, the freedom to teach and learn, and the freedom of academic expression (Maassen et al., 2023). Furthermore, the conditions for academic freedom to work effectively include institutional autonomy, self-governance by the academic community (staff and students), academic labour conditions, and financial conditions. This does not mean that the relationship between the central dimensions of and conditions for academic freedom can be seen as simple, linear, and causal. Instead, the starting point for the studies presented in this report is that academic freedom is an individual right, which requires a set of basic institutional conditions necessary for exercising academic freedom as optimally as possible (Beaud 2022).

A summary of these central dimensions and conditions of academic freedom is presented in Table 1.

The report now proceeds with a summary of key findings from both studies and presents joint policy options based on findings from the two studies. The two studies are then presented separately, with both parts providing a detailed overview of their background, approach, methodology and data sources.

Table 1: Central dimensions of and basic conditions for academic freedom

Central dimensions of and basic conditions for academic freedom

Central dimensions of academic freedom

Freedom to conduct scientific research: this dimension concerns the freedom of each individual academic staff member to develop and follow his/her own research agenda without any undue political, administrative, religious, economic, social, cultural, or academic interferences, pressures, or limitations. The freedom referred to here is not absolute but has to be exercised within the generally accepted framework conditions for academic freedom.

Freedom to teach, and freedom to study: This dimension concerns the freedom of individual academic staff to develop and follow their own teaching agendas and aspirations, and the freedom of students to develop and follow their own study preferences without any undue political, administrative, religious, economic, social, cultural, or academic interferences, pressures, or limitations. The freedom referred to here is not absolute but has to be exercised within the generally accepted framework conditions for academic freedom.

Freedom of academic expression: This dimension concerns the freedom of academic staff and students to express themselves on the basis of their academic area of expertise or field of study within their institution and the wider academic community on academic and/or governance matters, without any undue internal or external pressures or risks of being punished. In addition, it concerns the freedom of academic staff to publish, disseminate and exchange research findings through academic journals and other outlets without any internal or external infringements, violations, threats, or pressures.

Basic conditions for academic freedom

Institutional autonomy This dimension concerns the room to manoeuvre that higher education and research institutions have for managing their own internal academic and administrative affairs without undue external interference. The interference referred to here can be political/legal, religious, economic, social, or cultural, and affect the procedural and/or substantive autonomy of higher education institutions.

Self-governance: This dimension concerns the right of higher education and science staff, and students to be involved in the institutional governance and decision-making with respect to academic affairs. Self-governance is also referred to as the right of academic staff and students to co-determine academic affairs.

Labour conditions: This dimension concerns the extent to which the labour conditions of academic staff provide the conditions under which all members of the academic community can exercise their academic freedom without fear of losing their job (tenured staff), or their contract not being renewed, and/or of access to a tenured position being jeopardised (non-tenured staff).

Financial conditions: This dimension concerns the extent to which funding conditions for teaching or research have an impact on the freedom of the academic staff to develop and follow their own teaching and research agendas, and the freedom of students to develop and follow their own study preferences, that goes beyond what are regarded as valid and legitimate economic framework conditions.

From: Maassen et al (2023) "State of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States: Overview of de facto trends and developments". In the 27 country reports presented in this report (Maassen et al. 2023) the reader can find references to national Constitutions and laws addressing academic freedom.

2. Key findings

2.1. Approach in the two studies

The two studies presented in this report were conducted in parallel, each with an independent research team and a different methodological approach.

In the first stage of the studies, analyses of various data sources were carried out. Main elements of the methodological design can be found in Table 2. More information about the data sources and analytic approaches can be found in Part 2 and Part 3 of this report, where each of the two studies is presented separately.

Table 2: Overview of methodological design of the two studies

The synthesis study

In this study, a review of various quantitative and qualitative data sources is carried out, to provide an update of the state of academic freedom in 27 EU Member States. Data sources for the analysis included the Academic Freedom Index, the EUA Autonomy Scorecard, the Freedom in the World Report, and the *de jure* scorecard of academic freedom. In addition, the study reviewed reports on infringements from the Academic Freedom Monitoring Project from Scholars at Risk.

Based on these data sources, a country report was prepared for each EU Member State.

Latest trends analysis study

In this study, a detailed qualitative narrative review of the *de facto* academic freedom in ten selected EU Member States is carried out. The Member States included in this study are Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Romania. The countries were selected to cover a range of positions in existing academic freedom indexes and to represent a diverse set of EU Member States (geography, old/new EU-members, population size).

For each of the ten Member States, a country report was prepared based on desk research of events data, focused on recent public debates, media outputs and secondary literature. For each country report, feedback from national experts was received to confirm, validate, and supplement the findings by the research team.

In the second stage of the analysis, a joint meeting with the academic board was carried out for both studies. The experts consulted represent an interdisciplinary body of academic expertise. The aim of these consultations was to discuss the findings in order to obtain a more valid understanding and interpretation, and to discuss possible policy options.

In the final stage, the findings and policy options were discussed and validated with a Sounding Board of higher education stakeholders in Europe. The members of the sounding board represented the following organisations, networks and alliances: All European Academics (ALLEA), the European University Association (EUA), the European Students Union (ESU), the Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE), the Young Academy of Europe (YAE), the European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc), the League of European Research Universities (LERU), the Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities (The Guild), Science Europe, Scholars at Risk (SAR), the Coimbra group, and CESAER.

It should also be mentioned here that public authorities of the EU Member States were not given the opportunity to respond to the findings of the studies or provide feedback to the reports.

The final version of the reports, including the proposed policy options, remain the responsibility of the research teams who have prepared the reports.

2.2. Key findings: Synthesis study

For each EU Member State, this study brings together the results of existing measures and assessments of academic freedom from the Academic Freedom Index, the EUA Autonomy Scorecard, Freedom House, Scholars at Risk, and a scorecard of legal protections of academic freedom. As these country reports focus mainly on the quantitative measures of academic freedom, they are useful for comparative perspectives between countries but do not cover the contextual nuances of each higher education system. For a deeper understanding of the results and the opportunities available for promoting and protecting academic freedom, the quantitative indicators have to be used together with other qualitative sources, see for instance the findings from the Latest Trends Analysis Study in this Monitor. The methodology and results of the report have been discussed and validated with experts and higher education stakeholders whose feedback has been used to formulate conclusions and policy options.

The main results of the synthesis are:

- From a global perspective, the state of academic freedom in the European Union is relatively high on average compared to other regions and stable over time.
- Taking the European Union Member States as a reference point, there are nine countries within the European Union with a below-average level of academic freedom. These are Austria, Malta, Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Greece, Poland and Hungary. Over the past ten years, eight of these countries have seen a statistically significant decline in academic freedom or aspects thereof, indicating an erosion of this important fundamental academic value. Special attention is needed for the situation in Hungary where the level of academic freedom has fallen further in recent years and is low compared not just to all other EU Member States, but also globally (the bottom 20-30% of countries worldwide).
- On average, the institutional autonomy of higher education systems in EU Member States is stable. Yet, according to the European University Association's University Autonomy Scorecard, there are changes in legislation that have led to recent declines in various EU Member States in financial autonomy (e.g. Austria, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Slovakia), organisational autonomy (e.g. Slovenia, Estonia, Denmark) staffing autonomy (Croatia, Slovakia) and academic autonomy (e.g. Denmark, Estonia).
- The results show no direct relation between the level of academic freedom and the conditions for academic freedom as presented in table 1. Yet expert and stakeholder insights make clear that in situations where these conditions are not sufficiently realised, academic freedom is vulnerable in the long run. Further research is needed to understand the mechanisms of the relationship between the core elements of academic freedom and its supportive conditions.

2.3. Key findings: Latest trends analysis study

This study has updated, elaborated, and further systematised the main recent trends with respect to academic freedom in ten EU Member States. Exploring the different dimensions of potential threats to academic freedom, a rather varied picture emerges across the selected countries. Systemic and structural infringements of academic freedom have only been identified in Hungary. At the same time, in most of the other EU Member States covered in the study, there are increasing

worries about a deterioration of *de facto* academic freedom, with threats which are argued to come from various sides at the same time.

In most EU Member States, there are concerns about undue political interferences, including from the governments, in academic freedom. In some cases, these represent direct attacks on the responsibility of the academic community for guarding academic freedom, for example, in the form of using political arguments for claiming that certain academic areas, such as critical theory or gender studies, are not scientific, and therefore the public funding of teaching programmes and research in these areas should be stopped. While the determination of public budgets for higher education and research is a political responsibility, using political arguments for interfering in the academic responsibility for guarding the quality of academic activities and determining what are scientific activities and what are not, can be regarded as an attack on academic freedom. In other cases, the interference is more indirect and can consist of introducing far-reaching changes in the conditions under which academic freedom is to be exercised. This concerns, for example, far-reaching changes in institutional governance structures that significantly limit the involvement of staff and students in the institutional decision-making with respect to academic affairs.

Another possible source for threats to academic freedom is formed by institutional leadership and management, who are responsible for protecting academic freedom in principle. The report refers to cases where a more executive institutional leadership has made decisions resulting in an erosion of academic freedom. There are, for example, worrying trends around personnel policies, including the firing of tenured academic staff on the basis of controversial grounds and the growing share of temporary positions, as well as the disallowance of academic activities that were deemed to be controversial.

In some EU Member States, specific actions of academic staff and students are also regarded as a potential threat to academic freedom. While academic debates, tensions, disagreements, and conflicts do not form a threat to academic freedom in themselves, attempts to silence specific strands of research, teaching or expression can result in undue threats to, or even violations of, academic freedom.

Furthermore, threats and attacks by civil society actors on individual academics or academic groups, especially through social media, have grown in most EU Member States. This form of pressure from civil groups can result in self-censorship, which is a serious threat to academic freedom. In addition, the impact of private sector actors on academic freedom remains an issue in several EU Member States. A key element in this concerns the role of private funding, especially of research. To maintain research activities in EU Member States with stagnating levels of public funding, researchers need to obtain a higher degree of funding from private sources. While this can lead to productive collaborations between academia and the private sector and is not a problem per se, the study shows worrying cases of undue interference of private funders, for example, in the research problems to be addressed, the results to be produced, and the academic publications that are to be allowed.

Finally, a relatively new issue is how European and national security concerns and policies that are emerging as a consequence of growing geopolitical tensions, might affect academic freedom. Here we can, amongst other things, refer to work of DG RTD of the European Commission in creating a digital platform aimed at centralising information that would support academics, students and higher education and science institutions in Europe to counter foreign interference.

3. Joint policy options

The policy options presented in this report are developed on the basis of the findings of the two studies, taking into account the results of the synthesis study that analysed data from existing monitors and data sources, and of the trends study consisting of elaborated country reports, with input from experts and key stakeholders. Based on these findings, policy options were developed in both studies, which in this report have been integrated into a comprehensive joint set of policy options.

1. Strengthen the existing European legal framework for promoting and protecting academic freedom

- Academic freedom is a fundamental European value mentioned in Article II.13, 'Freedom of the arts and sciences' of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. As stated in this article: "The arts and scientific research shall be free of constraint. Academic freedom shall be respected"¹. There is broad acknowledgement about the importance of the primary academic activities of education and research for the proper functioning and further development of the democratic political order, economy, and ecology of the European Union. Therefore, it is appropriate that the existing legal framework conditions for protecting academic freedom at the European level are strengthened.
- Strengthened legal protection of academic freedom can be expected to support researchers, students, and the academic organisations in their internal and external academic activities, as well as lay down the basic dimensions of academic freedom that EU Member State governments and other governance bodies would have to respect.
- The initiative by the European Parliament to strengthen the legal framework for the protection of academic freedom in the European Union should take into account relevant initiatives of the European Commission, so that appropriate coordination between these initiatives aimed at strengthening the protection of academic freedom in Europe can be achieved.

2. Setting up a European Platform for Academic Freedom

- The awareness of, and discussions on, the state of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States are at different levels in different countries and do not always reflect the current situation of academic freedom. Furthermore, the situation of academic freedom depends on the extent to which the academic community can appropriately respond to threats to, and infringements of, academic freedom in specific situations. A European Platform for Academic Freedom may support further exchange, awareness, and mutual understanding on what academic freedom implies, and it can function as a forum and clearing house for good practices of protecting and securing academic freedom.
- Such a platform could provide an important function which gathers information on threats to, and violations of, academic freedom, and stimulates debates concerning academic freedom. The platform might also enable better synergies between the different initiatives at European level to protect and promote academic freedom. It can also be expected to lead to a stronger shared understanding of key dimensions of academic freedom.

¹ See: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/eu-charter/article/13-freedom-arts-and-sciences>

3. Further work concerning enhanced awareness and dissemination of definitions and interpretations of academic freedom

- While the initial phase of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor has already identified important elements of a common interpretation of academic freedom, there is no generally agreed upon definition across EU Member States².
- The EP Academic Freedom Monitor can contribute to the identification of key areas and issues with respect to which the EU-level legislative protection of academic freedom in the EU Member States should be enhanced.
- It is particularly important that the EP Academic Freedom Monitor contributes to raising the awareness of individual academic staff at European universities, colleges, and research institutes about the importance of academic freedom for their professional activities, including what this entails in practice.

4. Further development of the EP Academic Freedom Monitor

- The current version of the EP Academic Freedom Monitor is in its initial phase. It has to be further settled as an instrument for the European Parliament in order to realise all its intentions and ambitions. For the further development of this monitor and its functions, it is essential that the EP enables the necessary improvements of the monitor. This concerns especially the capacity and infrastructure available at the European level, and the funding earmarked to conduct the studies and other actions underpinning the monitor.
- The studies presented in this report have certain limitations in scope and methodology. Further extension of available funding and the scope of the EP Academic Freedom Monitor can be regarded to be necessary for enhancing its future relevance and impact. The specific form of the monitor should also be discussed. For example – what is a relevant balance of quantitative and qualitative components in the monitor; how often and in which forms should updates be undertaken; who should be carrying out studies that underpin the monitor; what should be the frequency of these studies; and should they cover all EU Member States, or selected ones.
- The current design of the EP Academic Freedom Monitor makes use of the most appropriate measurements available for monitoring academic freedom and its framework conditions (the synthesis report), and data on the state of play (latest trends analysis). These concern mainly tenured academic staff. The Monitor does not cover all aspects due to the limitations of existing data and the specific definitions and methodology employed in the current studies. Specific additional aspects that have been identified in the current studies that need more attention if the EP Academic Freedom Monitor wants to realise its ultimate aims include:
 - The academic freedom of doctoral students and early career researchers, as well as researchers from underrepresented groups, who have a precarious position in the academic system. They might all be vulnerable to infringements of academic freedom, especially if they are threatened with career restrictions.
 - Academic freedom for students, in terms of freedom to study and students' role in research and institutional governance. Such an extension implies that the EP Monitor more adequately covers the overall relation of academic freedom to teaching and student learning.

² For the next phase of the EP Academic Freedom monitor, work done in EU Member States to develop a definition of academic freedom, for example, the definition presented by the KNAW in the Netherlands, should be taken into account.

- Data concerning self-censorship among academic staff as a result of undue pressures or interferences and cooling effects, which at this stage are insufficiently covered in existing academic freedom monitoring and measurement activities.
- The legal framework for academic freedom, which has not been appropriately updated since Beiter et al. (2016).
- Acknowledging the possible threats to academic freedom from undue foreign interferences, there are rising worries in the academic community about the possible pressures on academic freedom due to international security policies, and related restrictions on international scientific collaboration and exchange.

5. Better integrate academic freedom into the EU higher education, research, development and innovation initiatives

- Over the last thirty years, the EU has established through a range of initiatives, often within its framework programmes for research and innovation (currently Horizon Europe) and the Erasmus+ programme, a key role in research and education, academic exchange and other academic activities in Europe. These initiatives are complementary to the backbone of national and regional higher education and research policies. Given their impact it is highly appropriate that the Horizon Europe Regulation states that ‘the Programme should promote the respect of academic freedom in all countries benefiting from its funds’ (Recital 72), while under the Erasmus+ programme ‘it should be ensured that academic freedom is respected by the countries receiving funds’ (Recital 64). However, the legal value of these recitals remains rather unclear. It can therefore be recommended to embed academic freedom more strongly in the enacting terms of the legal instruments in question.
- Academic freedom could also be taken into consideration for other EU initiatives that concern knowledge policies. Specific examples include:
 - o In the current Call for proposals for European Universities alliances³, among the expected impacts of European Universities is to foster respect of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. This could be changed into a requirement to respect and protect academic freedom within the alliance and to contribute to fostering the respect of academic freedom in society.
 - o Strengthening the requirements concerning institutional policies, procedures, and structures to safeguard academic freedom as a condition for obtaining EU research and/or education funding.

6. Use the EP Academic Freedom Monitor results within the dialogue between the Commission and Member States and candidate Member States

- The importance of academic freedom runs parallel to the key role of higher education and research for the future of the European society, economy, ecology, and political order. In that respect, it would be critical for the European Commission to include the state of academic freedom in its dialogues with Member States in the rule of law reporting cycles, as well as in dialogues on national programs with respect to subjects like the economic restructuring, climate policy and social cohesion⁴.
- The protection and assurance of academic freedom should also be part of the dialogue between the Commission and the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and

³ See: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/erasmus/wp-call/2024/call-fiche_erasmus-edu-2024-eur-univ_en.pdf

⁴ This is in line with a submission by Scholars at Risk Europe on 23 March 2021, to the European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) (see: <https://sareurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/SAR-Europe-Rule-of-Law-submission-to-EP.pdf>).

Herzegovina Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine, and be considered as a condition for entering the EU.

7. Meta-analysis of academic freedom data on national levels

- While the current monitor has provided a broad analysis of existing comparative data sources, there are also several initiatives on national levels that provide data on academic freedom. Some countries, for example, the Netherlands, have set up a national level platform concerning academic freedom. There is a need to continuously synthesise this data to keep track of developments concerning academic freedom.
- A potential role for the EP STOA panel could be to create a clearing house function. If the STOA Panel cannot play such a role, it can be recommended that the EP STOA Panel supports the development of a European clearing house on academic freedom.

8. Enhancement of the knowledge basis concerning academic freedom

- The results of the studies in this report show that the relationship between academic freedom and framework conditions is not linear or straightforward. Having *de jure* conditions for academic freedom in place is not sufficient for securing *de facto* academic freedom in practice, and the relationship between framework conditions and academic freedom warrants more attention. To develop paths for improvement for Member States where the *de facto* academic freedom is under pressure, it is necessary to develop a broader understanding of academic freedom, and how the framework conditions interact with academic freedom.
- This report has identified several trends and worries concerning academic freedom. It has also highlighted that the methodological approach in the underlying studies is not able to provide comprehensive, in-depth insights of those aspects which are neither covered by existing measures (the synthesis report) nor covered with the methodologies adopted in this issue of the Monitor (the trends analysis). This includes:
 - o Cases of and experiences with self-censorship by academic staff. While there are many indications that self-censorship is a growing phenomenon among academic staff in various EU Member States, there is a lack of valid empirical data. Self-censorship refers here to those cases where academic staff withdraw from certain research areas or themes as a consequence of undue pressure, interference or attacks, or avoid research problems that might lead to undue pressure, interference, or attacks.
 - o Labour conditions in academia in general and how those interact with academic freedom, especially for temporary staff and early career researchers.
 - o Comparative and more comprehensive data on doctoral students' academic freedom.
 - o Themes related to students' academic freedom.
 - o A more comprehensive and comparative understanding of how academic freedom relates to foreign policy.
- There are various ways in which the knowledge basis with respect to *de jure* and *de facto* academic freedom can be strengthened. For example, we would recommend a pan-European survey among academic staff, university leaders and public authorities, which could provide new data on several of the aspects mentioned above. Furthermore, European Commission could be recommended to fund research projects dedicated to academic freedom under the Horizon 2020 programme, with the aim to further enhance our understanding of the state of play of academic freedom in the EU member States.

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Part 2:
Synthesis report:
Systematising
existing
measurements of
academic freedom
in EU Member
States

Executive summary

Academic Freedom is an essential fundamental value for research and higher education systems and a prerequisite for democratic societies. In its role to protect and support European values as a basis for the European Community, the European Parliament has taken the initiative to publish annually a monitor on academic freedom. The aim of the EP Academic Freedom Monitor is to contribute to the understanding of potential and real threats to academic freedom in the EU Member States, and identify ways in which the protection and promotion of academic freedom can be strengthened.

This synthesis report presents key inputs to this monitor. For each Member State it brings together the results of existing measures on academic freedom. These measurements rely on structured expert input and thus reflect the perspective of these experts on the academic freedom in the country the expert covers. As these country reports focus mainly on the quantitative measures of academic freedom, they are not comprehensive. For deeper understanding of the results and to discuss the opportunities for improvement, these measures have to be used together with other sources.

Methodology and results have been discussed with experts and stakeholders, of which the feedback has been used to formulate conclusions and policy options.

The main results of the synthesis are:

- From a global perspective, the state of academic freedom in the European Union is relatively high on average compared to other regions and stable over time.
- Taking the European Union Member States as a reference point, there are nine countries within the European Union with a below-average level of academic freedom. These are Austria, Malta, Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Greece, Poland and Hungary. Over the past ten years, eight of these countries have seen a statistically significant decline in academic freedom or aspects thereof, indicating an erosion of this important fundamental academic value. Special attention is needed for the situation in Hungary where the level of academic freedom has fallen further in recent years and is low compared not just to all other EU Member States, but also globally (the bottom 20-30% of countries worldwide).
- On average, the institutional autonomy of higher education systems in EU Member States is stable. Yet, according to the European University Association' University Autonomy Scorecard, there are changes in legislation that have led to recent declines in various EU Member States in financial autonomy (e.g., Austria, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Slovakia), organisational autonomy (e.g., Slovenia, Estonia, Denmark) staffing autonomy (Croatia, Slovakia) and academic autonomy (e.g., Denmark, Estonia).
- The results show no direct relation between the level of academic freedom and the conditions for academic freedom as presented in table 1. Yet expert and stakeholder insights make clear that in situations where these conditions are not sufficiently realised, academic freedom is vulnerable in the long run. Further research is needed to understand the mechanisms of the relationship between the core elements of academic freedom and its supportive conditions..

Stakeholders and experts have indicated new threats to academic freedom, which are not fully covered by the monitor. These new threats include:

- Pressure from social and political groups from outside the scientific community, including violent threats towards individual scientists as well as threats of legal actions against scientists and their organisations with an aim to silence them.
- Restrictions on scientists to freely collaborate globally with researchers from other countries. These restrictions are related to considerations of economic competition and market protection, as well as to military conflicts.
- Infringements of academic freedom from within higher education and research organisations, when institutions pay insufficient attention to the protection of academic freedom for all members of the academic community and may even restrict the freedom of academics to speak out, disseminate their research findings, and make their own choices in research and teaching. Especially early career academics may be vulnerable to such pressures as they often have temporary labour contracts.

1. Introduction

1.1. Academic freedom and the European policy context

Academic freedom is widely accepted as a fundamental value of higher education systems and as a prerequisite for well-functioning democratic societies. Within the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union⁵ (EU) academic freedom is inscribed in Article II.13, 'Freedom of the arts and sciences' which reads "The arts and scientific research shall be free of constraint. Academic freedom shall be respected." The explanatory memorandum of the Charter⁶ says that the right to academic freedom "is deduced primarily from the right to freedom of thought and expression", and that "it is to be exercised having regard to Article 1⁷ and may be subject to the limitations authorised by Article 10⁸ of the European Convention on Human Rights"⁹.¹⁰ Having the same legal force as EU treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union offers legal protections against infringements of academic freedom (Deketelaere, 2022).

All EU Member States have ratified the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which bound them to "respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity" (Article 15)¹¹. While differing in scope and content, European countries have also codified academic freedom in their constitution, judicial decisions, or higher education laws and made it a de facto guideline for governance structures. This widespread codification of academic freedom in legislation has made its existence in practice almost self-evident, especially in democratic societies. Yet in recent years the academic community and other main higher education stakeholders¹² have become concerned about the actual state of academic freedom in European countries (Craciun & Mihut, 2017). Specific infringement cases indicate that by themselves, current legal protections of academic freedom are insufficient to maintain academic freedom in practice also because they are insufficiently specified (Popović, Lakhno, & Dubrovsky, 2023). For example,

⁵ For the full text of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2012/C 326/02), see: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>

⁶ For the full explanations relating to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2007/C 303/02), see: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:303:0017:0035:en:PDF>

⁷ Article 1 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union refers to human dignity: "Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected."

⁸ Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights refers to freedom of expression: "1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. The right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises. 2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary."

⁹ For the full text of the European Convention on Human Rights, see: https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/convention_ENG

¹⁰ Academic freedom is thus not an absolute right but carries with it duties and responsibilities such as adhering to academic integrity standards or respecting human dignity.

¹¹ For the full text of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which was opened for signature, ratification and accession in 1966 and entered into force in 1976, see: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cescr.pdf>

¹² See for example the 2019 joint statement of All European Academies (ALLEA), The European University Association (EUA) and Science Europe on academic freedom and institutional autonomy: <https://www.eua.eu/downloads/content/academic%20freedom%20statement%20april%202019.pdf>

legislation may mention the protection of academic freedom without stipulating the different core elements that fall under it (e.g., research, teaching, learning, dissemination), protect just some academic activities (e.g., teaching but not learning), or protect just some members of the academic community (e.g., tenured academic staff but not early career academics, or students). As a result, while widespread, existing legal protections fail to protect all core aspects of academic freedom and all members of the academic community equally. Additionally, legal guarantees of academic freedom do not necessarily imply *de facto* respect for this fundamental academic value and right.

With the establishment and development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the European Education Area (EEA) as well as the European Research Area (ERA), higher education systems have become more interconnected than ever before. In this context, threats to academic freedom are not only a concern within national borders but also across (Craciun, 2022). An illustration is the case of Central European University (CEU) brought to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) by the European Commission against Hungary related to the 2017 amendment of the Hungarian Law on higher education¹³. The ECJ ruled that new regulatory “conditions introduced by Hungary to enable foreign higher education institutions to carry out their activities in its territory are incompatible with EU law”¹⁴. Specifically, Hungary failed to comply with the provisions in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) from the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Charter provisions on academic freedom, freedom to found higher education institutions, freedom to conduct a business, and freedoms of establishment and free movement of services. While the ruling was welcomed, “the court’s decision reinforced the view of many that, on its own, Article 13 does not give enough legal protection to academic freedom” (Deketelaere, 2022) as the Charter only applies when Member States are implementing EU law. In line with this realisation, several high-level political bodies have started initiatives in an attempt to better secure academic freedom within Europe.

In the European Higher Education Area, at the Bologna Process ministerial conference in Rome (2020), higher education ministers from 49 countries agreed on a common definition of academic freedom¹⁵ for the whole EHEA and committed themselves to safeguarding and protecting academic freedom and academic integrity, responsibility for and of higher education, institutional autonomy, and participation of students and staff in governance¹⁶. These interconnected values represent the six rights/freedoms and duties/obligations of the EHEA that are to be taken together despite the tensions that may arise between them. The Bologna Process has created a working group on Fundamental Values to define these academic values and develop a comprehensive framework to monitor them in the higher education systems of the EHEA member states. As such, part of the activities of the working group addresses academic freedom as a main value for higher education.

In the European Research Area, the ministerial conference in Bonn (2020) adopted a Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research¹⁷ which affirmed “the central role of freedom of scientific research as a common core value and principle for research cooperation within the European Research Area

¹³ Court of Justice of the European Union case Commission v Hungary (C-66/18).

¹⁴ For full judgement in Commission v Hungary (C-66/18), see: <https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2020-10/cp200125en.pdf>

¹⁵ “We adopt the **definition of academic freedom** as freedom of academic staff and students to engage in research, teaching, learning and communication in and with society without interference nor fear of reprisal”. (EHEA, 2020, p.5, emphasis in original)

¹⁶ For the full text of the Rome Communiqué (2020), see: https://www.ehea.info/Upload/Rome_Ministerial_Communique.pdf

¹⁷ For the full text of the Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research (2020), see: https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/shareddocs/downloads/files/_drp-efr-bonner_erklaerung_en_with_signatures_maerz_2021.pdf?blob=publicationFile&v=1

and with international partners.” (ERA, 2020). The declaration understands the ERA as a safeguard of freedom of scientific research. Developments are under way for the design of a EU-level regulation on the freedom of scientific research that clarifies the scope of the freedom, definitions of the relevant terminology, the freedoms that scientific researchers enjoy, the rights and obligations of research organisations, and the obligations of governments.

In the European Education Area, the European Commission has launched an initiative – in line with the commitments made in the European Strategy for Universities (2022)¹⁸ – to develop guiding principles on protecting fundamental academic values by 2024. Importantly, these guidelines aim to be in synergy with the aforementioned commitments made in the EHEA and ERA. Protections of academic values are seen as important not just for the academic community, but for society as universities are considered “key to promote active citizenship, tolerance, equality and diversity, openness and critical thinking for more social cohesion and social trust, and thus protect European democracies” (European Commission, 2022). The flagship European Universities Initiative (EUI) is the primary policy instrument for achieving the ambitions of the European Strategy for Universities (Craciun, Kaiser, Kottman & van der Meulen, 2023). In the context of ever-closer cooperation between European University Alliances with a view towards developing a European Degree and a European legal status, the European Commission should ensure that – while respecting the autonomy of Member States and higher education institutions – there are provisions and incentives in place in the EUI to secure fundamental academic values and rights for all academic community members.

These are just three prominent examples¹⁹ of the growing awareness that academic freedom is a key fundamental academic value for not only higher education and research, but for the European community. There are several reasons why academic freedom is getting more attention. On the negative side, recent threats to academic freedom across EU Member States (Craciun, 2022; Craciun & Mihut, 2017; Mihut & Craciun, 2017; Matei, 2021; Gergely & Zoltán, 2022) have meant that protections of academic freedom can no longer be taken for granted even in democratic states (Maassen et al., 2022). On the positive side, the awareness comes with an ever-stronger role of scientific research and higher education for the advancement of public knowledge, innovation, wellbeing, and democracy. For instance, the conclusions of the Council of the European Union (2022) reinforce the key role of higher education institutions in securing the future of Europe and the role of the European Union, Member States and higher education institutions in protecting academic freedom and scholars at risk²⁰. This extensive role comes with new expectations for academic staff and higher education institutions that require new reflection on public values such as academic freedom.

The European Parliament Forum on Academic Freedom and the Monitor on Academic Freedom are timely initiatives in this direction. They underscore the need for European level coordination in translating the growing awareness of the importance of academic freedom into legislative and non-legislative initiatives that protect and promote the value. These initiatives are even more important

¹⁸ For the full text of the European Strategy of Universities (2022), see:

<https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/commission-communication-on-a-european-strategy-for-universities>

¹⁹ There are additional initiatives and recommendations regarding academic freedom from other institutional actors such as the Council of Europe, Magna Charta Universitatum, UNESCO. For example, the Council of Europe and the OSUN Global Observatory on Academic Freedom commissioned a study on the relationship between external quality assurance and fundamental academic values (Craciun, Matei & Popović, 2021), see: <https://elkana.ceu.edu/sites/elkana.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/391/coestudyfinal.pdf>. Another example is the Magna Charta Universitatum (MCU) 2020 update of the fundamental principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy in line with changes that have happened in universities and the contexts in which they operate since the original MCU in 1988.

²⁰ For the full text of the Council conclusions (2022) see: <https://www.charm-eu.eu/system/files/2023-06/Council%20conclusions%20on%20a%20European%20strategy%20empowering%20higher%20education.pdf>

given the many programs such as Erasmus+, Horizon2020, or the European Universities Initiative that contribute to European cohesion in the areas of higher education, research and innovation, stimulate mobility of staff and students and therefore require a shared understanding of the public values behind higher education, research and innovation, not in the least of academic freedom.

Recent measurements and monitoring reports indicate not just threats to academic freedom, but also differences in contextual understandings, differences in legal and non-legal protections of the value, and differences in the practice of academic freedom in higher education and scientific research (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023; Maassen, Martinsen, Elken, Jungblut & Lackner, 2022; Beiter, Karran & Appiagyei-Atua, 2016). Part of these differences have historical backgrounds related to the political and social development of the concept within the history of the European Union (EU) Member States, where some dimensions of the concept have been given more weight than others.

Yet, there is wide acceptance of central aspects of academic freedom (Maassen et al., 2023) that include the freedom to research, teach, learn, and intramural and extramural communication. Freedom to research refers to the freedom of individual academic staff to develop and follow their own research agenda without any undue political, administrative, religious, economic, social, cultural, or academic pressures. Freedom to teach and learn refers to, on the one hand, the freedom of individual academic staff to develop and design courses and teaching agendas, and on the other hand, the freedom of students to choose and pursue their studies without any undue pressures. Freedom of academic expression refers to the freedom of the academic community to express themselves on the basis of their academic area of expertise or field of study within and outside their institution. This includes the freedom of academic staff to publish and exchange research findings, without any undue internal or external pressures or risks of being punished. Additionally, freedom of expression refers to the right of the academic community to express themselves on higher education governance matters without fear of repression.

As most studies emphasise, these three freedoms are not absolute, but have to be exercised within the accepted framework conditions for academic freedom, including the regular governance mechanisms for higher education and research within the higher education institutions. Crucial for the promotion of academic freedom are also the broader social, political, and economic conditions in which higher education and scientific research are embedded. These include institutional autonomy, self-governance by the academic community (staff and students), labour conditions, and financial conditions. Further attention should be paid to how these conditions affect the practice of academic freedom in different national and institutional contexts and for different members of the academic community (tenured vs. non-tenured staff, early career vs. recognised researchers, staff vs. students).

As the main dimensions of academic freedom are widely agreed upon, the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 will not aim at further defining the concept of academic freedom, nor suggest a further hierarchy in its dimensions. We consider the Monitor as an instrument for the European Parliament (as an agora in bringing together different higher education stakeholders to better protect and promote academic freedom), but also more broadly for the EU Member States and the European academic community, to identify weak spots, threats as well as opportunities for mutual learning and joint initiatives to strengthen this academic value. In the next section we discuss the aims and structure of the current study in more detail.

1.2. Aims and structure of the synthesis report

The European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 brings together the current Synthesis Report and the Latest Trends Analysis Report. It intends to contribute to a better understanding of the current potential and real threats to academic freedom in the EU Member States, and the ways

in which the protection and promotion of academic freedom can be strengthened. It builds on the previous studies commissioned by the European Parliament to understand the existing methods and procedures through which academic freedom is monitored (Kováts & Rónay, 2022) and analyse the state of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States (Maassen et al., 2022).

The Synthesis Report is an independent status review that systematises up to date data on academic freedom in the 27 EU Member states from already existing monitoring projects. The focus is on new measurements of academic freedom since the independent analysis provided by Maassen et al. (2022) for the European Parliament. The current report is to be read with its companion study in the EP Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 on 'Latest trends analysis' in academic freedom in the EU that provides a more in-depth qualitative view of developments.

The structure of the study is as follows.

Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction the policy developments on academic freedom in Europe and established the relevance of monitoring the value.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the research design of the study which is based on desk research expert consultations. In addition, the results of the study were reviewed by a sounding board of higher education stakeholders whose input was used to validate and enrich the study.

Chapter 3 provides a synthesis of existing measurements of academic freedom in the 27 EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. In this chapter we offer country fact sheets for each EU Member State that synthesise existing measurements of academic freedom in the respective country.

Chapter 4 builds on the findings from the previous chapter and identifies the major recurring challenges to academic freedom in the European Union. The trends analysis maps out the groups of countries who witness specific threats related to the various dimensions of academic freedom. The analysis also identifies those countries who score high on academic freedom measurements so that peer learning can occur. The identified trends were discussed with a group of experts on academic freedom in an online consultation.

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2. Research design

Considering the aims, the study *Systematising existing measurements of academic freedom in EU Member States: Synthesis Report* is designed to provide an update on the state of play of academic freedom in each of the 27 EU Member States based on up-to-date monitoring efforts of the value. This chapter provides a brief overview of the methodology and the data sources employed.

2.1. Methodology

The methodology of the current study is based on desk research and consultations with experts and stakeholders. Overall, the report builds on the efforts of previous academic freedom studies from the European Parliament. Specifically, the study providing an overview of existing conceptualisations and monitoring efforts of academic freedom (Kováts & Rónay, 2023) and the study providing an overview of de facto trends and developments in academic freedom in the EU (Maassen et al., 2023).

In the first phase of the research, we used desk research. To provide an update on the state of play of academic freedom in each of the 27 EU Member States we drew on the latest existing measures to monitor the value and reports of grave infringements of academic freedom. We collected and synthesised academic freedom measurements for each EU Member State from the latest releases of the Academic Freedom Index, the EUA Autonomy Scorecard, the Freedom in the World Report of Freedom House, and the de jure scorecard of academic freedom. Where available, the quantitative scores were supplemented with reports from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project. These data sources are presented and discussed in the next section (see Section 2.1).

In the second phase of the research, we consulted experts on academic freedom. The aim of the consultation was to gather expert assessments on what are the major concerns and threats regarding academic freedom in EU Member States. The consultation drew on the synthesis of findings from the country reports (see chapter 3) from which we extracted both recurrent threats to academic freedom identified in different Member States and concerning threats to academic freedom that need to be addressed urgently. The expert consultation sought to triangulate the findings of the research team and improve the comprehensiveness and depth of the findings. In addition, we asked experts to propose and assess various legislative and non-legislative policy options that would help to enhance protections of academic freedom in EU Member States.

In the third phase of the research, we validated and enriched our findings through a sounding board of higher education stakeholders. The sounding board was composed of cross-sectorial European academic associations representing both education and research. The members of the sounding board came from All European Academics (ALLEA), the European Association of Universities (EUA), European Students Union (ESU), Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE), Young Academy of Europe (YAE), the European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc), the League of European Research Universities (LERU), The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities (The Guild), Science Europe, Scholars at Risk (SAR), and the Conference of European Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research (CESAER). The members of the sounding board provided input on emerging threats and developments on academic freedom as well as policy options to address these from the perspective of the organisations they represent.

The research design employed has a couple of limitations. First, the reliance on desk research to collect and synthesise already existing data on academic freedom implies that the study is bound to have similar strengths and weaknesses to the data sources used (for an overview see Kováts & Rónay, 2023). Yet, synthesizing the different existing data sources into individual country cases can paint a more comprehensive picture of the state of academic freedom in the Member States. Second, while the sounding board and expert consultations brought together a wide variety of

stakeholders in higher education, the voice of higher education ministries is missing from the study. Future studies should include relevant higher education public authorities.

2.2. Data sources

The Synthesis Report is based on the most promising existing efforts to assess *de jure* and *de facto* levels of academic freedom. Each individual data source has its own strengths and limitations in terms of factors such as geographical coverage, regularity of reporting, type of data used²¹, contextual specificity, breadth, and depth in covering all the elements of academic freedom, and consideration of how they apply to different members of the academic community. As a previous study for the European Parliament by Kováts and Rónay (2023) provides an extensive discussion of efforts to assess academic freedom, we will not engage in an extensive analysis here²².

Academic Freedom Index

The Academic Freedom Index (AFI) is a recurring global index that assesses *de facto* levels of academic freedom based on yearly expert assessments. The AFI is based on time-series data collected through the V-Dem Project²³. V-Dem provides up-to-date multidimensional and disaggregated measurements on various dimensions of democracy in 179 countries and territories around the world based on the assessment of more than 2000 country experts. Some of the data they collect to assess the health of democracies is related to academic freedom. Five V-Dem indicators are used by AFI to provide a global comparison on how countries are faring in terms of academic freedom: freedom to research and teach²⁴, freedom of academic exchange and dissemination²⁵, institutional autonomy²⁶, campus integrity²⁷, and freedom of academic and cultural expression²⁸. These indicators are coded by country experts on a 0-4 scale on a country-year basis starting from 1900 and then aggregated into the index which has a value between 0-1 (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022)²⁹. The dataset used for the current report is V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023).

EUA Autonomy Scorecard

The EUA Autonomy Scorecard is a recurring comparative legal analysis of institutional autonomy across higher education systems in EU member states and beyond that is currently at its fourth

²¹ For a detailed overview of the types of data that can be employed to monitor academic freedom see Spannagel (2020) who provides an extensive discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of expert assessments, opinion data, events data, institutional self-assessments, and *de jure* assessments.

²² For an extensive discussion of the strengths and limitations of different data sources in assessing academic freedom see also Spannagel (2020).

²³ More information on the data collection methods used by V-Dem can be found here: <https://v-dem.net/>. [V-Dem datasets are open access and can be downloaded from the project website.](#)

²⁴ Freedom to research and teach refers to the extent to which academics are able to pursue teaching and research agendas without undue interference.

²⁵ Freedom of academic exchange and dissemination refers to “freedom to discuss and disseminate research findings among academic (intramural) and non-academic audiences (extramural)” (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022).

²⁶ As indicated in table 1 in this report, institutional autonomy concerns the room to manoeuvre that higher education and research institutions have for managing their own internal academic and administrative affairs without undue external interference.

²⁷ Campus integrity refers to “the absence of a deliberately, externally induced climate of insecurity or intimidation on campus” (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022).

²⁸ Freedom of academic and cultural expression refers to how often and significant government censorship and sanctions are when expression is related to political issues.

²⁹ For a detailed description of the AFI and its indicators, see Spannagel & Kinzelbach (2022).

edition. Institutional autonomy is considered an important enabling condition for academic freedom (Maassen et al., 2023). Four core dimensions of institutional autonomy are probed in the EUA Autonomy Scorecard: organisational autonomy, financial autonomy, staffing autonomy, and academic autonomy. The latest edition of the scorecard includes an analysis of 35 European higher education systems including a novel analysis of academic freedom protections in national legislation. For comparison, EUA Autonomy Scorecard scores for this report were obtained from its third (Pruvot & Estermann, 2017) and fourth editions (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). These reports are based on data collected in 2015 and 2021-2022, respectively.

Freedom in the World Report

The Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2023) is a yearly global comparative overview of political rights and civil liberties providing both quantitative indicators and narrative accounts. The assessment of each country is conducted by external analysts on the basis of “on-the-ground research, consultations with local contacts, and information from news articles, nongovernmental organisations, governments, and a variety of other sources” (Freedom House, 2023)³⁰ and reviewed by expert advisors and regional specialists for validation purposes. Freedom House has been conducting this assessment for the last 50 years. The scores for academic freedom in the Freedom in the World report were collected from the countries and territories’ narrative reports (Freedom House, 2023) that accompany its two latest editions (Gorokhovskaia, Shahbaz, & Slipowitz, 2023; Repucci & Slipowitz, 2022). The scores were collected specifically for the question, “Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination?”.

De jure scorecard of academic freedom

The de jure scorecard of academic freedom (Beiter, Karran & Appiagyei-Atua, 2016) is a one-off study that provides an assessment of *de jure* protections of academic freedom in the 27 EU Member States and the United Kingdom. The scorecard is based on five core dimensions of academic freedom related to the protection of academic freedom for teaching and research in higher education legislation, the provision of institutional autonomy in legislation, the provision of self-governance in legislation, the legal protection of academic tenure, and adherence to international agreements and constitutional protection of academic freedom. The data has not been updated since the 2016 release of the study but provides a good base line for assessing developments in legal provisions for academic freedom, for example, by comparing with the de jure analysis provided in the latest edition of the EUA Autonomy Scorecard.

Academic Freedom Monitoring Project

The Academic Freedom Monitoring Project developed by Scholars at Risk³¹ – an international network of institutions and individuals aiming to protect and promote academic freedom – is a database that aggregates incidents of academic freedom or human rights infringements affecting academic communities. The database only contains records of repression against academic freedom such as killings/violence/disappearances, wrongful imprisonment/ detention, wrongful prosecution, restrictions on travel or movement, retaliatory discharge/loss of position/expulsion from study, and other significant events related to academic freedom infringements that affect the higher education community³². The database was searched for incidents affecting academic

³⁰ For a detailed account of the methodology used in the latest edition of the Freedom in the World Report, see: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/FITW_2023%20MethodologyPDF.pdf

³¹ The Academic Freedom Monitoring Project was started by Scholars at Risk in 2012 and it is a collaborative effort between SAR and volunteer researchers who document attacks on higher education in countries across the globe. More details on Scholars at Risk can be found here: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/about/>

³² More details about how the data is collected and validated can be found here: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/actions/academic-freedom-monitoring-project/>

freedom in EU Member States from the 1st of January 2022 to the 31st of July 2023. Additional accounts of EU Member States were sought in the Free to Think (SAR, 2022), an annual report by Scholars at Risk, to check whether threats to academic freedom were reported in the geographic scope of interest to this study³³. The type of repressions recorded by Scholars at Risk refer to violations of academic freedom and human rights of the members of the academic community, and as such the monitoring effort does not capture the more insidious or bottom-up threats to academic freedom that are prevalent in EU Member States. As such, the data used from this source is limited. Still, the events data gathered from this source provides a qualitative account of worrying academic freedom developments in EU Member States. The aim was to identify possible recurring threats (see chapter 4) so as to make targeted policy recommendations. For a more in-depth qualitative analysis of national developments, see the study on 'Academic freedom across the EU 2023: Latest trends analysis', presented separately in this report.

2.3. References

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³³ Only one incident from an EU Member State was reported on in the Free to Think (2022) report. The incident was in Poland and it is discussed in the country fact sheet, see chapter 3.

3. Country reports

3.1. Austria

3.1.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Austria is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for Austria published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023). For a more in-depth qualitative analysis of academic freedom in Austria, check the companion report to this study in the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 on ‘Latest trends analysis’.

3.1.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Austria from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Austria are presented in Table 3.2.1.

Table 3.2.1. Austria: Academic Freedom Index

Austria - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,95	0,88
Freedom to research and teach	3,71	3,31
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,78	3,39
Institutional autonomy	3,4	3,4
Campus integrity	3,78	3,52
Academic and cultural expression	3,71	3,71

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Austria is in the top 20-30% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). There has been a statistically significant change in Austria’s AFI score in the last decade, yet because the change has not been bigger than 10% (or >0.1 change in AFI score) the change is not considered substantial (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). If we look at the developments in the different AFI indicators in the last decade there is a significant change reported between 2012-2022 in the general academic freedom score (-

0.092), the freedom to research and teach (-0.557), and the freedom of academic exchange and dissemination (-0.518) (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute, 2023). For the rest of the indicators no significant change in the last decade is reported.

Freedom in the World

The score for Austria on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, “academic freedom is generally upheld, and the educational system is free from extensive political indoctrination” (Freedom House, 2023).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Austria are presented in Table 3.2.2.

Table 3.2.2. Austria: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Austria – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	70,5%	75,25%
Organisational autonomy	78%	78%
Financial autonomy	59%	59%
Staffing autonomy	73%	79%
Academic autonomy	72%	85%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Austria scores well on institutional autonomy compared to other EU higher education systems³⁴. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Austria suggest that institutional autonomy is improving. The scores suggest that Austria is doing better on staffing and academic autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Austria with an overall legal protection score of 63,5 C. The score for Austria is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in Austria’s constitutional norms. References to academic freedom are included both the Basic Law on the General Rights of Nationals – in Article 17 on science and teaching of (“(1) Knowledge and its teaching are free. [...] (5) The right to supreme direction and supervision over the whole instructional and educational system lies with the state”) and in Article 17a on artistry (“Artistic creativity as well as the dissemination of art and its teaching shall be free”)

³⁴ See Annex 2 of this report.

– and in the Federal Constitutional Law – in Article 81c para 1 (“The public universities are places of free scientific research, tuition, and revelation of the Arts. They act autonomously within the framework of the laws and may render statutes. The members of university bodies are dispensed from instructions”) (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p. 85). In addition, academic freedom is protected also in the Universities Act which refers to the provisions made in the Basic Law (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

3.1.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023³⁵. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports one incident of academic infringement in the period January 2022 – July 2023 in Austria. The incident refers to the cancellation of a lecture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (AKBILD) in May 2022 because of external pressures that were politically motivated.

3.1.4. References

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³⁵ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

3.2. Belgium

3.2.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Belgium is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.2.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Belgium from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Belgium are presented in Table 3.3.1.

Table 3.3.1. Belgium: Academic Freedom Index

Belgium- Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,96	0,97
Freedom to research and teach	3,82	3,82
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,9	3,9
Institutional autonomy	3,62	3,62
Campus integrity	3,57	3,81
Academic and cultural expression	3,46	3,75

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Belgium is in the top 10% of countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Belgium are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Belgium on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "The government does not restrict academic freedom. Schools are free from

political indoctrination, and there are no significant impediments to scholarly research or discussion” (Freedom House, 2023).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Belgium are presented in Table 3.3.2.

Table 3.3.2. Belgium: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Belgium – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Flanders		French Community of Belgium (Wallonia)	
	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	73%	72,5%	69%	70,75%
Organisational autonomy	70%	70%	90%	90%
Financial autonomy	76%	74%	52%	54%
Staffing autonomy	76%	76%	44%	49%
Academic autonomy	70%	70%	90%	90%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard does not provide data for the country as a whole. It provides separate scores for Flanders and Wallonia³⁶. Institutional autonomy scores are quite stable for both regions. The scores suggest that Wallonia is doing better than Flanders on organisational and academic autonomy, and Flanders is doing better than Wallonia on financial and staffing autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Belgium with an overall legal protection score of 49,25 E. The score for Belgium is lower than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100% scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least. The country score is the average of the scores provided for Flanders (51.5 D) and Wallonia (47 E).

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in Belgium’s constitutional norms and higher education law. References to academic freedom in the constitution relate to teaching, while the 2013 Higher Education Landscape Law (FWB) relate to both the freedom of higher education institutions to organise teaching and research and to the freedom of academic staff.

³⁶ See Annex 2 of this report.

3.2.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023³⁷. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Belgium in the period January 2022 – July 2023.

3.2.4. References

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3.3. Bulgaria

3.3.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Bulgaria is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.3.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Bulgaria from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedge et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke

³⁷ The websites of the publications was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

& Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Bulgaria are presented in Table 3.4.1.

Table 3.4.1. Bulgaria: Academic Freedom Index

Bulgaria - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,86	0,85
Freedom to research and teach	3,59	3,27
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,32	3,24
Institutional autonomy	3,28	3,08
Campus integrity	3,38	3,4
Academic and cultural expression	2,88	3,63

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Bulgaria is in the top 20-30% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Bulgaria are generally stable. However, there is a significant change reported between 2012-2022 in the freedom of academic exchange and dissemination (-0,451) (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute, 2023). For the rest of the indicators no significant change in the last decade is reported.

Freedom in the World

The score for Bulgaria on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is generally upheld in practice". (Freedom House, 2023).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Bulgaria is not included in the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Bulgaria with an overall legal protection score of 65,5 E. The score for Bulgaria is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

3.3.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023³⁸. This source of data was described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Belgium in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.3.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

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3.4. Croatia

3.4.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Croatia is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.4.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Croatia from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedge et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

³⁸ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Croatia are presented in Table 3.5.1.

Table 3.5.1. Croatia: Academic Freedom Index

Croatia - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,86	0,86
Freedom to research and teach	3,29	3,03
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,35	3,5
Institutional autonomy	3,27	3,38
Campus integrity	3,81	3,81
Academic and cultural expression	2,84	2,73

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Croatia is in the top 20-30% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Croatia are generally stable. However, there is a significant decrease reported between 2012-2022 in the freedom of academic and cultural expression (-0,49) (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute, 2023). For the rest of the indicators no significant change in the last decade is reported.

Freedom in the World

The score for Croatia on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 3 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "While there are generally no overt restrictions on speech in classrooms, critics continue to allege inappropriate political interference at all levels of education." (Freedom House, 2023). The same concern was raised for Croatia in 2022.

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Croatia are presented in Table 3.5.2.

Table 3.5.2. Croatia: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Croatia – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	52,25%	41,5%
Organisational autonomy	62%	62%
Financial autonomy	60%	46%
Staffing autonomy	37%	12%

Academic autonomy	50%	46%
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Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Croatia scores low on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries³⁹. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Croatia suggests that institutional autonomy is decreasing. The scores suggest that Croatia is doing worse on financial, staffing, and academic autonomy. For instance, since 2016 promoting staff or “opening any type of new position requires ex-ante approval from the external authority” meaning that institutional staffing autonomy has decreased (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). These staffing restrictions also impact on the academic autonomy of Croatian universities, as while universities have autonomy in deciding on student numbers, they must abide by a staff/student ratio of 1/30 for accreditation purposes (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Croatia with an overall legal protection score of 69 C. The score for Croatia is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in Croatia’s constitution and Act on Scientific Activity. References to academic freedom in the constitution relate to the freedom of scientific, cultural, and artistic creativity, while those in the Act on Scientific Activity state that higher education should be based on academic freedom, self-governance, and university autonomy.

3.4.1. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁴⁰. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Croatia in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.4.2. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

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³⁹ See Annex 2 of this report.

⁴⁰ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute (2023). Academic Freedom Index. <https://academic-freedom-index.net/>

Freedom House (2022). Croatia: Freedom in the World 2022 Country Report. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/croatia/freedom-world/2022>

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3.5. Cyprus

3.5.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Cyprus is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023). For a more in-depth qualitative analysis of academic freedom in Cyprus, check the companion report to this study in the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 on 'Latest trends analysis'.

3.5.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Cyprus from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Cyprus are presented in Table 3.6.1.

Table 3.6.1. Cyprus: Academic Freedom Index

Cyprus - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,92	0,92
Freedom to research and teach	3,54	3,54
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,75	3,75

Institutional autonomy	3,52	3,52
Campus integrity	3,43	3,45
Academic and cultural expression	3,37	3,37

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Cyprus is in the top 10-20% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Cyprus are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Cyprus on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 3 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is respected in Cyprus".

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Cyprus are presented in Table 3.6.2.

Table 3.6.2. Cyprus: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Cyprus – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	n/a	39%
Organisational autonomy	n/a	54%
Financial autonomy	n/a	21%
Staffing autonomy	n/a	39%
Academic autonomy	n/a	42%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Cyprus scores low on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁴¹. Cyprus was not included in the third edition of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard (2017), so it is not possible to compare developments over time.

⁴¹ See Annex 2 of this report.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Cyprus with an overall legal protection score of 53 D. The score for Cyprus is slightly higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in Cyprus' individual universities' laws⁴². For example, the 1998 law of the Cyprus University of Technology "refers to the responsibility of the institution to safeguard academic freedom and freedom of scientific research and circulation of ideas" (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

3.5.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁴³. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Cyprus in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.5.4. References

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⁴² Cyprus is a case where laws may apply to specific public universities, which may ultimately translate into different levels of institutional autonomy across the higher education system (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

⁴³ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

Spannagel, J., & Kinzelbach, K. (2022). The Academic Freedom Index and its indicators: Introduction to new global time-series V-Dem data. Quality & Quantity. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-022-01544-0>

3.6. Czechia

3.6.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Czechia is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.6.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Czechia from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Czechia are presented in Table 3.7.1.

Table 3.7.1. Czechia: Academic Freedom Index

Czechia - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,93	0,98
Freedom to research and teach	3,61	3,88
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,57	3,91
Institutional autonomy	3,61	3,61
Campus integrity	3,92	3,92
Academic and cultural expression	3,34	3,83

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Czechia is in the top 10% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). In the latest AFI edition (2023), Czechia actually scores first worldwide. Recent AFI scores for Czechia are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Czechia on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is respected. Ceremonial presidential approval is required for academic positions." (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA Institutional Autonomy Scorecard for Czechia are presented in Table 3.7.2.

Table 3.7.2. Czechia: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Czechia – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	n/a	73,25%
Organisational autonomy	n/a	54%
Financial autonomy	n/a	69%
Staffing autonomy	n/a	98%
Academic autonomy	n/a	72%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Czechia scores well on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁴⁴. Czechia was not included in the third edition of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard (2017), so it is not possible to compare developments over time.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Czechia with an overall legal protection score of 51,5 D. The score for Czechia is lower than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Czechia's constitution and higher education act. The Czech constitution mentions that "the freedom of scholarly research and of artistic creation is guaranteed" (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p.111). The law on higher education refers to academic freedom and related rights, specifically mentioning freedom to teach and research (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

⁴⁴ See Appendix 2 of this report.

3.6.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁴⁵. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Czechia in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.6.4. References

- Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001
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3.7. Denmark

3.7.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Denmark is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023). For a more in-depth qualitative analysis of academic freedom in Denmark, check the companion report to this study in the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 on 'Latest trends analysis'.

⁴⁵ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

3.7.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Denmark from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Denmark are presented in Table 3.8.1.

Table 3.8.1. Denmark: Academic Freedom Index

Denmark - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,92	0,91
Freedom to research and teach	3,6	3,6
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,57	3,57
Institutional autonomy	2,82	2,73
Campus integrity	3,9	3,76
Academic and cultural expression	3,73	3,73

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Denmark is in the top 10-20% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Denmark are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Denmark on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is not yet available. For 2022, the score for Denmark on academic freedom was 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score). According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is respected." (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Denmark are presented in Table 3.8.2.

Table 3.8.2. Denmark: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Denmark – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	81%	78,5%
Organisational autonomy	94%	87%
Financial autonomy	69%	69%
Staffing autonomy	86%	86%
Academic autonomy	75%	72%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Denmark scores well on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁴⁶. At the same time, the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is decreasing in Denmark. The scores suggest that Denmark is doing worse on organisational and academic autonomy. For instance, a decrease in academic autonomy is noted in relation to the decision of the Danish government in 2021 to cap English-language programs stipulating the number of study places for programs delivered in English at each higher education institution (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). Additionally, a decrease in organisational autonomy is noted as since 2017 ministerial approval is required for the nomination of the chair of the board (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Denmark with an overall legal protection score of 38,5 F. The score for Denmark is lower than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in Denmark's university act which stipulates that the university has the freedom to research (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

3.7.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁴⁷. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Denmark in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

⁴⁶ See Annex 2 of this report.

⁴⁷ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

3.7.4. References

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3.8. Estonia

3.8.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Estonia is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023). For a more in-depth qualitative analysis of academic freedom in Estonia, check the companion report to this study in the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 on 'Latest trends analysis'.

3.8.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Estonia from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedge et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Estonia are presented in Table 3.9.1.

Table 3.9.1. Estonia: Academic Freedom Index

Estonia - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,95	0,97
Freedom to research and teach	3,52	3,87
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,88	3,88
Institutional autonomy	3,38	3,38
Campus integrity	3,93	3,93
Academic and cultural expression	3,77	3,77

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Estonia is in the top 10% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). In the latest AFI edition (2023), Estonia scored second worldwide. Recent AFI scores for Estonia are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Estonia on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is generally respected." (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Estonia are presented in Table 3.9.2.

Table 3.9.2. Estonia: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Estonia – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	90,75%	86,25%
Organisational autonomy	88%	73%
Financial autonomy	77%	77%
Staffing autonomy	100%	100%
Academic autonomy	98%	95%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators

where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Estonia scores high on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁴⁸. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggest that institutional autonomy is decreasing in Estonia. The scores suggest that Estonia is doing worse on organisational and academic autonomy. For instance, a decrease in organisational autonomy is noted due to the governance reform of higher education which determines a maximum range of five years for the rector's office term and the full control of external authorities over the appointment of external board members, who form a majority in the board. The slight decrease in academic autonomy is due to the fact that higher education institutions must now offer equivalent Estonian-language programs at bachelor's and master's level if they offer English-language programs.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Estonia with an overall legal protection score of 34 F. The score for Estonia is lower than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA university Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in Estonia's constitution which stipulates the freedom of science and art and the freedom of teaching.

3.8.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁴⁹. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Estonia in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.8.4. References

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⁴⁸ See Annex 2 of this report.

⁴⁹ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

Kinzelbach, K., Lindberg, S. I., Pelke, L., & Spannagel, J. (2023). *Academic Freedom Index 2023 Update*. FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg and V-Dem Institute. DOI: 10.25593/opus4-fau-21630

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3.9. Finland

3.9.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Finland is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.9.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Finland from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Finland are presented in Table 3.10.1.

Table 3.10.1. Finland: Academic Freedom Index

Finland - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,95	0,95
Freedom to research and teach	3,6	3,62
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,88	3,88
Institutional autonomy	2,78	3,01
Campus integrity	3,89	3,89
Academic and cultural expression	3,78	3,78

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey

coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Finland is in the top 10% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Finland are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Finland on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is generally respected." (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Finland are presented in Table 3.10.2.

Table 3.10.2. Finland: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Finland – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	85,5%	85,5%
Organisational autonomy	93%	93%
Financial autonomy	67%	67%
Staffing autonomy	92%	92%
Academic autonomy	90%	90%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Finland scores high on institutional autonomy compared to other EU Member States⁵⁰. The EUA Autonomy Scorecard IV suggest that institutional autonomy is stable in Finland.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Finland with an overall legal protection score of 55 D. The score for Finland is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

⁵⁰ See Annex 2 of this report.

According to the EUA Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in Finland's constitution and university act. References to academic freedom included in the constitution stipulate guarantees for science, art, and higher education (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). The universities act stipulates the freedom to research and teach with the caveat that "teachers must comply with the statutes and regulations issued on education and teaching arrangements" (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p.111).

3.9.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁵¹. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Finland in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.9.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

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⁵¹ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

3.10. France

3.10.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in France is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023). For a more in-depth qualitative analysis of academic freedom in France, check the companion report to this study in the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 on ‘Latest trends analysis’.

3.10.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for France from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for France are presented in Table 3.11.1.

Table 3.11.1. France: Academic Freedom Index

France - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,89	0,91
Freedom to research and teach	3,7	3,7
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,23	3,54
Institutional autonomy	2,69	2,69
Campus integrity	3,46	3,46
Academic and cultural expression	3,85	3,85

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

France is in the top 10-20% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for France are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for France on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "There are no formal restrictions on academic freedom in France." (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for France are presented in Table 3.11.2.

Table 3.11.2. France: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

France – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	46%	46,75%
Organisational autonomy	59%	57%
Financial autonomy	45%	44%
Staffing autonomy	43%	44%
Academic autonomy	37%	42%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, France scores low on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁵². The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggest that institutional autonomy is slightly increasing in France. The scores suggest that France is doing worse on organisational and financial autonomy and better on staffing and academic autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided France with an overall legal protection score of 63 C. The score for France is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in France's code of education. The code of education defines academic freedom as an individual right for teachers and researchers and "a guarantee of excellence in French higher education and research" (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p.112).

⁵² See Annex 2 of this report.

3.10.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁵³. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports three incidents of academic freedom infringements in the period January 2022 - July 2023 in France. The first report refers to an incident in Pointe-à-Pitre at the University Hospital of Guadeloupe where approximately 50 people damaged the facilities, cut the electricity, and intimidated faculty and students forcing them to leave classrooms and offices (SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2022). "One leader of the university hospital accused a collective of organisations opposed to vaccination mandates of having been behind the incident." (SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2022). The second report refers to an incident at Bordeaux Montaigne University where "individuals armed with iron bars apparently associated with far-right groups attempted to enter an amphitheatre" in order to stop an event where a left-wing political party was discussing student living conditions (SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2022). They were prevented from entering by university security, but three security guards were reportedly injured in the incident (SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2022). The third report refers to online harassments and death threats directed towards Carlos Moreno, professor at that University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, regarding his work on the *15-minute city* – an idea "which suggests that offices, schools, stores, and other everyday places should be only a short walk or bike ride from home" (SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2023). The threats are "reportedly largely coming from climate change deniers and QAnon conspiracy believers, who claim that the "15-minute city" concept is a step toward urban "prison camps" and "climate change lockdowns" with heavy surveillance and restrictions on movement. They accuse Moreno of being an agent of an invisible totalitarian world government." (SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2023).

3.10.4. References

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⁵³ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

Pruvot, E. B., Estermann, T., & Popkhadze, N. (2023). *University Autonomy in Europe IV: The Scorecard 2023*. European University Association.

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3.11. Germany

3.11.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Germany is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.11.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Germany from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Germany are presented in Table 3.12.1.

Table 3.12.1. Germany: Academic Freedom Index

Germany - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,97	0,96
Freedom to research and teach	3,89	3,89
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,9	3,9
Institutional autonomy	3,51	3,12
Campus integrity	3,82	3,82
Academic and cultural expression	3,44	3,44

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Germany is in the top 10% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Germany are generally stable,

with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Germany on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is generally respected, though legal prohibitions on extremist speech are enforceable in educational settings. (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022). In 2022, Freedom House reported on the increased precarity of university employees in German universities due to new employment regulations capping fixed-term contract to a 12-year limit. In 2023, Freedom House further reported on developments on this issue "In late 2020, university employees—disadvantaged by a newly adopted 12-year time limit on fixed-term contracts—launched a grassroots initiative (#IchBinHanna) seeking a solution to precarious working conditions in academia. In 2021, the topic was taken up for discussion in the Bundestag, and in late 2022, the Bundestag's Committee on Education, Research, and Technology announced that reforms to the 2007 Science Time Contract Act, which regulates fixed-term employment in academia, were being drafted; the law had not been amended as of year's end" (Freedom House, 2023).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Germany are presented in Table 3.12.2. below.

Table 3.12.2. Germany: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Germany – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Brandenburg		Hessen		North-Rhine Westphalia	
	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	61,75%	61,75%	65,75%	65,75%	65,5%	65,5%
Organisational autonomy	58%	58%	77%	77%	68%	68%
Financial autonomy	44%	44%	35%	35%	43%	43%
Staffing autonomy	58%	58%	63%	63%	63%	63%
Academic autonomy	87%	87%	88%	88%	88%	88%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, the three German higher education systems score quite similarly on institutional autonomy. They score in the second half of the top, when compared to other EU countries⁵⁴. No changes on

⁵⁴ See Appendix 2 of this report.

any dimension of institutional autonomy have been identified since the last edition of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard III.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Germany with an overall legal protection score of 64,5 C. The score for Germany is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100% scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Germany's federal and state level constitution. The German federal constitution explicitly mentions the freedom of arts and sciences (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

3.11.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁵⁵. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Germany in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.11.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., Knutsen, C.H., Lindberg, S. I., Teorell, J., Altman, D., Bernhard, M. et al. (2023). "V-Dem [Country-Year/Country-Date] Dataset v13" Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project. <https://doi.org/10.23696/vdemds23>.

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⁵⁵ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

3.12. Greece

3.12.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Greece is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.12.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Greece from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Greece are presented in Table 3.13.1.

Table 3.13.1. Greece: Academic Freedom Index

Greece - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,76	0,77
Freedom to research and teach	3,21	3,24
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,28	3,28
Institutional autonomy	2,75	2,75
Campus integrity	2,62	2,69
Academic and cultural expression	2,88	2,88

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Greece is in the top 40-50% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Greece are generally stable. However, if we look at the developments in the last decade there is a significant change reported between 2012-2022 in the freedom of academic and cultural expression (-0.947) (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute, 2023). For the rest of the indicators no significant change in the last decade is reported.

Freedom in the World

The score for Greece on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to

Freedom House, “There are no formal restrictions on academic freedom in Greece, and the educational system is free of political indoctrination. A law passed in February 2021 introduced police forces to some university campuses in an effort to fight crime, a longstanding problem in some institutions. Delays in the implementation of the policy echo the government’s ambivalence in light of opposition, protest, and violence.” (Freedom House, 2023).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Greece are presented in Table 3.13.2.

Table 3.13.2. Greece: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Greece – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	n/a	33,5%
Organisational autonomy	n/a	51%
Financial autonomy	n/a	31%
Staffing autonomy	n/a	19%
Academic autonomy	n/a	33%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Greece scores low on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁵⁶. Greece was not included in the third edition of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard (2017), so it is not possible to compare developments over time.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Greece with an overall legal protection score of 55,5 D. The score for Greece is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA Autonomy Scorecard IV (Benetot Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Greece’s constitution and laws. References to academic freedom included in the constitution stipulate both the freedom of art, science, research and teaching the obligation of the State to promote these freedoms (Benetot Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). In addition, Law No. 4485 guarantees freedom in research and teaching, and Law No. 4777 mentions the protection for academic freedom (Benetot Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

⁵⁶ See Appendix 2 of this report.

3.12.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁵⁷. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports eight incidents of academic freedom infringements in the period January 2022 - July 2023 in Greece. The first report refers to an incident at Athens University of Economics and Business where a group of hooded men physically attacked a professor during a lecture who then needed to be hospitalised. “An anarchist group claiming responsibility for the attack alleged that it was an effort to prevent the university or Ministry of Education from covering up the professor’s misdeeds –.” (SAR’s Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2022). The second report refers to an incident where “the Minister of Education, Niki Kerameos, requested a preliminary investigation into eight student leaders from the Technical University of Crete, in apparent retaliation for their participation in protest activities.” (SAR’s Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2022). The third report refers to an incident at the University of West Attica where students were assaulted by unidentified armed individuals before a charity event organised on campus in support of Ukrainian refugees (SAR’s Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2022). The rest of the reports refer to incidents that happened on the campus of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki where there were multiple violent clashes between riot police (MAT) and student protesters (SAR’s Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2022).

3.12.4. References

- Beiter, K. D. Karan, T. & Apiiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*. 3(3). 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001
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⁵⁷ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

3.13. Hungary

3.13.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Hungary is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023). For a more in-depth qualitative analysis of academic freedom in Hungary, check the companion report to this study in the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 on 'Latest trends analysis'.

3.13.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Hungary from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Privot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Hungary are presented in Table 3.14.1.

Table 3.14.1. Hungary: Academic Freedom Index

Hungary - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,36	0,34
Freedom to research and teach	1,64	1,64
Academic exchange and dissemination	2,33	2,26
Institutional autonomy	0,95	0,74
Campus integrity	2,74	2,74
Academic and cultural expression	1,85	1,8

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Hungary is in the bottom 20-30% of countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Hungary are significantly decreasing. If we look at the developments in the last decade there is a significant decrease reported between 2012-2022 in the general academic freedom score (-0.266), the freedom to research and teach (-0.643), institutional autonomy (-1.538), and the freedom of academic and cultural expression (-1.358) (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute, 2023). For the rest of the indicators no significant change in the last decade is reported.

Freedom in the World

The score for Hungary on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 2 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, concerning developments are happening in Hungary regarding academic freedom. First, the “Fidesz-led government has maintained its efforts to bring schools and universities under close supervision. A gradual overhaul of the public education system raised concerns about excessive government influence on school curriculums, and Parliament has restructured institutions and their finances to increase government-appointed chancellors’ powers. Authorities have increasingly threatened the academic autonomy of well-established institutions, pulling support, interfering in their affairs, and landing progovernment supporters in leading positions. The government has revoked accreditation from all gender studies programs.” (Freedom House, 2023). Second, “Progovernment media outlets commonly target activists, academics, programs, and institutions, often by calling them “Soros agents,” referring to Hungarian-born financier and philanthropist George Soros. Fidesz has targeted the Central European University (CEU), a graduate school founded by Soros, by changing the requirements for foreign universities to operate in Hungary. The government also targeted the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), stripping the 200-year-old academy of its network of research institutions in 2019 and handing it over to a new governing body.” (Freedom House, 2023). Third, “A July 2022 ÁSZ⁵⁸ report on “pink education” made the unfounded claim that the overrepresentation of women in higher education might cause demographic challenges and economic harm.” (Freedom House, 2023). Except for the third point, similar concerns on academic freedom in Hungary were raised in the previous edition of Freedom in the World (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Hungary are presented in Table 3.14.2.

Table 3.14.2. Hungary: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Hungary – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	50,75%	separate report
Organisational autonomy	56%	
Financial autonomy	39%	
Staffing autonomy	50%	
Academic autonomy	58%	

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Hungary scores low on institutional autonomy compared to other EU Member States in the third edition of the EUA University Autonomy Score Card (2017). Hungary was not scored in the

⁵⁸ ÁSZ is the State Audit Office of Hungary.

fourth edition of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard (2023) because the changes in governance introduced through the foundation system are *sui generis*.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Hungary with an overall legal protection score of 36 F. The score for Hungary is lower than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Hungary's fundamental law and the national law on higher education. The obligation of the state to guarantee the freedom of teaching and learning and the freedom of research and artistic creation is referenced in the fundamental law (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). In addition, the national higher education law stipulates the right to freely determine the curriculum, teaching methods and teaching content (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

3.13.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁵⁹. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no specific threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Hungary in the period January 2022 – July 2023.

3.13.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

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⁵⁹ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

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3.14. Ireland

3.14.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Ireland is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.14.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Ireland from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Ireland are presented in Table 3.15.1.

Table 3.15.1. Ireland: Academic Freedom Index

Ireland - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,91	0,91
Freedom to research and teach	3,58	3,58
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,56	3,56
Institutional autonomy	3,21	3,21
Campus integrity	3,4	3,4
Academic and cultural expression	3,79	3,79

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Ireland is in the top 10-20% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Ireland are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Ireland on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, “Academic freedom is respected” (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Ireland are presented in Table 3.15.2.

Table 3.15.2. Ireland: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Ireland – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	67%	71%
Organisational autonomy	73%	76%
Financial autonomy	63%	63%
Staffing autonomy	43%	56%
Academic autonomy	89%	89%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Ireland scores well on institutional autonomy compared to other EU Member States⁶⁰. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is improving in Ireland. The scores suggest that Ireland is doing better on organisational and staffing autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Ireland with an overall legal protection score of 52,5 D. The score for Ireland is lower than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Ireland’s university act and technological university act. The acts refer to the university’s rights and responsibility to protect and promote academic freedom (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

⁶⁰ See Appendix 2 of this report.

3.14.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁶¹. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Ireland in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.14.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

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3.15. Italy

3.15.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Italy is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.15.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Italy from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedge et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke &

⁶¹ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Italy are presented in Table 3.16.1.

Table 3.16.1. Italy: Academic Freedom Index

Italy - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,97	0,96
Freedom to research and teach	3,83	3,83
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,91	3,91
Institutional autonomy	3,64	3,64
Campus integrity	3,9	3,9
Academic and cultural expression	3,41	3,18

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Italy is in the top 10% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Italy are generally stable. However, if we look at the developments in the last decade there is a significant decrease reported between 2012-2022 in the freedom of academic and cultural expression (-0.705) (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute, 2023). For the rest of the indicators no significant change in the last decade is reported.

Freedom in the World

The score for Italy on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is generally respected" (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Italy are presented in Table 3.16.2.

Table 3.16.2. Italy: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Italy – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	58,75%	60%
Organisational autonomy	65%	65%

Financial autonomy	70%	70%
Staffing autonomy	44%	49%
Academic autonomy	56%	56%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Italy scores in the lower half of the top on institutional autonomy compared to other EU Member States⁶². The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is slightly improving in Italy. The scores suggest that Italy is doing better on staffing autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Italy with an overall legal protection score of 57,5 D. The score for Italy is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Italy's constitution and the 2010 law on the organisation of universities. The constitution refers to the obligation of the state to guarantee the freedom of science and art and their teaching (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). In addition, the aforementioned law mentions the duty of the ministry to respect "the freedom of teaching and the autonomy of universities, which are considered primary seats of free research and free training" (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p.113).

3.15.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁶³. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports one incident of academic infringement in the period January 2022 - July 2023 in Italy. The report refers to the incident at Sapienza University in Rome where police attacked student who were peacefully protesting against a conference that "organised by Azione Universitaria (AU), a far-right student organisation, and featured members from Brothers of Italy (Fdi), the country's ruling party." (SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2022).

3.15.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiagyeyi-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

⁶² See Appendix 2 of this report.

⁶³ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., Knutsen, C.H., Lindberg, S. I., Teorell, J., Altman, D., Bernhard, M. et al. (2023). "V-Dem [Country-Year/Country-Date] Dataset v13" Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project. <https://doi.org/10.23696/vdemds23>.

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3.16. Latvia

3.16.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Latvia is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.16.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Latvia from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedge et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Latvia are presented in Table 3.17.1.

Table 3.17.1. Latvia: Academic Freedom Index

Latvia - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,96	0,95
Freedom to research and teach	3,84	3,63

Academic exchange and dissemination	3,89	3,89
Institutional autonomy	3,2	3,2
Campus integrity	3,9	3,9
Academic and cultural expression	3,73	3,73

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Latvia is in the top 10% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Latvia are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Latvia on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 3 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "While academic freedom is largely upheld, lawmakers have begun to place some limitations on instruction in recent years." (Freedom House, 2023). The limitations refer to restrictions in the language of instruction. The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Latvia are presented in Table 3.17.2 below.

Table 3.17.2. Latvia: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Latvia – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	70,5%	75,75%
Organisational autonomy	57%	69%
Financial autonomy	90%	90%
Staffing autonomy	89%	89%
Academic autonomy	46%	55%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Latvia scores well on institutional autonomy compared to other EU Member States⁶⁴. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is improving in Latvia. The scores suggest that Latvia is doing better on organisational and academic autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Latvia with an overall legal protection score of 60 C. The score for Latvia is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Latvia's constitution and higher education law. The constitution refers to the obligation of the state to recognise the freedom of scientific research and other artistic and creative activities (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). In addition, the higher education law references academic freedom and the duty of higher education institutions to ensure freedom of research and art and freedom to study as long as academic freedom does not infringe upon "the rights of other persons, the constitution of higher education institutions, and laws and regulations" (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p. 113).

3.16.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁶⁵. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Latvia in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.16.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

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⁶⁴ See Appendix 2 of this report.

⁶⁵ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

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3.17. Lithuania

3.17.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Lithuania is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.17.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Lithuania from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Lithuania are presented in Table 3.18.1.

Table 3.18.1. Lithuania: Academic Freedom Index

Lithuania - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,93	0,92
Freedom to research and teach	3,71	3,56
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,81	3,81
Institutional autonomy	2,79	2,99
Campus integrity	3,73	3,73
Academic and cultural expression	3,23	3,23

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Lithuania is in the top 10-20% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Lithuania are generally stable. However, if we look at the developments in the last decade there is a significant decrease reported between 2012-2022 in the freedom of academic and cultural expression (-0.642) (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute, 2023). For the rest of the indicators no significant change in the last decade is reported.

Freedom in the World

The score for Lithuania on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is respected, and the educational system is generally free from political influence" (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Lithuania are presented in Table 3.18.2. below.

Table 3.18.2. Lithuania: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Lithuania – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	68,5%	71,25%
Organisational autonomy	88%	88%
Financial autonomy	61%	61%
Staffing autonomy	83%	83%
Academic autonomy	42%	53%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Lithuania scores well on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁶⁶. The EUA Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is improving in Lithuania. The scores suggest that Lithuania is doing better on organisational and staffing autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Lithuania with an overall legal protection score of 59,5 D. The score for Lithuania is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100% scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

⁶⁶ See Appendix 2 of this report.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Lithuania's constitution and higher education law. The constitution stipulates the freedom of culture, science, research and teaching and refers to the obligation of the state to support these freedoms (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). In addition, the higher education law references the duty of higher education institutions to ensure the academic freedom of the academic community members (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p. 113).

3.17.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁶⁷. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Lithuania in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.17.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

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⁶⁷ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

3.18. Luxembourg

3.18.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Luxembourg is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.18.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Luxembourg from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Luxembourg are presented in Table 3.19.1.

Table 3.19.1. Luxembourg: Academic Freedom Index

Luxembourg - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,95	0,95
Freedom to research and teach	3,78	3,78
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,83	3,83
Institutional autonomy	2,97	2,97
Campus integrity	3,92	3,92
Academic and cultural expression	3,74	3,74

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Luxembourg is in the top 10% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Luxembourg are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Luxembourg on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is generally respected in practice." (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Luxembourg are presented in Table 3.19.2.

Table 3.19.2. Luxembourg: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Luxembourg – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	77%	79%
Organisational autonomy	34%	56%
Financial autonomy	91%	75%
Staffing autonomy	94%	96%
Academic autonomy	89%	89%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Luxembourg scores well on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁶⁸. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is improving in Luxembourg. The scores suggest that Luxembourg is doing better on organisational and staffing autonomy, but worse on financial autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Luxembourg with an overall legal protection score of 47,5 E. The score for Luxembourg is lower than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in Luxembourg's university act. The act stipulates that the academic staff has the right to academic freedom in exercising their teaching and research roles (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

3.18.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁶⁹. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Luxembourg in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

⁶⁸ See Appendix 2 of this report.

⁶⁹ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

3.18.4. References

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3.19. Malta

3.19.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Malta is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.19.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Malta from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedge et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Malta are presented in Table 3.20.1.

Table 3.20.1. Malta: Academic Freedom Index

Malta - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,93	0,88
Freedom to research and teach	3,79	3,15
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,8	3,8
Institutional autonomy	2,44	2,44
Campus integrity	3,83	3,83
Academic and cultural expression	3,07	3,07

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Malta is in the top 20-30% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Malta are generally stable. However, if we look at the developments in the last decade there is a significant change reported between 2012-2022 in the freedom to research and teach (-0.645) (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute, 2023). For the rest of the indicators no significant change in the last decade is reported.

Freedom in the World

The score for Malta on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "The education system is generally free from political indoctrination and other constraints on academic freedom." (Freedom House, 2023). A similar conclusion was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Malta is not included in the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Malta with an overall legal protection score of 36 F. The score for Malta is lower than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

Malta is not included in the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV so no information on *de jure* protections of academic freedom can be gleaned from this resource.

3.19.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁷⁰. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Malta in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.19.4. References

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Pruvot, E. B., Estermann, T., & Popkhadze, N. (2023). *University Autonomy in Europe IV: The Scorecard 2023*. European University Association.

Spannagel, J., & Kinzelbach, K. (2022). The Academic Freedom Index and its indicators: Introduction to new global time-series V-Dem data. Quality & Quantity. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-022-01544-0>

3.20. The Netherlands

3.20.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in The Netherlands is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023). For a more in-depth qualitative analysis of academic freedom in The Netherlands, check the companion report to this study in the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 on 'Latest trends analysis'.

⁷⁰ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

3.20.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for The Netherlands from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for The Netherlands are presented in Table 3.21.1.

Table 3.21.1. The Netherlands: Academic Freedom Index

The Netherlands - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,86	0,82
Freedom to research and teach	3,13	3,03
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,43	3,11
Institutional autonomy	3,13	3,52
Campus integrity	3,71	3,41
Academic and cultural expression	3,31	3,31

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

The Netherlands is in the top 30-40% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for The Netherlands are generally stable. However, if we look at the developments in the last decade there is a significant decrease reported between 2012-2022 in the freedom of academic exchange and dissemination (-0.528) and in campus integrity (-0.519) (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute, 2023). For the rest of the indicators no significant change in the last decade is reported.

Freedom in the World

The score for The Netherlands on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is largely upheld in the Netherlands." (Freedom House, 2023). A similar conclusion was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for The Netherlands are presented in Table 3.21.2.

Table 3.21.2. The Netherlands: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The Netherlands – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	66,75%	71,75%
Organisational autonomy	69%	83%
Financial autonomy	77%	66%
Staffing autonomy	73%	92%
Academic autonomy	48%	46%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2022), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, The Netherlands scores well on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁷¹. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is improving in The Netherlands. The scores suggest that The Netherlands is doing better on organisational and staffing autonomy, but worse on financial and academic autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided The Netherlands with an overall legal protection score of 44 E. The score for The Netherlands is lower than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in The Netherlands' higher education and scientific research act. The act stipulates that academic freedom should be respected in higher education institutions and teaching hospitals (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

3.20.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁷². These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in The Netherlands in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

⁷¹ See Appendix 2 of this report.

⁷² The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

3.20.4. References

- Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001
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3.21. Poland

3.21.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Poland is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023). For a more in-depth qualitative analysis of academic freedom in Poland, check the companion report to this study in the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 on 'Latest trends analysis'.

3.21.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Poland from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedge et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Poland are presented in Table 3.22.1.

Table 3.22.1. Poland: Academic Freedom Index

Poland - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,76	0,74
Freedom to research and teach	3,19	3,02
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,19	3,19
Institutional autonomy	2,5	2,5
Campus integrity	3,38	3,38
Academic and cultural expression	2,3	2,25

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Poland is in the top 40-50% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Poland are significantly decreasing. If we look at the developments in the last decade there is a significant decrease reported between 2012-2022 on all AFI indicators: the general academic freedom score (-0.242), the freedom to research and teach (-0.921), institutional autonomy (-1), campus integrity (-0.521), and the freedom of academic and cultural expression (-1.508) (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Poland on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 3 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, the ruling party "has sought to discredit academics who challenge its preferred historical narrative, particularly with regard to the events of World War II. However, the right to pursue academic research has been upheld by courts. In June 2022, President Duda signed a law creating the Copernicus Academy, which is charged with financing scientific research. In 2021, Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) head Jerzy Duszyński warned that the new academy would duplicate much of the PAN's work and threaten its funding." (Freedom House, 2023).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Poland are presented in Table 3.22.2.

Table 3.22.2. Poland: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Poland – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	68,25%	71,5%
Organisational autonomy	67%	71%
Financial autonomy	54%	60%

Staffing autonomy	84%	87%
Academic autonomy	68%	68%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Poland scores well on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁷³. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is improving in Poland. The scores suggest that Poland is doing better on organisational, financial, and staffing autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Poland with an overall legal protection score of 54,5 D. The score for Poland is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Poland's constitution and law on higher education and science. The constitution states that "the freedom of artistic creation and scientific research as well as dissemination of the fruits thereof, the freedom to teach and to enjoy the products of culture, shall be ensured to everyone" (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p. 113). In addition, the higher education and science law states that the freedom of teaching, freedom of artistic creation, freedom of research, freedom of dissemination, and institutional autonomy are the foundation of the Polish higher education and science system (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). Furthermore, according to the preamble of the law, the state has the obligation to create and ensure optimal conditions for the exercise of these freedoms by the academic community (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

3.21.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁷⁴. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports one incident of academic infringement in the period January 2022 - July 2023 in Poland. The incident refers to the refusal of the Polish President Andrzej Duda "to approve the promotion of genocide researcher and head of the Center for Research on Prejudice at University of Warsaw, Dr. Michał Bilewicz, apparently due to the nature of his research" (SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, 2022).

⁷³ See Appendix 2 of this report.

⁷⁴ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

3.21.4. References

- Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiagyeyi-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001
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3.22. Portugal

3.22.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Portugal is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023). For a more in-depth qualitative analysis of academic freedom in Portugal, check the companion report to this study in the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 on 'Latest trends analysis'.

3.22.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Portugal from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedge et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Portugal are presented in Table 3.23.1.

Table 3.23.1. Portugal: Academic Freedom Index

Portugal - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,91	0,92
Freedom to research and teach	3,3	3,61
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,72	3,72
Institutional autonomy	3,09	2,95
Campus integrity	3,77	3,77
Academic and cultural expression	3,63	3,63

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Portugal is in the top 10-20% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Portugal are generally stable. However, if we look at the developments in the last decade there is a significant decrease reported between 2012-2022 in institutional autonomy (-0.702) and the freedom of academic and cultural expression (-0.314) (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute, 2023). For the rest of the indicators no significant change in the last decade is reported.

Freedom in the World

The score for Portugal on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is respected. Schools and universities operate without undue political or other interference." (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Portugal are presented in Table 3.23.2.

Table 3.23.2. Portugal: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Portugal – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	66,5%	70%
Organisational autonomy	80%	80%
Financial autonomy	70%	70%

Staffing autonomy	62%	62%
Academic autonomy	54%	68%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Portugal scores well on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁷⁵. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is improving in Portugal. The scores suggest that Portugal is doing better on academic autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Portugal with an overall legal protection score of 61 C. The score for Portugal is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Portugal's constitution and law on higher education. The constitution guarantees the freedom to teach and learn and the freedom of intellectual, artistic and scientific creation (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). In addition, the higher education law states that while under critical situations, the state may interfere in the governance of higher education institutions, it cannot endanger institutional autonomy and academic freedom in the process (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

3.22.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁷⁶. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Portugal in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.22.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

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FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg & V-Dem Institute (2023). *Academic Freedom Index*. <https://academic-freedom-index.net/>

⁷⁵ See Appendix 2 of this report.

⁷⁶ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

Freedom House (2022). *Portugal: Freedom in the World 2022 Country Report*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/portugal/freedom-world/2022>

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Pruvot, E. B., Estermann, T., & Popkhadze, N. (2023). *University Autonomy in Europe IV: The Scorecard 2023*. European University Association.

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3.23. Romania

3.23.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Romania is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023). For a more in-depth qualitative analysis of academic freedom in Romania, check the companion report to this study in the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023 on ‘Latest trends analysis’.

3.23.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Romania from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Romania are presented in Table 3.24.1.

Table 3.24.1. Romania: Academic Freedom Index

Romania - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,9	0,88
Freedom to research and teach	3,54	3,43
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,71	3,71
Institutional autonomy	2,85	2,68

Campus integrity	3,63	3,63
Academic and cultural expression	3,39	2,98

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Romania is in the top 20-30% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Romania are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Romania on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 3 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "The government generally does not restrict academic freedom, but the education system is weakened by widespread corruption and politically influenced appointments and financing." (Freedom House, 2023). A similar conclusion was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Romania are presented in Table 3.24.2.

Table 3.24.2. Romania: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Romania – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	n/a	68,5%
Organisational autonomy	n/a	54%
Financial autonomy	n/a	75%
Staffing autonomy	n/a	84%
Academic autonomy	n/a	61%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Romania scores in the lower half of the top on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁷⁷. Romania was not included in the third edition of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard (2017), so it is not possible to compare developments over time.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Romania with an overall legal protection score of 53,5 D. The score for Romania is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in Romania's law on higher education. The law "outlines the principle of academic freedom and makes the university leadership responsible for safeguarding the academic freedom of teaching and scientific personnel" (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p.114).

3.23.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁷⁸. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no specific threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Romania in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.23.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

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Pruvot, E. B. & Estermann, T. (2017). *University Autonomy in Europe III: The Scorecard 2017*. European University Association.

⁷⁷ See Appendix 2 of this report.

⁷⁸ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

Pruvot, E. B., Estermann, T., & Popkhadze, N. (2023). *University Autonomy in Europe IV: The Scorecard 2023*. European University Association.

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3.24. Slovakia

3.24.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Slovakia is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.24.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Slovakia from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Slovakia are presented in Table 3.25.1.

Table 3.25.1. Slovakia: Academic Freedom Index

Slovakia - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,96	0,95
Freedom to research and teach	3,81	3,81
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,89	3,61
Institutional autonomy	3,42	3,28
Campus integrity	3,79	3,79
Academic and cultural expression	3,8	3,8

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Slovakia is in the top 10% of countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Slovakia are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Slovakia on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, “Academic freedom is guaranteed by the constitution and upheld by authorities.” (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Slovakia are presented in Table 3.25.2. below.

Table 3.25.2. Slovakia: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Slovakia – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	57,25%	62,5%
Organisational autonomy	42%	57%
Financial autonomy	70%	68%
Staffing autonomy	61%	69%
Academic autonomy	56%	56%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Slovakia scores in the lower half of the top on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁷⁹. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is improving in Slovakia. The scores suggest that over time Slovakia is doing better on organisational and staffing autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Slovakia with an overall legal protection score of 60,5 C. The score for Slovakia is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100% scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Slovakia’s constitution and law on higher education. The Slovak constitution guarantees the freedom of science and art (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). In addition, the higher education law refers to academic freedom and rights and their guarantee in higher education institutions (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

⁷⁹ See Appendix 2 of this report.

3.24.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁸⁰. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Slovakia in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.24.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

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3.25. Slovenia

3.25.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Slovenia is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.25.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Slovenia from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedge et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke

⁸⁰ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

& Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Slovenia are presented in Table 3.26.1.

Table 3.26.1. Slovenia: Academic Freedom Index

Slovenia - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,91	0,93
Freedom to research and teach	3,28	3,28
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,87	3,87
Institutional autonomy	2,99	3,46
Campus integrity	3,85	3,85
Academic and cultural expression	2,89	3,29

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Slovenia is in the top 10% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Slovenia are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Slovenia on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is generally respected." (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year with the caveat that "the Janša government has attempted to influence appointments to academic institutions; the government continued to refuse to appoint Igor Žagar as head of the Education Research Institute." (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Slovenia are presented in Table 3.26.2. below.

Table 3.26.2. Slovenia: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Slovenia – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	52,5%	55%
Organisational autonomy	65%	59%

Financial autonomy	57%	66%
Staffing autonomy	44%	48%
Academic autonomy	44%	47%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Slovenia scores in the lower half of the top on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁸¹. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is improving in Slovenia. The scores suggest that over time Slovenia is doing better on financial, staffing and academic autonomy, but worse on organisational autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Slovenia with an overall legal protection score of 52,5 D. The score for Slovenia is lower than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in Slovenia's constitution, higher education act, and research and innovation act. The Slovenian constitution guarantees the freedom of science and art (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). In addition, the higher education act refers to the "freedom of research, artistic creation, and knowledge of the higher education institutions" (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p.114). Finally, the research and innovation act stipulates the freedom of research (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

3.25.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁸². These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Slovenia in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.25.4. References

Beiter, K. D., Karan, T., & Apiiagyei-Atua, K. (2016). Academic Freedom and Its Protection in the Law of European States: Measuring an International Human Right. *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 3(3), 254-345. DOI: 10.1163/22134514-00303001

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⁸¹ See Appendix 2 of this report.

⁸² The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

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3.26. Spain

3.26.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Spain is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.26.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Spain from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Spain are presented in Table 3.27.1.

Table 3.27.1. Spain: Academic Freedom Index

Spain - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,94	0,94
Freedom to research and teach	3,82	3,82
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,81	3,81
Institutional autonomy	3,09	3,09

Campus integrity	3,44	3,44
Academic and cultural expression	3,61	3,61

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedge et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

vSpain is in the top 10% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Spain are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Spain on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is not yet available. For 2022, the score for Spain on academic freedom was 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score). According to Freedom House, "The government does not restrict academic freedom in law or in practice." (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Spain are presented in Table 3.27.2.

Table 3.27.2. Spain: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Spain – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	53,75%	54,25%
Organisational autonomy	55%	55%
Financial autonomy	55%	55%
Staffing autonomy	48%	50%
Academic autonomy	57%	57%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Spain scores in the lower half of the top on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁸³. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is improving in Spain. The scores suggest that overtime Spain is doing better on staffing autonomy.

⁸³ See Appendix 2 of this report.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Spain with an overall legal protection score of 66,5 C. The score for Spain is higher than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Spain's constitution and organic law of universities. The Spanish constitution "recognises and protects the right to academic freedom, freedom of teaching, as well as the right to literary, artistic, scientific and technical production and creation. It recognises the autonomy of universities under the terms established by the law." (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p.114). In addition, the higher education law refers to academic freedom as the foundation of the autonomy and activity of universities, specifically mentioning the freedom to teach, the freedom to learn, and the freedom to research (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023).

3.26.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁸⁴. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Spain in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

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⁸⁴ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

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3.27. Sweden

3.27.1. Introduction

The country report on academic freedom in Sweden is part of the European Parliament Academic Freedom Monitor 2023. It builds on and updates the previous country report for published by the European Parliament on the *de facto* state of academic freedom in the Member States of the European Union (Maassen et al., 2023).

3.27.2. Quantitative country scores

In this section, we present country scores for Sweden from the latest editions of the Academic

In this section, we present country scores for Sweden from the latest editions of the Academic Freedom Index (Spannagel & Kinzelbach, 2022; Coppedage et al., 2023; Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023), the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot & Estermann 2017; Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023), the Freedom in the World Report (Freedom House, 2022; 2023), and the *de jure* scorecard on academic freedom (Beiter et al., 2016). These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Academic Freedom Index

The latest Academic Freedom Index scores for Sweden are presented in Table 3.28.1.

Table 3.28.1. Sweden: Academic Freedom Index

Sweden - Academic Freedom Index	Previous score (2021)	Current score (2022)
General	0,95	0,94
Freedom to research and teach	3,53	3,53
Academic exchange and dissemination	3,91	3,91
Institutional autonomy	2,92	2,54
Campus integrity	3,84	3,84
Academic and cultural expression	3,9	3,9

Source: V-Dem Version 13 (Coppedage et al., 2023)

Legend: The general score for academic freedom is an index that ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 constitutes no respect of academic freedom and 1 constitutes full respect of academic freedom in the country. The scores for the other categories in AFI range from 0 to 4, with 0 representing the lowest score and 4 the highest. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous year. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous year, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous year. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Sweden is in the top 10% countries worldwide regarding respect for academic freedom (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023). Recent AFI scores for Sweden are generally stable, with no statistically significant change in the last decade (Kinzelbach, Lindberg, Pelke & Spannagel, 2023).

Freedom in the World

The score for Sweden on academic freedom in the 2023 edition of the Freedom in World is 4 (in a 0-4 range, where 0 is the lowest and 4 the highest score), the same score as in 2022. According to Freedom House, "Academic freedom is generally respected." (Freedom House, 2023). The same was reported in the previous year (Freedom House, 2022).

EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

The latest scores of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard for Sweden are presented in Table 3.28.2. below.

Table 3.28.2. Sweden: EUA University Autonomy Scorecard

Sweden – EUA Autonomy Scorecard	Previous score (2017)	Current score (2023)
EUA Autonomy Scorecard	70%	69,75%
Organisational autonomy	61%	59%
Financial autonomy	56%	56%
Staffing autonomy	97%	97%
Academic autonomy	66%	67%

Source: Pruvot & Estermann (2017), Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze (2023)

Legend: The general score for institutional autonomy is an index represent percentages ranging from 0 to 100%. Following the calculations by Maassen et al. (2023), the first row of the table provides an average score for the 4 autonomy dimensions that is not available in the original EUA report. Grey coloured indicators indicate no change in score compared to the previous edition. With pink we have highlighted the indicators where we see a downward change compared to the previous edition, with green we have highlighted the indicators where we see an upward change compared to the previous edition. The indicated change refers to the direction of change and is not necessarily statistically significant.

Overall, Sweden scores in the lower half of the top on institutional autonomy compared to other EU countries⁸⁵. The EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV suggests that institutional autonomy is very slightly decreasing in Sweden. The scores suggest that over time Sweden is doing slightly worse on academic autonomy.

Legal protection of academic freedom

When assessing *de jure* protections of academic freedom, Beiter et al. (2016) provided Sweden with an overall legal protection score of 39,5 F. The score for Sweden is lower than the average for all EU Member States is 52,79 D. The number represents a percentage on a 0% to 100 % scale, the letter provides a grouping of countries from A to F where A are the country with most overall legal protection of academic freedom and F with the least.

According to the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard IV (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023) provisions related to academic freedom are included in both Sweden's constitution and higher education act. The Swedish constitution refers to the freedom of research protected according to the rules of the law (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023). In addition, the higher education act stipulates that "higher education institutions must operate under the general principle that academic freedom must be promoted and protected" (Pruvot, Estermann & Popkhadze, 2023, p.115).

⁸⁵ See Appendix 2 of this report.

3.27.3. Scholars at Risk

In this section, we present any qualitative country reports of academic freedom threats, infringements or violations from the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project published in 2022 and 2023⁸⁶. These sources of data were described in chapter 2 of this report.

Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project reports no threats, infringements, or violations of academic freedom in Sweden in the period January 2022 - July 2023.

3.27.4. References

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⁸⁶ The database was searched for entries from January 2022 to July 2023.

4. Developments of academic freedom in the EU

The aim of the monitor is to capture and synthesise signals about the development of academic freedom in Europe and contribute to a better understanding of the threats to academic freedom in the EU Member States. The country reports bring together a range of different academic freedom and institutional autonomy measurement as well as reports of hard repression of academic freedom from Scholars at Risk reports. Based on this, in this chapter we provide a general comparative overview of academic freedom in the EU Member States, discuss the current state of affairs of different aspects of academic freedom, as well as reflect on the situation of the supporting conditions of academic freedom.

4.1. State of play of academic freedom in the EU according to Academic Freedom Index

The Academic Freedom Index is based on five core dimensions of academic freedom: freedom to research and teach, freedom of academic exchange and dissemination, campus integrity, freedom of academic and cultural expression, and institutional autonomy. We discuss in this section the general AFI score and four of the underlying indicators⁸⁷. Table 4.1 lists the EU Member States on their latest general AFI score. As is to be generally expected, the overall average level of academic freedom for two consecutive years is generally stable. Yet, looking at developments in the underlying indicators over the last decade reveals a more nuanced picture.

Table 4.1 Academic Freedom in EU Member states according to the AFI general score

Country	AFI-General Score (2023)	Country	AFI-General Score (2023)	Country	AFI-General Score (2023)
Czechia	0,98	Slovenia	0,93	Austria	0,88
Belgium	0,97	Cyprus	0,92	Malta	0,88
Estonia	0,97	Lithuania	0,92	Romania	0,88
Germany	0,96	Portugal	0,92	Croatia	0,86
Italy	0,96	Denmark	0,91	Bulgaria	0,85
Finland	0,95	France	0,91	Netherlands	0,82
Latvia	0,95	Ireland	0,91	Greece	0,77
Luxembourg	0,95			Poland	0,74
Slovakia	0,95	EU-Average	0,89	Hungary	0,34
Spain	0,94				
Sweden	0,94				

In terms of developments, the first eighteen countries in Table 4.1 have an above EU average score for general academic freedom. Yet, some of these countries still show a significant change in a specific dimension of academic freedom in the last decade. According to the AFI, in Italy the freedom of academic and cultural expression decreased significantly between 2012-2022. For Lithuania a

⁸⁷ In the model used for this monitor, the underlying aspect of institutional autonomy, is considered as a supporting condition for academic freedom and will be discussed in Section 4.2.

significant decline in the freedom of academic and cultural expression and for Portugal a significant decrease in institutional autonomy and freedom of academic and cultural expression was measured by the AFI over the last decade.

Nine EU Member States have a below EU-average score for general academic freedom according to the AFI. These are Austria, Malta, Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Greece, and Poland. In most of these countries the situation of academic freedom has decreased compared to the previous year, only in Romania there is no significant change in the academic freedom scores. In Austria and Poland, the general academic freedom score decreased. In other countries in this group specific dimensions of academic freedom have decreased: in Bulgaria the freedom of academic exchange and dissemination, in Malta the freedom to research and teach, in Croatia and Greece the freedom of academic and cultural expression, and in the Netherlands campus integrity and the freedom of academic exchange and dissemination decreased.

Finally, the monitor confirms Hungary to have a specific position, characterised by a very low score on the general academic freedom index and on all of the underlying aspects of academic freedom covered in AFI. In the last decade the situation seems to have become worse considering the significant and substantial decrease reported between 2012-2022 in the general academic freedom, the freedom to research and teach, the institutional autonomy, and the freedom of academic and cultural expression.

As mentioned, the AFI distinguishes different aspects of academic freedom. The freedom to research and teach indicates to what extent scholars are free to develop and pursue their own research and teaching agendas without interference. The average score for the EU for this freedom decreased with 0.05 compared to last years' AFI. In only three Member States it improved with more than 0.1 and in nine it declined with more than -0.1. The countries in which the freedom to research and teach rose are in order of growth Portugal (+0.31), Czechia (+0.27), Estonia (+0.25). The countries in which it fell are in order of decrease: Malta (-0.66), Austria (-0.4), Bulgaria (-0.32), Croatia (-0.26), Latvia (-0.21), Poland (-0.17), Lithuania (-0.15), Romania (-0.11) and the Netherlands (-0.1). Four countries show such a decline at a significant level over the longer period of 2012-2022, which are Poland (-0.92), Malta (-0.65), Hungary (-0.64) and Austria (-0.56).

The freedom of academic exchange and dissemination refers to the extent that scholars are free to exchange and communicate research ideas and findings. The average score of the EU member states for this freedom remained stable. However, in three member states the score improved with more than 0.1, while it declined in three others compared to the previous AFI results. The Member States that showed an improvement are Czechia (+0.34), France (+0.31) and Croatia (+0.15). The three member states where the level of this freedom declined recently with more than 0.1 are Austria (-0.39), the Netherlands (-0.32) and Slovakia (-0.28). Over the longer period of 2012-2022, the freedom of academic exchange and dissemination declined significantly in the Netherlands (-0.53), Austria (-0.52) and in Bulgaria (-0.45). In addition to these scores, there are signals from experts and stakeholders that this freedom is also under pressure in other EU Member States, for example, in relation to international military and economic conflicts, which can result in bans and restrictions on scientific collaboration and exchange.

The third aspect, campus integrity, refers to the extent that campuses are free from politically motivated surveillance or security infringements. Compared to the previous monitor results, the average score for the EU remained stable. In one member state the campus integrity improved with more than 0.1, which is Belgium (+0.24). In three countries the level of campus integrity fell: the Netherlands (-0.3), Austria (-0.26) and Denmark (-0.14). Over the ten-year period 2012-2022 the AFI reports significant decline of campus integrity in the Netherlands (-0.52) and Poland (-0.52).

The fourth aspect is the freedom of academic and cultural expression in relation to political issues. Again, the average score for the EU is stable compared by last year's AFI. However, in four member

states the level of freedom of expression increased and in three member states the score declined more than 0.1 points. The countries where it improved include Bulgaria (+0.75), Czechia (+0.49), Slovenia (+0.4) and Belgium (+0.29). The freedom of academic and cultural expression declined in Romania (-0.42), Italy (-0.23) and Croatia (-0.11). Over the longer period of 2012-2022, significant decrease of the freedom of academic and cultural expression was witnessed in Poland (-1.5), Hungary (-1.36), Greece (-0.95), Italy (-0.7), Lithuania (-0.64) and Portugal (-0.31).

The overall conclusion of the above analysis is that while on average academic freedom is stable, in a third of the member states the level of academic freedom is below the EU-average and not improving. On the contrary, all member states in the below average group witness a decrease on certain scores compared with the previous year's AFI, or over the longer period of 2012-2022. Especially the freedom of academic exchange and dissemination as well as the freedom to research and teach seem to be vulnerable. If we compare scores of this year with those of last year, we see a decrease in the average score for Member States on these two freedoms. More specifically, in nine countries the freedom to research and teach seems to have decreased, while the long-term trends in academic freedom show for quite some countries a significant decrease in the freedom of academic and cultural expression. For the freedom of academic exchange and disseminations the evidence from the AFI is less strong, but experts and stakeholders warn about restrictions on international exchange and communication because of military and economic conflicts. Experts and stakeholders have also signalled that the existing measurements of academic freedom do not cover sufficiently the academic freedom of students.

4.2. Conditions for academic freedom.

Academic freedom is not absolute and can only be realised within supportive framework conditions. The monitor focuses especially on governance mechanisms for higher education and research and on the broader social, political, and economic conditions in which higher education and scientific research are embedded. These include the legal framework for academic freedom and the institutional autonomy, self-governance by the academic community (staff and students), labour conditions, and financial conditions.

4.2.1. Legal framework

In many European countries academic freedom is protected through judicial decisions or codified in the constitution or in the laws on higher education, and is providing a legal ground for the design of the governance structures. For the monitor there is currently no systematic measurement of the extent by which the law protects academic freedom in the Member States, except for the analysis of Beiter et al. (2016). The analysis shows that for three countries at the time of the analysis (2016) the legal framework for academic freedom was weak, while according to the pilot study (Maassen et al., 2023) *de facto* academic freedom is at high or moderate level, namely in Estonia, Sweden, and Denmark.

The analysis by Beiter et al. (2016) distinguishes five ways how academic freedom can be legally protected. At the time of the analysis the most used legal instrument to strengthen academic freedom is the protection in the constitution and international agreements. Ireland and Malta made the least use of this form of protection. The second instrument in order of use is the settlement of academic freedom in legislation, which is relatively weak in Estonia, Sweden, Slovenia, Denmark, Malta, Greece, and Hungary.

Two aspects look at to what extent legislation settles governance mechanisms that support academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and self-governance. Of these two the institutional autonomy is weakly settled in Sweden, France, Greece and Hungary and the self-governance is weakly settled in Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Lithuania, Denmark, Ireland, Malta, and the Netherlands, according to the analysis by Beiter et al. (2016).

Of specific interest is the extent to which academic freedom of members of the academic profession is protected through job security. This aspect of the legal protection framework is on average weak in the EU and specifically in Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Finland, and Slovakia - all countries with a relatively high level of *de facto* academic freedom. Expert feedback highlights this aspect as a critical one for the relation between institutional autonomy and academic freedom. Institutional autonomy might, for example, strengthen the position of university leadership in labour relations, which might imply in certain circumstances a restriction of academic freedom of the academic staff.

4.2.2. Institutional autonomy

Institutional autonomy is considered as an important condition for academic freedom. The development of institutional autonomy is covered in the synthesis in three ways: first, the results of the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard (which includes a general score and four aspects of institutional autonomy); second, institutional autonomy is covered as an aspect in the AFI; and thirdly, the legal analysis of Beiter et al. (2016) indicates legal protections of institutional autonomy in higher education legislation. In this sub-section we first discuss the developments of institutional autonomy at the general level as measured by the EUA scorecard, and then we discuss the underlying aspects of institutional autonomy.

Table 4.2 presents the countries for which the EUA has measured the institutional autonomy in its report for 2023 (Puvot, Estermann and Popkhadze, 2023) and lists the changes in the general institutional autonomy since 2017. On average, the level of institutional autonomy has slightly decreased, mainly due to a considerable decline in Croatia (-10.75%) which had and still has the lowest measured level of institutional autonomy, and in Estonia (-4.5%) which nevertheless still has the highest measured level for institutional autonomy and smaller declines in Denmark (-2.5%), Flanders (-0.5%) and Sweden (-0.25%). In thirteen Member States institutional autonomy was strengthened. The AFI also shows a slight decrease in institutional autonomy compared to the year before. Over the period of 2012-2022 AFI results indicate a significant decline for Portugal (-0.7), Poland (-1.0) and France (-1.5) in institutional autonomy.

Country	EUA University Autonomy Scorecard (2023)	Change 2017 - 2023	Country	EUA University Autonomy Scorecard (2023)	Change 2017 - 2023
Estonia	86,25%	-4.5%	Sweden	69,75%	-0.25%
Finland	85,5%	-	Romania	68,5%	-
Luxembourg	79%	+2%	Germany - Hessen	65,75%	-
Denmark	78,5%	-2.5%	Germany - North Rhine- Westphalia	65,5%	-
Latvia	75,75%	+5,25%	<i>EU average</i>	65.4%	-1.4%
Austria	75,25%	+5,25%	Slovakia	62,5%	+5,25%
Czechia	73,25%	-	Germany - Brandenburg	61,75%	-
Belgium - Flanders	72,5%	-0.5%	Italy	60%	+1,25%
The Netherlands	71,75%	+5%	Slovenia	55%	+2.5%
Poland	71,5%	+3,25%	Spain	54,25%	-

Lithuania	71,25%	+2,75%	France	46,75% ^x	+0.02%
Ireland	71%	+4%	Croatia	41,5%	-10.75%
Belgium - Wallonia	70,75%	+1.75%	Cyprus	39%	-
Portugal	70%	+3.5%	Greece	33,5%	-

Further analysis of the underlying aspects of institutional autonomy reveals further signals that while these aspects are rather stable on average, for specific Members States the situation on institutional autonomy is getting worse on specific aspects.

- The organisational autonomy refers to the organisational structure, internal governance and selection of senior management. This aspect of institutional autonomy has declined in five countries: Estonia (-15%), Denmark (-7%), Slovenia (-6%), Sweden (-2%), France (-2%).
- The EU average financial autonomy, that is autonomy in financial and asset management, of universities in the Member States declined with -5.5%, due to decreases in Luxembourg (-16%), Croatia (-14%) and the Netherlands (-11%).
- Staffing autonomy refers to freedom in human resources policy, such as remuneration, hiring and dismissal of senior academics and administrators. Its average score remained stable but declined considerably in Croatia (-25%).
- The academic autonomy regarding the autonomy to decide on programme and research profile, quality assurance, student admission also was stable, though it did decline in four countries, namely Croatia (-4%), Denmark (-3%), the Netherlands (-2%) and Estonia (-3%). The academic autonomy in legislation is very low compared to the average level of 45.5, in Hungary (12.5), Greece (22.5), and Sweden (32.5).

The overall conclusion for the development in institutional autonomy is that at EU level institutional autonomy is on average stable. Slight improvements are visible for quite a number of countries, but hardly in countries with a low level of institutional autonomy. Of concern is the considerable decrease of institutional autonomy in Croatia. Member states that show a decline on several dimensions of institutional autonomy include the Netherlands, and Denmark.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Academic Freedom in EU Member States according to the Academic Freedom Index (2023)

Country	AFI-General Score (2023)
<i>Austria</i>	0,88
<i>Belgium</i>	0,97
<i>Bulgaria</i>	0,85
<i>Croatia</i>	0,86
<i>Cyprus</i>	0,92
<i>Czechia</i>	0,98
<i>Denmark</i>	0,91
<i>Estonia</i>	0,97
<i>Finland</i>	0,95
<i>France</i>	0,91
<i>Germany</i>	0,96
<i>Greece</i>	0,77
<i>Hungary</i>	0,34
<i>Ireland</i>	0,91
<i>Italy</i>	0,96
<i>Latvia</i>	0,95
<i>Lithuania</i>	0,92
<i>Luxembourg</i>	0,95
<i>Malta</i>	0,88
<i>The Netherlands</i>	0,82
<i>Poland</i>	0,74
<i>Portugal</i>	0,92
<i>Romania</i>	0,88
<i>Slovakia</i>	0,95
<i>Slovenia</i>	0,93
<i>Spain</i>	0,94
<i>Sweden</i>	0,94

Country	AFI-General Score (2023)
<i>Czechia</i>	0,98
<i>Belgium</i>	0,97
<i>Estonia</i>	0,97
<i>Germany</i>	0,96
<i>Italy</i>	0,96
<i>Finland</i>	0,95
<i>Latvia</i>	0,95
<i>Luxembourg</i>	0,95
<i>Slovakia</i>	0,95
<i>Spain</i>	0,94
<i>Sweden</i>	0,94
<i>Slovenia</i>	0,93
<i>Cyprus</i>	0,92
<i>Lithuania</i>	0,92
<i>Portugal</i>	0,92
<i>Denmark</i>	0,91
<i>France</i>	0,91
<i>Ireland</i>	0,91
<i>Austria</i>	0,88
<i>Malta</i>	0,88
<i>Romania</i>	0,88
<i>Croatia</i>	0,86
<i>Bulgaria</i>	0,85
<i>The Netherlands</i>	0,82
<i>Greece</i>	0,77
<i>Poland</i>	0,74
<i>Hungary</i>	0,34

Annex 2: Institutional Autonomy in EU Member States according to the EUA Autonomy Scorecard IV (2023)

Country	EUA Autonomy Scorecard IV (2023)
<i>Austria</i>	75,25%
<i>Belgium - Flanders</i>	72,5%
<i>Belgium - Wallonia</i>	70,75%
<i>Bulgaria</i>	n/a
<i>Croatia</i>	41,5%
<i>Cyprus</i>	39%
<i>Czechia</i>	73,25%
<i>Denmark</i>	78,5%
<i>Estonia</i>	86,25%
<i>Finland</i>	85,5%
<i>France</i>	46,75%
<i>Germany - Brandenburg</i>	61,75%
<i>Germany - Hessen</i>	65,75%
<i>Germany - North Rhine-Westphalia</i>	65,5%
<i>Greece</i>	33,5%
<i>Hungary</i>	separate report
<i>Ireland</i>	71%
<i>Italy</i>	60%
<i>Latvia</i>	75,75%
<i>Lithuania</i>	71,25%
<i>Luxembourg</i>	79%
<i>Malta</i>	n/a
<i>The Netherlands</i>	71,75%
<i>Poland</i>	71,5%
<i>Portugal</i>	70%
<i>Romania</i>	68,5%
<i>Slovakia</i>	62,5%
<i>Slovenia</i>	55%
<i>Spain</i>	54,25%
<i>Sweden</i>	69,75%

Country	EUA Autonomy Scorecard IV (2023)
<i>Estonia</i>	86,25%
<i>Finland</i>	85,5%
<i>Luxembourg</i>	79%
<i>Denmark</i>	78,5%
<i>Latvia</i>	75,75%
<i>Austria</i>	75,25%
<i>Czechia</i>	73,25%
<i>Belgium - Flanders</i>	72,5%
<i>The Netherlands</i>	71,75%
<i>Poland</i>	71,5%
<i>Lithuania</i>	71,25%
<i>Ireland</i>	71%
<i>Belgium - Wallonia</i>	70,75%
<i>Portugal</i>	70%
<i>Sweden</i>	69,75%
<i>Romania</i>	68,5%
<i>Germany - Hessen</i>	65,75%
<i>Germany - North Rhine-Westphalia</i>	65,5%
<i>Slovakia</i>	62,5%
<i>Germany - Brandenburg</i>	61,75%
<i>Italy</i>	60%
<i>Slovenia</i>	55%
<i>Spain</i>	54,25%
<i>France</i>	46,75%
<i>Croatia</i>	41,5%
<i>Cyprus</i>	39%
<i>Greece</i>	33,5%

Part 3: Latest trends analysis

Executive summary

Academic freedom is a pillar of open and democratic societies, and the very foundation for high quality academic education and research. This study provides an analysis of recent trends in the area of academic freedom in selected EU Member States. This “Latest trends analysis” study is undertaken at the request of the European Parliament's Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA Panel), in the framework of its initiative to establish an authoritative platform to monitor academic freedom in the EU Member States – the EP Academic Freedom Monitor. The 2023 edition of the Monitor is based on two complementary studies: a synthesis report that combines various, mainly quantitative, indexes and data sources to examine the state of academic freedom in Europe (“The synthesis report” presented in Part 2 of this report), and this study, “Latest trends analysis,” which qualitatively examines the state of academic freedom in ten EU Member States.

This study provides a trend analysis of *de facto* academic freedom in the European Union based on an examination of recent developments in ten European Union Member States. The Member States examined are Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Romania. This study has updated, elaborated, and systematised the main recent trends with respect to academic freedom in ten EU Member States as presented in the pilot study (Maassen et al. 2023). Exploring the different dimensions of potential threats to academic freedom, a rather varied picture emerges across the selected countries. Systemic and structural infringements of academic freedom have only been identified in Hungary. At the same time, in most of the other EU Member States covered in the study, there are increasing worries about a deterioration of *de facto* academic freedom, with threats argued to come from various sides at the same time.

In most EU Member States, there are concerns about undue interference from the government and politics in academic freedom. In some cases, these represent direct attacks on academic freedom, for example, in the form of using political-ideological arguments for discontinuing public funding of research and/or teaching in certain academic areas. In other cases, the interference is more indirect and consists of introducing far-reaching changes in the public funding of academic activities or controlling the appointment of university leaders.

Another possible source for threats to academic freedom is formed by institutional leadership and management, who are responsible for protecting academic freedom in principle. The report refers to cases where institutional leadership has made decisions leading to shifts in the balance between strategic priorities and protecting academic freedom, resulting in an erosion of the latter. Furthermore, there are various examples of worrying trends around personnel policies, including the firing of tenured academic staff and the abuse of temporary positions, as well as in the disallowance of academic activities that were deemed to be controversial.

In some EU Member States, specific actions of academic staff and students are also regarded as a potential threat to academic freedom. While academic debates, tensions, disagreements, and conflicts do not form a threat to academic freedom in themselves, attempts to silence specific strands of research, teaching or expression can result in undue threats to, or even violations of, academic freedom.

Furthermore, threats and attacks by civil society actors on individual academics or academic groups, especially through social media, have grown in most EU Member States. This form of pressure from civil groups can result in academic self-censorship, which is a serious threat to academic freedom. In addition, the impact of private sector actors on academic freedom remains an issue in several EU Member States. A key element in this concerns the role of private funding, especially of research. To maintain research activities in EU Member States with decreasing levels of public funding, researchers need to obtain a higher degree of funding from private sources. While this can lead to productive collaborations between academia and the private sector and is not a problem per se, the study identified some cases of undue interference of private funders in internal academic affairs.

Finally, an emerging issue is how security concerns in international collaborations might affect academic freedom. This coincides with worries about the threat of foreign interferences in academia in EU Member States.

Policy options based on this study are presented jointly with the Synthesis study in the Part 1 of this report.

1. Introduction

This study provides a trend analysis of *de facto* academic freedom in the European Union based on an examination of recent developments in ten European Union Member States. These Member States are Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Romania.

A starting point for the study is that academic freedom is a necessary condition for the academic sector to operate as optimally as possible. Academic freedom is a pillar of open and democratic societies, and the very foundation for high quality academic education and research. After several decades of reforms that focused on changing structural features of national higher education systems, including system organisation, institutional governance structures, public funding mechanisms, the structure of academic degrees and study programmes, and quality assurance and accreditation (see, for example, de Boer & Maassen, 2020; Jongbloed & Vossensteyn, 2001; Paradeise, Bleiklie, et al., 2009), key actors at the European and national level have come to the conclusion that academic freedom has been taken too much for granted during these reforms.

While the importance of academic freedom is generally acknowledged throughout the EU, with some form of legal protection in place either in the national constitution or in specific higher education laws, several studies and debates suggest that academic freedom is increasingly under pressure in academic practices, also in the EU Member States (see, Maassen et al., 2023). To contribute to a better understanding of the current threats to academic freedom and to prevent a possible further deterioration of academic freedom, both the European Commission and the European Parliament have initiated activities to monitor academic freedom in Europe.

This “Latest trends analysis” study is undertaken at the request of the European Parliament’s Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA Panel), in the framework of its initiative to establish an authoritative platform to monitor academic freedom in the EU Member States – the EP Academic Freedom Monitor. The 2023 edition of the Monitor is based on two complementary studies: a synthesis analysis that combines various, mainly quantitative, indexes and data sources to examine the state of academic freedom in Europe (“The synthesis study” presented in Part 2 of this report), and this study, “Latest trends analysis,” which qualitatively examines the state of academic freedom in ten EU Member States. Both methodologically and conceptually, this study builds on a pilot study which examined the *de facto* state of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States and was conducted in 2022 (Maassen et al. 2023). The pilot study indicated that academic freedom is, in a number of respects, eroding in the EU Member States. During the last decade, different signals about the deterioration of academic freedom were identified, but the pilot study also emphasised that there is a need for better evidence and data, in order to make a more robust interpretation of where the protection of academic freedom needs to be enhanced and what are possible policy options for achieving this enhancement. In the study presented in this part of the report, the methodology developed in the pilot study is applied. The study aims at taking the initial findings a step further, by focusing in more detail on the situation in the ten selected EU Member States.

In terms of *de jure* protection of academic freedom, references to academic freedom can be found at various sources. Academic freedom is a right recognised by the EU in Article 13 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000/C 364/01): “Freedom of the arts and sciences. The arts and scientific research shall be free of constraint. Academic freedom shall be respected.” Most countries globally indicate commitment to academic freedom in some form, having in place some form of legal protections for academic freedom (see, e.g. Karran, 2007). Many higher education institutions have provisions protecting the academic freedom of the members of their academic community in their internal regulations or by-laws. Even if there is legal protection of academic freedom, there may remain a lack of agreement on what kind of activities are included, and what

kind of individuals are covered by this freedom. That indicates that current *de jure* provisions alone do not guarantee that academic freedom is respected and protected in practice.

Examining the *de facto* situation, *on a global scale*, the state of play of academic freedom in the European Union appears to be in a relatively positive place. For example, in the latest version of the global monitor Academic Freedom Index (AFI)⁸⁸, most EU Member States are among the best performing countries. In the group of ten countries with the highest score in the index, eight are EU Member States. Furthermore, there are no EU Member States in the group of lowest scoring countries in the AFI. Importantly, as these kinds of global measures cover a very broad set of different country contexts, a global monitor such as the AFI will therefore mask nuances among the well performing countries, such as most of the EU Member States. While academic freedom may not be under serious, continuous, and direct threat in these countries, gradual processes of erosion can nevertheless contribute to a long-term deterioration of *de facto* academic freedom.

Table 1.1. Overview of EU Member States in Academic Freedom Index

Academic freedom index 2023	EU Member States
Top 10%	Czech Republic, Estonia, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, Latvia, Finland, Slovakia, Sweden, Spain, Slovenia
Top 10-20%	Portugal, Lithuania, Cyprus, France, Denmark, Ireland
Top 20-30%	Austria, Malta, Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria
Top 30-40%	the Netherlands
Top 40-50%	Greece, Poland
Bottom 40-50%	-
Bottom 30-40%	-
Bottom 20-30%	Hungary
Bottom 10-20%	-
Bottom 10%	-

Definitions and degrees of specification concerning academic freedom remain varied (Altbach, 2001; Karran, 2007; Stachowiak-Kudła, 2021). This study takes a point of departure in the definition and conceptualisation provided by the pilot study, *“State of play of academic freedom in the EU member states: Overview of de facto trends and developments”* (Maassen et al., 2023). The definition developed in the pilot study is built on the work by academic scholars, such as Beaud (2022), and definitions in the Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research and the Rome Ministerial Communiqué of the European Higher Education Area. The pilot study defined that the essence of academic freedom consists of the triptych of the freedom of research, the freedom of teaching and studying, and the freedom of academic expression. There is general agreement on the importance of these three essential components. In addition to these, recent debates about academic freedom also bring up a range of other dimensions, including institutional autonomy, academic labour conditions, financial freedom, and self-governance within higher education institutions. While these also represent important elements in discussions on academic freedom, the pilot study argued for the necessity of distinguishing between the essential elements of academic freedom (the triptych) and the conditions that enable the exercise of these freedoms as optimally as possible.

⁸⁸ The Academic Freedom index is produced by a team of researchers from FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany and the V-Dem institute in Gothenburg, Sweden. It is based on expert-based data on five indicators: freedom to research and teach; freedom of academic exchange and dissemination; institutional autonomy; campus integrity; and freedom of academic and cultural expression.

Key findings from the pilot study (Maassen et al., 2023) suggest that despite acknowledgement of academic freedom as a basic value and principle for the operation of academia, there are clear indications about the erosion of *de facto* academic freedom in EU Member States: “*there are legitimate worries about the state of play of academic freedom in the EU member states*” (p. II). The report specifically highlights developments contributing to this erosion, such as the overall transformations of societies and the socio-economic role of knowledge production, changes in the political landscape, and the emergence and intensifying use of social media. The report argues that while higher education systems in Europe have been undergoing significant reform processes concerning governance, funding and organisation, the consequences of these reforms for academic freedom have received less attention.

The pilot study emphasised the following main threats to *de facto* academic freedom in Europe: a) political interference in determining which academic fields and areas are scientific and which not; governmental interference threatening institutional autonomy; b) threats to academic freedom from institutional leadership and management; c) growing threats to academic freedom from civil society; d) growing threats to academics freedom from the private sector; and e) threats to academic freedom emerging from internal academic conflicts and tensions (pp. 172-175). While the report identified a number of incidents where violations of academic freedom have been observed, structural *de facto* infringements of academic freedom were only identified in one country, Hungary. A more detailed definition and framework adopted in this study is provided in Chapter 2 of this report.

1.1. Objectives of this study

This report provides a review of the state of *de facto* academic freedom in ten selected EU Member States. This implies that the report presents an overview of the main public debates on academic freedom in the selected countries, based on desk research and expert feedback to produce a narrative description of recent developments in these EU Member States. This overview consists of an update and extension of the overview presented in the pilot study (Maassen et al. 2023). The findings for each country are organised according to factors (potentially) threatening the *de facto* state of play. It identifies tensions and areas where there are gaps and where more action is needed, highlighting countries where the academic freedom situation needs to be mostly urgently addressed, in order to be followed up with appropriate measures at the national and possibly European level. Based on the findings, the study proposes and assesses policy options for EU-level legislation and initiatives, to help enhance the protection of academic freedom in the European Union. These policy options are presented jointly with the Synthesis report in the Part 1 of this report.

1.2. Report outline

This chapter provides a general introduction to the latest trends report, and a summary of the state of play of academic freedom in Europe. Chapter 2 will present in greater detail the design of this study. This includes a definition of academic freedom employed in this study, an outline of the five main sources for threats that are used as an analytical perspective for organising the findings in the country cases, as well as the methodological approach to this study. The chapter also discusses the limitations of this methodology. Next, in Chapter 3, a synthesis of the empirical findings is provided. The report concludes with a chapter that includes the ten country reports. The policy options developed based on the analysis are presented jointly with the Synthesis report in Part 1 of this report.

2. Study design and methodology

This study was designed to examine current trends concerning academic freedom in ten EU Member States. The study is conducted as desk research combined with various forms of expert inputs and interactions with academic stakeholders. We start this chapter by providing the definition of academic freedom employed in this report, followed by a brief description of the five sources of threats to academic freedom that are used as an analytical perspective for the country cases. After this, the specific methodological design aspects are presented, including limitations.

2.1. Definition and contextualisation of academic freedom

While academic freedom is generally acknowledged as a basic value and principle in higher education, there is no globally agreed upon definition of academic freedom. Consequently, there remain variations in whether academic freedom is defined in a narrow manner, that is, interpreting it as an individual right of members of the academic profession, or more broadly that is, by also including students and administrative staff, and identifying institutional aspects as key components of academic freedom.

The pilot studies for the STOA Panel conducted in 2022 (Kováts & Rónay, 2023; Maassen et al., 2023), identified key dimensions that allow for an examination and discussion of the current state of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States. The definitions also relate to the Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research and the Rome Ministerial Communiqué of the European Higher Education Area. Building especially on the Rome Communiqué, as well as scholarly work on the area of academic freedom (Beaud, 2022), Maassen et al. (2023) take a starting point in two main considerations that frame the definition of academic freedom.

- First, academic freedom is an *individual* freedom – whether granted to members of the academic profession, or also including students and administrative staff.
- Second, academic freedom does not exist in a vacuum, it operates *within a specific institutional setting – the university* (or more broadly, higher education institutions and research institutes)⁸⁹.

This institutional embeddedness means that the institution of the university has a principal responsibility for safeguarding the optimal exercise of academic freedom, and the exercise of academic freedom is intrinsically placed within universities (Beaud 2022). It is also important to keep in mind that academic freedom is never absolute, it is contextually bound. There are legitimate constraints on academic freedom, provided by research ethics and integrity guidelines, or specific directives, laws and regulations. Such guidelines evolve over time, for example, what may have been considered acceptable medical or social science research decades ago, might not be considered acceptable now, and the other way around. While the case of changing boundaries for acceptable medical research may seem obvious, there are other areas where the boundaries would be more contested and subject for negotiation. Academic freedom may also collide with other rights and freedoms⁹⁰. As societies evolve and develop, new expectations emerge which may warrant a need to re-negotiate the scope of academic freedom and an appropriate, generally accepted definition.

⁸⁹ The question of the scope of academic freedom is a definitional question and both more broad and narrow definitions exist. For more elaborate discussion, consult the pilot study: Maassen, P., Martinsen, D., Elken, M., Jungblut, J., & Lackner, E. (2023). *State of play of academic freedom in the EU member states - Overview of de facto trends and developments*.

⁹⁰ For an analysis of how constitutional courts resolve conflicts of rights by using the principle of proportionality to justify limitations of academic freedom, see Stachowiak-Kudła (2021), who researched this issue by checking how the courts

Nevertheless, there is a core to academic freedom – the so-called triptych – with respect to which there is considerable agreement, referring to the central dimensions of academic freedom. These were also outlined in the joint first chapter of the monitor, and include (from Maassen et al 2023):

- **Freedom to research** is the freedom of each individual academic staff member to develop and follow his/her own research agenda without any undue political, administrative, religious, economic, social, cultural, or academic infringements. The freedom referred to here is not absolute, but has to be exercised within the generally accepted framework conditions for academic freedom.
- **Freedom to teach and freedom to study** is the freedom of individual academic staff to develop and follow their own teaching agendas and aspirations, and the freedom of students to develop and follow their own study preferences without any undue political, administrative, religious, economic, social, cultural, or academic infringements. The freedom referred to here is not absolute, but has to be exercised within the generally accepted framework conditions for academic freedom.
- **Freedom of academic expression** is the freedom of academic staff and students to express themselves on the basis of their academic area of expertise or field of study within their institution and the wider academic community on academic and/or governance matters, without any undue internal or external pressures or risks of being punished. In addition, it concerns the freedom of academic staff to publish, disseminate and exchange research findings through academic journals and other outlets without any internal or external infringements, violations, threats or pressures.

These are further embedded in what the pilot study referred to as the conditions for academic freedom. These have to do with the specific institutional characteristics of the setting – the university – and specific practical conditions in which individual academics positions are embedded. The pilot study identified four conditions for academic freedom and operationalised these in the following manner (from Maassen et al 2023):

- **Institutional autonomy** concerns the room to manoeuvre that higher education institutions have to manage their own internal academic and administrative affairs without undue external interference. The interference referred to here can be political/legal, religious, economic, social, or cultural, and affect the procedural and/or substantive autonomy of higher education institutions.
- **Self-governance** concerns the right of academic staff and students to be involved in the institutional governance and decision-making with respect to academic affairs. Self-governance is also referred to as the right of academic staff and students to co-determine academic affairs.
- **Labour conditions** concerns the extent to which the labour conditions of academic staff provide the conditions under which all members of the academic community can exercise their academic freedom without fear of losing their job (tenured staff), or their contract not being renewed, or of access to a tenured position being jeopardised (non-tenured staff).
- **Financial conditions** concern the extent to which funding conditions for teaching or research have an impact on the freedom of the academic staff to develop and follow their own teaching and research agendas, and the freedom of students to develop and follow their own study preferences, that goes beyond what are regarded as valid and legitimate framework conditions.

consider the three elements of the proportionality principle *sensu largo* (suitability, necessity, and proportionality in narrow sense) in cases where academic freedom collided with other constitutional rights, such as the right to privacy or the right of religious communities to self-determination.

While these are important conditions for the exercise of academic freedom, one should not view the relationship between the conditions and the central dimensions of academic freedom as simple and linear where improvement on any individual condition would necessarily lead to an equivalent improvement of all the central dimensions of academic freedom. Instead, they point to academic freedom being exercised in a specific institutional context – the university, and, if the institutional conditions for how universities operate change substantively, this has consequences for the exercise of academic freedom. For each of those conditions, several trends can be identified, which point to certain reform ideas that have gained prominence. Moreover, they also point to important relationships between the various conditions, as they do not operate in a vacuum from each other but point to more fundamental changes in how academic institutions are governed, how academic staff is viewed, and how academic freedom may be understood in this context.

On an overarching level, since the 1990s, the governance of higher education in Europe has gone through significant changes. Institutional autonomy has been one of the central elements of recent governance reform trends in many European countries (Maassen, et al. 2017). An underlying assumption for such reform ideology has been that increased complexity requires enhancement of autonomy, flexibility and more professional management (Olsen, 2009). Nevertheless, while institutional autonomy has been an important cornerstone of reform trends in Europe, there is no agreed upon European model for university autonomy reforms, and substantive national variations remain (Musselin, 2005; Paradeise, Reale, et al., 2009). Moreover, reform trajectories have also significant historical and political differences.

Overall, higher education and science reform trajectories demonstrate “*different speeds and in different directions*” among EU Member States (Dobbins & Knill, 2009; Scott, 2002). These nuances matter, as institutional autonomy is also inherently linked to the construction of a more professionalised executive function in universities, changing understanding of the university as an actor itself (Krücken & Meier, 2006), and the specific national variations in how reforms take place. Strengthened executive functions within universities can also have consequences for academic self-governance. In a number of countries, worries have been expressed over the deterioration of academic self-governance in the wake of a more managerial and professionally steered university (Shattock, 2014).

The financial conditions represent an important framework condition for academic freedom, but also academic work more generally. This concerns both the general degree of available funding, and how funding is being allocated and according to what kind of criteria. A general trend seems to be that there has been a shift from general lump-sum funding towards indicators, incentives, and performance (Lepori et al., 2007). As an example, the strong dependence on competitive external funding for conducting research can have important consequences for academic freedom – and raises questions of what is the appropriate balance between legitimate steering of research priorities (where funding may be decreased or increased for specific fields or research themes), and constraints that would constitute infringements of academic freedom (when funding for specific fields is being cut in a manner that makes it impossible to conduct research in that specific area).

Finally, labour conditions are an important element for academic staff to exercise their academic freedom. On a basic level, this concerns labour security and the extent to which academic staff can exercise their academic freedom. At the same time, there are also more indirect and complex relationships between academic labour conditions and academic freedom. In a context where the use of temporary positions is generally increasing in European higher education (Frølich et al., 2018, pp. 101-102), opportunities for academic freedom may be constrained, if not directly then at least indirectly, in that staff may opt out from specific kinds of research themes or critique to avoid losing an opportunity for career advancement.

Overall, the institutional context for academic work is changing, with important consequences for academic freedom in the sense of emerging threats to academic freedom and the extent to which these are addressed appropriately and effectively.

2.2. Five factors affecting academic freedom

The pilot study showed that there are developments in each Member State that have led to worries about and/or threats to one or more academic freedom dimensions. In addition, in some EU Member States, examples of serious violations of academic freedom were found, either as incidents, or, in the case of Hungary, in the form of structural violations. In the pilot study, the factors causing these worries, threats or violations were organised and defined as follows (from Maassen et al. 2023):

- **Government and politics:** the ways in which political actors, that is, public authorities and their agencies, and individual politicians, such as members of parliament and their parties, affect or want to affect the state of play of academic freedom in their country in such a way that it unduly limits the possibilities of academics and students to exercise their academic freedom optimally.
- **Institutional leadership and management:** the ways in which the leadership and management of higher education institutions affect, or want to affect, academic freedom in their institution in such a way that it unduly limits the possibilities of academics and students to exercise their academic freedom optimally. This category includes both formal academic institutional leaders, such as presidents, rectors, vice-chancellors, and deans, as well as institutional administrative leaders/managers, such as heads of administrative offices, and administrative procedures and routines.
- **The academic community:** the ways in which members of the academic staff and students affect, or want to affect, the state of play of academic freedom in their institution, or in higher education in general, in such a way that it unduly limits the possibilities of other academics and students to exercise their academic freedom optimally.
- **Civil society:** the ways in which individual citizens or groups of citizens affect or want to affect the state of play of academic freedom in their country (and sometimes beyond) in such a way that it unduly limits the possibilities of academics and students to exercise their academic freedom optimally. The use of social media plays a key role in this category.
- **Private sector:** the way in which private companies affect or want to affect the state of play of academic freedom in their country (and sometimes beyond) in such a way that it unduly limits the possibilities of academics and students to exercise their academic freedom optimally. This may stem from a strong reliance on private funding and the conditions this sets for the research being carried out. The use of both legal and financial instruments plays a key role in this category.

Each country report in this study provides an overview of the current worries and threats to, and if applicable violations of, academic freedom in the ten selected EU Member States, organised along the five categories of threats introduced above.

It is of relevance for this study to make a distinction between traditional and new threats to academic freedom in the EU Member States. The legal frameworks in place for protecting academic freedom are introduced with the aim to protect academic freedom from the threats that were identified at the time these legal frameworks were developed. This concerns in essence the external threats by politics and possibly other societal forces, such as religion, interest groups and industry, and foreign States.

In most countries, the legal protection of academic freedom does not cover the internal threats from institutional leadership and management or from the academic community itself. For this it was assumed that the academic community could take care itself of protecting academic freedom internally, especially through institutional regulations and procedures. However, in recent decades, higher education systems across Europe have been undergoing significant reforms which on the one hand have strengthened institutional autonomy, but also changed the conditions for academic freedom. These consequences have rarely been explicitly addressed in adaptations of the legal foundation for academic freedom. The reforms were aimed at the development of more executive leadership and management functions, the professionalisation of institutional administration, and the expectation of higher education institutions to operate as competitive actors.

In addition, academic debates within universities have in some areas become more polarised. While clashes of ideas are inherent to scholarly endeavour, there are also instances where conflicts become of a kind that render academic debate impossible, and in this manner can become a constraint on academic freedom. Examples of this can be when specific research themes or lecture topics are labelled as unscientific and therefore unacceptable. While it is legitimate to discuss scientific validity of findings or even dominant ideas in certain fields, it remains important that such conflicts are resolved within the academic community, through academic arguments and debates.

Furthermore, the nature of the impact of civil society and the private sector on academic freedom has changed because of the growing integration of the academic sector into society, and the increasing importance of academic knowledge for economic productivity and innovation in the private sector. In this, the use of social media by civil society actors to challenge the relevance of academic knowledge in social and political decisions, and the use of legal and financial instruments by private companies to control scientific knowledge production and silence critical academic voices, play a major role. In other contexts, it has been argued that there is an emerging 'anti-science' coalition in the US, forming an unprecedented threat to academic freedom, consisting of structured collaborations between extremist politicians, wealthy private sector actors, and civil groups, aimed at undermining the position of the science system in society⁹¹. While this study has not found indications of such coalitions rising in the EU Member States, it is of relevance to be aware of the factors responsible for such coalitions, and the ways in which they violate academic freedom. This will allow for the strengthening of legal protection of academic freedom in the EU aimed at preventing the kind of impact on academic freedom we can observe in the US. Finally, there is also a growing awareness of the possible impact of foreign interferences on academic freedom in the EU, and the need to strengthen the protection of institutions and academics against such interference.

The study will discuss the extent to which the emergence of new threats to academic freedom will require public authorities to seriously update and adapt the existing political and legal framework conditions for protecting academic freedom.

2.3. Methodological approach

The methodology in this study follows the one adopted in the pilot project, where an aim is to update, elaborate and further systematise the findings from the pilot project in ten selected countries.

⁹¹ See the interview in Times Higher Education with one of America's most eminent vaccine scientists, Peter Hotez about this coalition: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/peter-hotez-academics-cannot-defeat-anti-science-alone>

2.3.1. Selection of ten countries for the analysis

Two criteria have been used in the country case selection strategy.

- The selected countries should cover a range of positions in the Academic Freedom Index. As indicated in the findings of the pilot study, in countries with positive overall findings, threats and worries about academic freedom were also identified. For this reason, the selection does not only focus on countries which have the lowest score in AFI, as this allows the study to gain a more balanced and nuanced picture of the state of academic freedom in Europe.
- The countries should represent a reasonable geographical balance, where the selected countries include various geographical regions of Europe, new and old EU member states, as well as larger and smaller countries in the EU.

The EU Member States selected for inclusion in this study are: Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Romania. The selected countries cover a range of scores in the 2023 Academic Freedom Index⁹². This selection represents some skewness towards 'the top' in AFI, this is also indicative of the general performance of EU Member States (see also Chapter 1).

Table 2.1 Overview of the countries included in this study

Country	Academic freedom index	Geography
Austria	Top 20-30% world wide	Western Europe
Cyprus	Top 10-20% world wide	Southern Europe
Denmark	Top 10-20% world wide	Northern Europe
Estonia	Top 10% world wide	Eastern Europe
France	Top 10-20% world wide	Western Europe
Hungary	Bottom 20-30% world wide	Eastern Europe
The Netherlands	Top 30-40% world wide	Western Europe
Poland	Top 40-50% world wide	Eastern Europe
Portugal	Top 10-20% world wide	Southern Europe
Romania	Top 20-30% world wide	Eastern Europe

2.3.2. Country reports

For each of the ten EU Member States, a country report was prepared. These reports consist of two main steps, both of which are important for the overall findings and interpretations.

Step 1: Initial drafts of the ten country reports are based on **desk research**, including examinations of recent public debates and secondary literature⁹³. The analysis builds on existing and publicly available documents and literature. We have mapped public debates through, for example, international and national media outlets, institutional websites, research literature, and various kinds of reports (so-called grey literature). This approach provides an insight into the main topics for debates concerning academic freedom in the selected Member States and follows the methodological approach developed in the pilot study, while it also updates, validates, and further

⁹² https://academic-freedom-index.net/research/Academic_Freedom_Index_Update.pdf

⁹³ This two-step approach and the data used to compile the national reports has some methodological limitations, see discussion in section 2.4.5.

systematises the findings from the study. Methodologically, this represents a form of events data analysis (Spannagel, 2020), where primary focus is on identifying incidents of (potential) infringement where a public debate has emerged, and worries and threats concerning academic freedom have been highlighted. This means that the incidents identified in this study are ones where academic freedom has explicitly been discussed in relation to the incident.

The country reports are explicitly structured according to the five potential sources of threats introduced above. Given that we are dependent on covering existing debates and incidents, the country reports also naturally vary in length. As is evident in the country reports, in some EU Member States more incidents have been identified than in others. The incidents should not be viewed quantitatively. The important question is whether the incidents have been addressed appropriately in the EU Member States in question, and whether effective safeguards for protecting academic freedom are in place when incidents happen.

Step 2: For each of the country reports, **expert feedback** has been organised. Expert-based assessments are widely used in comparative reviews of policies and trends, and in this study, they provided the country reports with relevant input, updates, and quality checks. In this instance, expert assessments were primarily used to validate the research teams' interpretation of the events identified in desk research, and to provide feedback and comments on general trends concerning academic freedom and various threats to academic freedom in their countries.

For each of the ten countries included in the review, the team has identified a list of possible national experts. These experts were selected based on their expertise concerning academic freedom in particular and/or the higher education and research sector more generally in that specific country, for example, by conducting research on higher education or having had roles where they have gained such insights. Given the types of worries and potential threats analysed in this report, the pool of experts does not include persons currently working in political functions, ministries or institutional top leadership positions. Some of the experts have had leadership roles in the past but were included if their current affiliations made it clear that there is no potential bias concerning their interpretations. For each country report, around 2-4 experts provided input. The experts received a draft country report for review and were invited to comment on and discuss the text they received, as well as provide any general comments about the state of play concerning academic freedom in their respective countries, especially in areas where no incidents were identified. All the experts have been granted anonymity, for them to be able to respond and contribute freely. Granting anonymity in this instance is an important measure to make sure that country experts can speak freely about the issues in their respective country, as these issues remain sensitive and contested in some of the countries in our analysis.

Any misunderstandings or errors that should remain in the country reports remain solely the responsibility of the research team.

2.3.3. Synthesis and validation

After the completion of the country reports for ten countries, the research team produced a **synthesis of key findings and cross-cutting issues** that had been identified through the desk research and expert feedback, which can be found in chapter 3.

The findings have been further discussed with an Academic Board of experts, and a Sounding Board of stakeholder organisations.

- The **Academic Board of experts** consisted of academic experts with specialised expertise concerning issues of academic freedom, having backgrounds from various

European countries and settings. The board functioned as a partner to the project team for discussing the interpretations and findings in the report, as well as the proposed policy options.

- The **Sounding Board** has been established with representatives of the major European cross-sectorial stakeholder organisations in accordance with the STOA Panel. The Sounding Board met during an online meeting and later received the draft report for comments and inputs. The organisations represented in the Sounding Board include: All European Academics (ALLEA), the European University Association (EUA), the European Students Union (ESU), the Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE), the Young Academy of Europe (YAE), the European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc), the League of European Research Universities (LERU), The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities (The Guild), Science Europe, Scholars at Risk (SAR), the Coimbra Group, and CESAER.

Meetings with the Academic Board and Sounding board were organised collaboratively with the team at CHEPS conducting the Synthesis study.

2.3.4. Policy options

An important goal of the project is to propose **policy options** concerning appropriate European level legislation and action. Policy options were developed iteratively based on the findings from the ten country reports. A first set of suggestions was developed by the research team, which were discussed with the Academic Board of experts and the Sounding Board. The research team worked on further developing, organising, and finalising the policy options during autumn 2023. The policy options were then merged with the policy options that were developed by CHEPS in the Synthesis study, and are presented in Part 1 of this report.

2.3.5. Methodological limitations

There are trade-offs due to the scope and methodological approach of this study. The study has been based on desk research that covers public debates concerning academic freedom. Thus, the research team relied on debates and issues that have been reported, debated, or mentioned somewhere in the public sphere, with a relevant link to academic freedom. Inherently, events-based data has a range of limitations in terms of comparability, selection bias, etc (see, e.g. Spannagel, 2020). An additional challenge is that in this study we synthesise information about events that have reached the public domain in some form of a debate, complaint, or a case.

With this starting point, the study is by default not able to capture undocumented and indirect cooling effects or cases that do not receive any public attention. The study is also unable to explore all cases and processes of infringement in a high level of detail. This means that there may also be infringements that this report has not captured. Examples of the type of infringements this report is typically not able to cover:

- A comprehensive picture of academic self-censorship that can take place when academics experience undue external pressure. While these might not be identified as an explicit case of infringement that has been publicly debated in EU Member States, such cases may nevertheless have serious and fundamental consequences for academic freedom over time.
- Settings where infringements have taken place, but those being a subject to this would not have the will, capacity, or opportunity to bring these cases to the public eye and have their case being debated publicly. One example of this would be temporary staff or younger scholars who in general would be in a more vulnerable position and thus may hesitate to engage and becoming a front person for a major debate.

- Settings where infringements have taken place, but the political climate of the country would make it difficult and challenging to engage in a political debate, as this may create further consequences for those whose academic freedom has been violated. It may also be seen as irrelevant to report on infringements or engage in a public debate, as it could be perceived that a public debate in any case would not lead to changes or appropriate responses.

In addition, the existence and tone of national debates is inherently linked to the general cultural and socio-economic context of the country. The existence of 'many' debates concerning academic freedom can therefore not be seen as an indicator for general deterioration of academic freedom in a particular country. The occurrence of many debates can also be an indication of a healthy climate where the scope and limits of academic freedom are continuously debated in open and constructive settings, and, despite the emergence of certain threats, important safeguards, and measures to protect academic freedom would be in place. Similarly, a lack of cases could also mean that academic staff who may be subject to violations of academic freedom see no point in public debate, as it would not likely lead to improvement. A key question is how threats to, or violations of academic freedom are being handled.

From that perspective it must be stressed that the methodology used in the study is not suitable to make a comprehensive diagnosis of *all* aspects of academic freedom in the selected countries. However, this was not the intention of this study. The methodology functions as a means to identify key debates and gaps where more attention is warranted. By exploring cases across ten countries, the study does provide an overview of important trends, areas where debates are ongoing, areas where specific threats or violations are identified, and not least, how such cases have been addressed, and if applicable solved, and whether principles of academic freedom have been upheld. Moreover, the existence of incidents is also not insignificant, they do point to a range of sources for threats, and incidents can be a basis for normalising certain pressures, which subsequently may result in more substantial and lasting violations of academic freedom.

3. Synthesis of research findings

This report has updated, elaborated, and further systematised the findings from the pilot study. Overall, the state of play of academic freedom in Europe has not changed significantly since the publication of the pilot study report, which examined the status until Summer 2022 (Maassen et al, 2023). Exploring the different dimensions of the *de facto* situation with respect to academic freedom in the ten selected EU Member States, a rather varied picture emerges across Europe. Except for Hungary, no systemic and structural infringements of academic freedom have been identified in the ten selected EU Member States. Nonetheless, there are strong indications of a worrying deterioration of *de facto* academic freedom in some countries, for example, in Poland. In other countries, incidents remain incidents at this point, rather than systemic patterns of structural violations.

In a number of EU Member States, there are concerns about undue interference from *the government and politics*. Governments have the responsibility for setting in place *de jure* protections of academic freedom. Yet, they can also function as a source for threats. In some instances, these represent direct attacks on academic freedom, for example, the case of the National Science Center (in Polish *Naradowe Centrum Nauki*, abbreviated as NCN) project funding in Poland, in others the threats are more indirect and rather concern changes in the financial and other framework conditions for higher education and scientific research that have the potential to weaken the practice of academic freedom. A critical framework condition is the level of public funding. In some countries, low levels of public funding have been noted as a critical point, for example, Estonia and Romania. While the necessity to obtain external contract funding – from both public and private sources – in itself is not an infringement of academic freedom, such funding does in many instances come with specific conditions and strings attached. Consequently, a growing reliance on non-governmental funding sources may also have consequences for academic freedom. Political interference also comes in the form of attacks on academic freedom by politicians who label certain fields as being “too activist,” and in this manner interfere with academic freedom. Here, it is important to note that government shifts may have an impact on *de facto* academic freedom. Recent election results and changes in governments may change the political climate and subsequently the state of play of academic freedom in these countries, either positively or negatively. However, at the time when this study is being finalised it was not yet possible to assess the possible impact of government shifts on academic freedom, for example, in the Netherlands and Poland.

Institutional leadership and management form another possible source for threats to academic freedom. This concerns especially cases where shifts in strategic priorities of the universities were seen to affect academic freedom negatively. This is particularly related to the overall strengthening of the executive function in universities, and several country experts expressed worries about this trend. Specific cases of firing tenured academic staff who, for instance, have been critical of university management of their institution represent possible examples of such trends. This is potentially highly problematic, as this directly interferes with one of the basic elements of academic freedom – the freedom of academic expression. Similarly, attempts to cancel lectures, for example, in Austria and Poland when the content of lectures is deemed to be controversial, represent possible violations of academic freedom. Several country experts also noted general worries about working conditions in academia and how these influence the exercise of academic freedom, especially for those academic staff on temporary contracts.

Academic staff and students are also identified as a potential threat to academic freedom in some countries. While internal academic tensions, debates, disagreements, conflicts and boycotts in themselves do not form a threat to academic freedom, attempts to completely silence specific strands of research, teaching or expression can result in undue threats to or even violations of academic freedom. Here, the cases also show that this can involve academic staff and/or students. In this area, it is particularly important to mention that the coverage of such debates might be

imbalanced – and heavy debates concerning single cases in some countries do not necessarily mean that this would not be an issue in other countries (albeit in different versions), nor does it mean that a heated debate of few cases would mean that this is a systemic issue or a violation of academic freedom. Not least, this is an area where there is no clear-cut boundary as to when academic disagreements, debates, tensions, conflicts, and boycotts might represent threats to or violations of academic freedom. While the report here points towards certain debates and potential incidents, this is an area where the interpretation of boundaries of academic freedom, empirical data, and a systematic knowledge basis need to be further improved.

Similarly, threats and attacks by *civil society actors* on individual academics or academic groups have taken place in several EU Member States. The report indicates that these threats and attacks often do not remain contained to a specific single source. Engagement on social media also means that debates can become cross-cutting and engage across traditional segments. In this, studies concerning Islam in France represent an example – where civil society, students and political actors have all been involved. It should also be noted that the pressure from social media leading to self-censorship is an area where the methodological approach used in this study is not able to provide a comprehensive picture, as self-censorship may emerge unnoticed. For example, academics may observe the debate culture concerning specific topics and opt out before engaging in research on those themes. Such events would not become a public debate, as they do not represent an infringement of expressions or research that has already been published. Rather, these would represent more indirect cooling effects where certain kinds of research would not be conducted, or specific study programmes or modules would be discontinued or not be developed. While difficult to identify with our methodology, such effects can be important and significant, and could in the long run seriously affect *de facto* academic freedom in certain academic fields.

Furthermore, the impact of *private sector actors* on academic freedom remains an issue in a number of EU Member States. The use of SLAPPs as a legal measure to silence critical voices was mentioned in the pilot study report and has remained a concern. Attempts to create European level regulation that fight the effects of SLAPPs have resulted in the provisional political agreement between the European Parliament and the Council on 30 November 2023 on new EU rules to protect those targeted with strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP)⁹⁴. Another issue is the role of private funding, especially of research. This is relevant, as a number of countries are characterised by relatively low and stagnating levels of public funding for scientific research⁹⁵. To maintain research activities, researchers thus need to also obtain a higher degree of funding from private sources. Such collaboration may be both a source for new ideas and research results, and provide much needed additional research funding. Yet, a growing dependence on non-governmental research funding may set several constraints on the research problems to be addressed, the results to be agreed upon, the publications to be produced, and the ownership of research outcomes, and may threaten the balance between basic curiosity driven research, and research where the problems are determined by external actors. It may also set boundaries to what kind of results are acceptable to publish, and where such results should be published. Specific concerns for academic freedom have emerged where the dependence becomes relatively high as, for example, in Denmark.

Finally, an issue that was not addressed explicitly in the pilot study is how security concerns in international collaborations might affect academic freedom. In this study, we have addressed the issue in two of the country reports, France and the Netherlands (sections 4.5.5 and 4.7.5), where in both cases, relevant reports had been published creating political attention and public debates. The reports discuss both the growing importance of being aware of the possible impact of international collaboration as well as international political tensions or conflicts on academic freedom, and ways

⁹⁴ See: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_6159

⁹⁵ For data see, for example, the Public Funding Observatory by the European University Association: <https://eua.eu/component/tags/tag/38-national-funding.html>

in which universities can become better prepared for dealing effectively with this threat. In this, in this the attempts to develop EU-wide policies and regulations should be welcomed, since they will allow for a better preparation for specific incidents and explicit threats to academic freedom, e.g. as a result of undue foreign interferences.

Overall, while our main focus was on specific incidents concerning academic freedom, national experts that were consulted also raised a number of more general concerns which they view as contributing to the erosion of academic freedom, where no incidents had taken place yet, but where there were nevertheless worries – for example, concerning the impact of changes in public funding, diminishing academic career opportunities, and executive leadership at universities.

As indicated, the identified threats to academic freedom appear in both traditional and new forms. The legal measures put in place to protect academic freedom were introduced in a specific time frame and set of institutional conditions. Thus, while protections for traditional threats may be in place, they might not always be effective against these threats when circumstances change. Even more challenging is the situation concerning new threats. As an example, pressuring university leadership to silence critical voices in academia, or the growing role of social media in a variety of attacks on academics. For the latter, the report particularly notes that the threat becomes more intertwined when threats from political actors, civil society actors, and private sector actors become combined. Such constellations may emerge across the whole political spectrum, and they can create considerable engagement on social media. Not only is legal protection of academics quite weak in such instances, there is also a lack of a comprehensive knowledge basis on the consequences of these trends.

4. Country reports of latest trends analysis

4.1. Austria

In the pilot study commissioned by the European Parliament STOA Panel, State of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States (Maassen et al., 2023), Austria was found to have strong *de jure* and *de facto* academic freedom. There is an ongoing public debate on academic freedom in Austria, also following the relocation of the Central European University (CEU) from Budapest to Vienna, which increased the awareness for academic freedom issues in the Austrian higher education sector. For example, the Rectors' conference of public universities addressed academic freedom in their 2021 annual report expressing concern about the situation in Europe, but also in Austria⁹⁶. In addition, there are different projects that aim at strengthening the relationship between academia and society such as the "Trust in Science" project of the Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalisation⁹⁷. Nevertheless, the STOA study also found potential threats to the *de facto* state of play of academic freedom. Regarding the central dimensions of academic freedom, the study found growing threats to the freedom of academic expression, as exemplified by attempts from the public and students to silence and/or shame scholars who expressed expert opinions on controversial topics. Regarding the conditions for academic freedom, the pilot study found that the 2021 amendments to the Universities Act introduced changes to institutional autonomy, self-governance, and academic labour conditions (Maassen et al. 2023).

Considering these points raised in the pilot study, several potential threats could be identified. First, due to increased politicisation of external members of university boards and the amendments to the Universities Act in 2021 that limited university autonomy, academic freedom in Austria faces potential threats from *government and politics*. Second, the amendments to the Universities Act in 2021 further tightened the employment conditions for Austrian academics, creating harder limits for employment durations on temporary contracts, which in turn worsens labour conditions and thus threatens the conditions for academic freedom of staff that are not on permanent contracts. Related to this, the continued partial de-coupling of student numbers and public funding creates pressure for academics in certain disciplines to handle large numbers of students, leading to threats to their ability to perform research. Third, intra-university protests against (potentially controversial) academics reveal *academia* itself as a potential threat. Finally, there is a threat from *civil society* based on public backlash against expert opinions, as was exemplified in debates around public safety precautions connected to Covid-19. The latter is also an issue highlighted in the 2021 annual report of the conference of rectors of public universities (Uniko 2022: Jahresbericht 2021), where it is described as a cause for concern related to the work of academics.

Since the publication of the pilot study (Maassen et al. 2023), many of the described threats to the state of play of academic freedom in Austria remain relevant, while new threats have also emerged. The latter mainly regard threats from *private sector or civil society actors*. Moreover, questions about threats from *government and politics* as well as threats to *conditions of academic freedom* are also re-emerging. While Austria continues to have strong *de jure* and *de facto* academic freedom, it is important to monitor potential threats in order to maintain the positive state of play of academic freedom in Austria.

In the following text, we outline the instances identified through desk research and expert feedback.

⁹⁶ See, Uniko 2022: Jahresbericht 2021

⁹⁷ <https://youngscience.at/de/trust-in-science>

4.1.1. Government and politics

While already acknowledged as an issue in the pilot study, newly identified cases of government interference in university matters and continued challenges to the conditions of academic freedom further the need to observe these aspects in Austria. While some of these threats are incidental (the ones related to political interference) others are more structural (the ones related to the conditions for academic freedom).

Regarding the latter, a point that has been raised in the pilot study and that continues to receive attention is the labour contract situation, especially of non-tenured academic staff. Austria has a rather high percentage of non-tenured staff (around 80%) and the amendments to the Universities Act in 2021 further tightened the employment conditions for these academics by introducing a hard eight-year limit for temporary contracts⁹⁸. Given the high percentage of academic staff on temporary contracts and the limited number of tenured positions, the tighter new rules create even greater pressure for early-career academics, leading to deteriorating conditions for academic freedom for these academics.

To begin with, one case identified in multiple news outlets as a potential breach of academic freedom regards the creation of the new technical university in Linz. Originally established under the previous Federal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz in 2020, the Institute for Digital Sciences Austria (IDSA) is set to open in the winter semester of 2023 and will be a new type of technical university with a focus on digitalisation (*Künftige TU Linz kämpft mit Gegenwind*, 2022; Staudinger, 2023; *Wieder Wirbel um Bestellung von Präsidentin der Linzer Digital-Uni*, 2023). The project has been contentious from its inception, with a variety of criticisms coming from universities, politicians, and the media. One of these criticisms regards the legal provisions for the university, as it is outside of the Universities Act, and thus operates more like private than public universities regarding student and staff relations (*Künftige TU Linz kämpft mit Gegenwind*, 2022). So far, there is only a brief "Federal Act on the Establishment of the Institute of Digital Sciences Austria", which is set to expire when a new federal law regulating the detailed organisation and ongoing operation of the Institute of Digital Sciences Austria enters into force⁹⁹. It contains, among other things, short sections on the legal status of the university, the students and faculty, but no elaboration of the internal organisation of the institutions (e.g., rectorate, university council, and senate)¹⁰⁰.

There is an expressed worry that this legal operation incorporates a potential threat to academic freedom, as it leaves more room for outside influence from politics and industry. The senate of Johannes Kepler University in Linz argued that "the law leaves appointment procedures and self-determination agendas completely unregulated, and thus exposes their regulation - via the founding convention - to the grip of politics. Overall, the law breathes an untimely distrust of science and scientists"¹⁰¹ (*Stellungnahmen zerpfücken Gründungsgesetz der Linzer TU*, 2022). Even with higher education policy being a federal matter, the creation of universities of applied sciences and private institutions has created a situation in which there is an increased role of the Länder in higher education in Austria. This means that the fear of political or industry influence is also influenced by the potential that provincial and regional business-driven local politics will find their way into this

⁹⁸ <https://science.orf.at/stories/3218037/>

⁹⁹ See, <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20011976>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000136587256/ministerrat-beschloss-tu-linz-als-institute-of-digital-sciences-austria>

¹⁰¹ Translation. The original quote is as follows: "Das Gesetz lässt Berufungsverfahren und Selbstbestimmungsagenden gänzlich unregelt, und setzt ihre Regelung so - via Gründungskonvent - dem Zugriff der Politik aus. Insgesamt atmet das Gesetz ein unzeitgemäßes Misstrauen gegenüber Wissenschaft und Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftlern."

university. Moreover, the IDSA founding law is missing some regulations of the University Act – which can be interpreted as the government's desire to not use some of the existing rules and protections of professional self-governance for this new type of institution. This uncertainty is also echoed in the election of a founding rector in which a formal complaint was issued after the supposedly preferred candidate of the local political leadership did not win the election¹⁰². This highlights the potential for tensions between academic self-governance and the interest of local politics and industry. A similar conflict between local politics and university self-governance over the election of a new rector also took place at the University of Salzburg, where the head of the regional government threatened the university with funding cuts if the process of finding a new rector would not be completed quickly¹⁰³. Also, the election of a new rector at the WU Vienna at the end of 2022 created conflicts¹⁰⁴. However, these were mainly between the senate and the university board as the board did not follow the proposed list of candidates when selecting the new rector. Given that the board has a significant number of external members while the senate is an internal body, this conflict further highlights the potential for external interference in university governance which has already been highlighted in the previous STOA report.

However, the science and education minister Martin Polaschek argues that it makes sense for the university to be formed outside of the University Act. He claims that it will be incorporated later, and that “the University of Klagenfurt was also not incorporated into the university law at the time, and the Danube University in Krems was also not incorporated into the University Act”¹⁰⁵ (*Künftige TU Linz kämpft mit Gegenwind*, 2022). The discussion regarding how far newly created institutions fall under established legal provisions, such as the University Law, or receive new, tailor-made legal frameworks (sometimes with less room for professional autonomy) is not only relevant regarding IDSA but could also be raised in relation to the other separately regulated sectors, such as private higher education institutions¹⁰⁶ that have their own distinct legal framework. Given the complexity arising from a multi-sector higher education system with separate legal frameworks, it is necessary to monitor and ensure that academic freedom is similarly guaranteed across all sectors.

Another recent case which exemplifies the interference of government and politics to academic freedom is the response of the science and education minister Martin Polaschek to a recent study from a doctoral student at the Islamic Studies department at the University of Vienna titled “Effects of Islamic religious education in Austria” (Krone.at, 2023). After backlash to the study from the MJO (the Muslim youth), the non-discriminatory education initiative and the organisation for civil courage and anti-racism work, Polaschek condemned the undertaking of the study saying, “the study was not commissioned by us” and “personally, I reject this type of survey”¹⁰⁷ (Schurian, 2023). This negative response of the Minister to the study was made even though he admitted that he knew the study and the controversies only from the media (Krone.at, 2023). This goes against the basic principle that a science and education minister is expected to protect the freedom of research instead of condemning an academic study only on the basis of criticism to the study by certain social groups, and without any direct knowledge of the study itself. Deputy head of the Institute for Islamic Theological Studies at the University of Vienna, Ednan Aslan, points out how political condemnation

¹⁰² <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000144236758/linzer-digital-uni-nach-praesidiumswahl-in-schweren-turbulenzen>

¹⁰³ <https://science.apa.at/power-search/14530038112852503824>

¹⁰⁴ <https://science.apa.at/power-search/12717764768396439586>

¹⁰⁵ Translation. The original quote is as follows: “auch die Universität Klagenfurt ins damalige UG und die Donau-Uni Krems ebenfalls nicht von Haus aus ins Universitätsgesetz eingebaut.”

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/HS-Uni/Hochschulsystem/Privatuniversitaet.html>

¹⁰⁷ Translation. The original quotes are as follows: “Diese Studie ist nicht von uns in Auftrag gegeben worden” and “Ich persönlich lehne eine solche Art von Befragungen ab.”

of studies related to Islam discourages academics from studying the topic (Schurian, 2023), which exemplifies that political interference in academic freedom can lead to academic self-censorship.

Another development since the pilot study that needs to be mentioned is the recent change in the constitution that demands that all publicly funded studies need to be published in a way that is openly accessible¹⁰⁸. This new constitutional law can improve conditions for academic freedom as it enables researchers guaranteed access to publicly funded studies.

A final academic freedom-related issue that has entered the political sphere and has the potential for political influence on university's self-governance regards the use of gender-inclusive language in communication, teaching and examination. The debate, which is happening in the context of a generally more sceptical view by parts of society and politics towards gender studies or feminist approaches in other disciplines¹⁰⁹, is visible in a proposal by FPÖ suggesting a legal ban of the demand for the use of gender-inclusive language in teaching and examination,¹¹⁰ which was presented in the parliamentary committee on science and research. The proposal by the FPÖ was not voted upon, and both members of the Green party and the conservative ÖVP supported the importance of gender-inclusive language, but also highlighted the autonomy of universities regarding decisions related to teaching and examination.

While not indicative of systemic government interference in matters of academic freedom, both cases discussed are examples of political interference in the academic sphere. In the case of the IDSA, the political decision to form the university outside of the university law and opening yet another regulatory sub-sector in higher education creates a potential for a weakened state of legal protection for institutional autonomy. As mentioned by education minister Martin Polaschek in the above quote, this is not the first university that was formed in this manner, and there are now a total of five separate legal frameworks for different parts of the higher education system. Considering this trend, it is important to monitor the effects of the university's formation outside of the Universities Act, and to monitor if future universities will continue to be formed in this manner, and how far this is used to ensure political or bureaucratic interference into academic matters in the newly created institutions.

In the case of Minister Polaschek's response to the University of Vienna study or the attempt by the FPÖ to politicise language choice in teaching and examination, the condemnation of a particular study or topic of research by the responsible minister can be perceived as a political threat to academic freedom, because it can discourage academics from undertaking research in such areas if they feel that the respective ministry won't support their right to inquiry. Moreover, the potential for political interference in what is perceived as appropriate language in teaching and examination highlights a potential breach of the professional autonomy of universities and academic freedom of the academics working in them. As the freedom for academics to set their own research and teaching agenda is an important element of academic freedom, the condemnation and the proposal by the FPÖ can be perceived as attempts government of political interference.

4.1.2. Institutional leadership and management

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom by institutional leadership and management, but concerns may be raised concerning the legal status of the new

¹⁰⁸ https://www.bmj.gv.at/dam/jcr:0070cee7-40cf-4cc1-912d-48adee45a250/Beilage_Ver%C3%B6ffentlichungspflicht%20gem.%20Art.%2020%20Abs.%205%20BVG.pdf

¹⁰⁹ see e.g. <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000133476536/student-will-rechtlich-gegen-gender-zwang-an-uni-wien-vorgehen>

¹¹⁰ https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20231003_OTS0185/wissenschaftsausschuss-schafft-anreiz-fuer-kleinere-hochschulereinnenschaften-sich-wirtschaftlich-der-oeh-zu-unterstellen

university established in Linz and how this may affect involvement from leadership and management in the future.

4.1.3. The academic community

Like the cases in the pilot study report (Maassen et al., 2023), the cases discussed in recent public debates in Austria concerning conflicts in the academic community as potential threats to academic freedom are related to the freedom of academics to choose their own research subject without undue external interference. The cases highlighted in this section are executed by student groups, but also link to pressures from the government, and outside activists.

The first case identified is the ‘*Erde brennt*’ (in English: earth is burning) student protests in December 2022. The student protests included the occupation of university classrooms at the University of Vienna, the University of Salzburg, the University of Innsbruck, the University of Graz, the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, the Academy of Fine Arts, and the University of Applied Arts (Zehetner, 2022). The students involved called for the Austrian government to engage in climate action through a list of demands. While the demands varied, it was argued in an opinion piece in the daily “Die Presse” that the protesters’ demand for all curricula to address climate justice violates the academic freedom of academics to set their own curriculum. While students demanding that climate change should be addressed in curricula are arguably using their right of academic expression, the student protests’ demands on strict curriculum regulations regarding the inclusion of climate change raise the question about the circumstances under which student activism might pose a threat to academic freedom.

Furthermore, the backlash against expertise and scientific input visible in debates around public safety precautions connected to Covid-19 that was raised in the 2021 annual report of the conference of rectors of public universities (Uniko 2022: Jahresbericht 2021) is also an example of civil society pressure against individual academics and academic research. This reveals a threat where academics are attacked for the provision of scientific expertise, which might have a negative effect on *de facto* academic freedom if academics do not feel that they receive enough institutional protection. Several Austrian researchers reported in a recent study that they experienced negative and partly hostile feedback from society following their engagement in debates about Covid19 measures¹¹¹. A similar point was also raised by Prof. Gartlehner, head of the Department of Evidence-based Medicine at the University of Continuing Education in Krems, in an interview where he highlighted the need for a change in the discussion climate regarding scientific expertise in Austria as parts of the society, certain interest groups and political parties, can sometimes be hostile towards academics who provide expertise¹¹².

When examined in combination with the cases from the pilot study (Maassen et al., 2023), these new cases of possible threats to academic freedom in relation to academic tensions and conflicts reveal a continued trend. While these cases remain individual incidents and have not systematically prevented academics from setting their own research and teaching agendas, the attempts to do so pose a potential threat to academic freedom and demand continued monitoring and public debate on how to balance the protection of academic freedom with legitimate student and academic staff activism and protests.

¹¹¹ <https://www.tt.com/artikel/30815932/wissenschaftler-in-oesterreich-in-oeffentlicher-rolle-emotional-belastet>

¹¹² <https://www.donau-uni.ac.at/de/aktuelles/upgrade-das-magazin-fuer-wissen-und-weiterdenken-der-universitaet-fuer-weiterbildung-krems/alle-ausgaben/upgrade-3-22-im-zweifel-fuer-den-zweifel/zwischen-ignoranz-und-bestaetigung.html>

4.1.4. Civil society

The cases highlighted above included both student and activist groups, and as such also point towards involvement from civil society. While public debates about research findings are legitimate, calls for interference from institutional leadership to cancel particular research projects would imply attempts at infringement of academic freedom.

4.1.5. Private sector actors

Based on the analysed media reports in this study, the threat of private sector actors to academic freedom has been identified as a potential new threat. This threat comes mainly from the involvement of private sector actors in setting universities' research agendas.

As the new IDSA in Linz is established separate from the University Act, there is concern about the involvement of private sector actors in the university. The president of the Austrian University Conference, Sabine Seidler, wrote to the parliamentary science committee that "the present concept shows an extremely one-sided orientation towards the needs of Upper Austrian industry and, as a result, a threatening restriction of the freedom of research and teaching."¹¹³ (*Stellungnahmen zerpfücken Gründungsgesetz der Linzer TU, 2022*). However, education minister Martin Polaschek argues that business influence is normal for universities because it is commonplace to have privately contracted research in other universities (*Künftige TU Linz kämpft mit Gegenwind, 2022*). As the new university is founded under new legal provisions, it is an important case that showcases the necessity to monitor the role of private sector actors in university establishment and operation, in order to ensure that it does not pose a threat to the academic freedom of those working at the university. The recent debate following the election of the founding rector highlights the relevance of the need to clarify the autonomy of the university also vis-à-vis regional private sector interests¹¹⁴.

While this example is an isolated case in Austria, the role of private sector actors in the university operations is yet to be known, as the new technical university has not fully started its operation yet. In addition, this could set a precedent for future universities and thus requires attention.

4.1.6. Summary of findings

The cases identified here suggest that the state of academic freedom in Austria continues to be strong, like the legal protections. However, some potential threats to the *de facto* situation have been identified. In addition to the issues highlighted in the pilot study (Maassen et al., 2023), a new threat from government and politics has arisen in the form of political encroachment on university autonomy. While not a systemic encroachment, this case is of note as it might present a role model for future expansions of the system. Moreover, the conditions for academic freedom are deemed by the academic community to be threatened by the problematic situation regarding temporary employment conditions and the partial mismatch between student numbers and public funding for universities. Additionally, there continue to be threats of academic intolerance, linked with pressures from civil society, the private sector, and government and politics. These cases have not succeeded in preventing academics from setting their own research and teaching agendas, but they are nonetheless a potential cause for concern as they may disincentivise academics from addressing more controversial or sensitive topics. Finally, the interference of private sector actors is a newly identified area and requires continued observation.

¹¹³ This quote is a translation of the original quote, which is in German. The original quote is as follows: "Das vorliegende Konzept zeigt eine extrem einseitige Orientierung an den Bedürfnissen der oberösterreichischen Industrie und damit einhergehend eine bedrohliche Einschränkung der Freiheit von Forschung und Lehre."

¹¹⁴ <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000144236758/linzer-digital-uni-nach-praesidiumswahl-in-schweren-turbulenzen>

4.1.7. Resources

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4.2. Cyprus

The pilot study commissioned by the European Parliament's STOA Panel, *State of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States* (Maassen et al., 2023) points out that while Cypriot academic freedom is relatively well-respected, comparatively vague legislation on academic freedom could potentially enable future violations. Specifically, the pilot study found that vague legislative protection for academic freedom combined with the country's weak protection for institutional autonomy of higher education institutions provided openings for infringements. The potential for interference is mostly described in relation to government intrusion in university affairs, including personnel or financial issues, especially for the three public universities (University of Cyprus, Cyprus University of Technology, Open University of Cyprus). Moreover, the unresolved conflict on the island between the north and the south creates obstacles for academic collaboration and research limiting to room for scholars. Furthermore, there are worries about the extent to which the legislative protection would be sufficient to guard academic freedom effectively against interference from external forces, such as religious leaders or foreign entities. The pilot study concludes that stronger or clearer legislation to protect both academic freedom and institutional autonomy could be beneficial to ease these sources for potential threats.

The findings from the pilot study indicate that Cyprus faces potential threats to the state of play of academic freedom from several sources. First, there is a potential threat from government and politics due to the identified potential of government interference in matters that should be autonomous to the universities. Second, as the study found attempts at interference from outside sources, there is also a threat from civil society. Increasing pressure from the government that incentivises universities to operate in a market-like manner combined with generally low research funding could additionally produce a threat from private sector actors, as the economic foundation of universities is weakened.

Since the pilot study, academic freedom in Cyprus has faced additional pressure from two sources identified in the first report. Specifically, there have been further examples of threats from civil

society and government and politics. As multiple of the cases identified are continuations of threats from the first report, they remain important to monitor, in case trends should continue to worsen.

4.2.1. Government and politics

Threats of government intervention to some of the conditions for academic freedom continue to exist in Cyprus. To begin with, as mentioned in the pilot study report (Maassen et al., 2023), there is continued concern over the economic situation of higher education and comparatively low funding rates for Cypriot universities (Prakas, 2023). Further, there are continued reports about government interference in staffing matters at the three public universities in Cyprus which, while supported by the legal frameworks of the country, can be interpreted as examples of limits in institutional autonomy. For example, there have been two new cases of government criticism of university staffing, where the rector of the University of Cyprus had to defend the continued employment of certain university professors. Specifically, the auditor-general has criticised the continued employment of a Nobel Prize winner who he claims has retired, in addition to the continued employment of a professor with a criminal conviction. In response, the rector of the university says that the Nobel Prize winner is still active at the university via lectures and mentoring, and that the continued employment of the professor who received a criminal conviction was supported by a court's decision (Hazou, 2023). Coupled with one of the cases highlighted in the earlier STOA report, where an MEP's dormant position at a university was questioned by the parliamentary house ethics committee (Panayiotides, 2021), these examples reveal a trend of strong government involvement in university staffing and raises questions regarding the need for stronger institutional autonomy protections.

Another issue that limits academic freedom relates to the occupation of Northern Cyprus by Turkey¹¹⁵. Given the political salience of the conflict, public entities and societal actors are very sensitive to any action that could be understood as acknowledging a partitioned status-quo. This pressure has created problems for some time now¹¹⁶, but with tension increasing in the last months, it has become more difficult for academics to navigate this question. For example, doing cross-community research projects has become more difficult as university leaderships, public officials and societal groups react strongly to actions that could be interpreted as taking a stance regarding the conflict. A concrete example of limited academic freedom is that scholars from the south or the north of the island can only visit universities on the other side of the island in their private capacity, and they cannot use their institutional affiliation as this could be understood as acknowledging the legal status of what the Cypriot government refers to as "illegally operating" universities¹¹⁷ in the north. Thus, the ongoing conflict and the political and societal reactions to it provide a complex field of tension which can make it hard or even impossible for academics to use their academic freedom.

Furthermore, recent media reports from Cyprus discuss a potential threat to academic freedom resulting from foreign political interference in the form of a recently established Confucius Institute at the Cyprus University of Technology (Marathovouniotis, 2023). Confucius Institutes are centres for learning about Chinese language and culture that are affiliated with the Chinese government (Zhou & Luk, 2016). While still being under debate in Cyprus, other countries have shut down Confucius Institutes at universities, following episodes of academic censorship occurring at different European Confucius Institutes (Pong & Feng, 2017). While the opening of the new Confucius

¹¹⁵ See e.g. <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/the-moral-grounds-for-the-eus-obligation-to-end-the-occupation-of-northern-cyprus-ari/>

¹¹⁶ see e.g. this report from 2007: <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20071025100538647>

¹¹⁷ https://europa.eu/europass/system/files/2022-05/Cyprus_Referencing_report%5B1%5D.pdf

Institute at the Cyprus University of Technology is celebrated by the university, media reports regarding the new institute already highlight concerns regarding the establishment (Marathovouniotis, 2023). Moreover, the European University Cyprus has recently established a Centre for Chinese Studies in collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, which is the fifth of its kind in Europe¹¹⁸. The centre is supposed to strengthen the ties between the university and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and will focus on promoting the development of knowledge about China in Cyprus. Especially in a context where legal provisions for academic freedom and institutional autonomy are somewhat imprecise, it is necessary to carefully monitor the situation at these centres and their interaction with the respective academic communities.

As mentioned in the pilot study (Maassen et al., 2023), there is an existing risk of Chinese influence on Cypriot higher education institutions following the 2022-2026 Memorandum of Understanding agreement for cooperation in higher education and scientific research between China and Cyprus (Ktisti, 2022). As the new Confucius Institute is the second institute to be established in Cyprus, with the first at the University of Cyprus (The Confucius Institute at the University of Cyprus) this can be seen as a further strengthening of Chinese presence in Cypriot higher education. This foreign involvement and its potential effects on academic freedom demand further monitoring to ensure that it does not pose a threat to fundamental values of academics involved in these collaborations.

4.2.2. Institutional leadership and management

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom by institutional leadership and management, but weak institutional autonomy and vague legislation may also subject the institutional leadership to undue external pressure in matters that may constrain academic freedom.

4.2.3. Academic community

The latest debates do not reveal any specific cases of infringements on academic freedom by the academic community.

4.2.4. Civil society

One new instance of a potential threat to the *de facto* state of play of academic freedom in Cyprus has been identified by the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project. This monitor has highlighted a violent attack against a student group that occurred on February 22, 2023, at the Cyprus University of Technology (*Academic Freedom Monitoring Project* 2023). Specifically, according to the report, hooded individuals attacked students at a meeting on sexual orientation that was held by the student union FETEPAK and ACCEPT-LGBTI Cyprus on the university's campus, resulting in one hospitalisation. The Scholars at Risk network reported that the incident represents a threat to academic freedom because violence on campus against student groups creates an environment where students feel unsafe to "engage on campus."

This case is an example of a threat to the freedom of expression, which was identified in the pilot study report as a central dimension of academic freedom (Maassen et al., 2023). It can be argued that this is not a case of academic expression, but personal expression, and thus outside the direct sphere of academic freedom as used in this report. However, when universities become environments where students and staff feel unsafe discussing certain topics, core academic activities of the university can be impacted.

¹¹⁸ <https://www.cbn.com.cy/article/2023/9/28/734555/euc-and-cass-open-first-centre-for-chinese-studies-in-cyprus>

4.2.5. Private sector actors

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom by private sector actors, but low funding of the university sector, which could lead institutions to be too dependent on external funding, may create a situation where such infringements can take place.

4.2.6. Summary of findings

In conclusion, there have been some new developments regarding the state of play of academic freedom in Cyprus that deserve further monitoring. To begin with, issues regarding funding conditions of higher education combined with a somewhat lower level of institutional autonomy related to staffing questions pose threats to the framework conditions for academic freedom in Cyprus. As these are continued trends, they support the notion from the earlier STOA report that Cypriot academic freedom could potentially benefit from strengthened and clearer legislative frameworks on institutional autonomy and academic freedom. Moreover, the ongoing occupation continues to create complications for academics who want to embark on inter-communal research projects or collaborations. Additionally, as the ties between Chinese and Cypriot higher education have been further strengthened via the new Confucius Institute at the Cyprus University of Technology and the new Centre for Chinese Studies at the European University Cyprus, it is important to monitor how this foreign influence affects academic freedom in the two involved Cypriot higher education institutions. Finally, the attack on LGBTQ+ student groups at the Cyprus University of Technology reveals a threat from civil society to the safety of university campuses. Although this is an isolated attack and it focused on more general societal values instead of explicit academic content, the argument made by Scholars at Risk that this could create an unsafe environment for members of the academic community and thus influence their willingness to engage with socially conflicting topics is a valid concern.

4.2.7. Resources

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4.3. Denmark

In the pilot study commissioned by the European Parliament STOA Panel on the State of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States (Maassen, Martinsen, Elken, Jungblut, & Lackner, 2023) several concerns about *de facto* academic freedom in Denmark had been identified. This included worries about the impact of changes in university governance and the public funding arrangements on academic freedom and the democratic culture within academia. The discourse tied to these concerns painted a picture of an academic climate where many academics felt marginalised in institutional governance, while also being susceptible to interference in their academic work from institutional leadership and management and external actors, especially from politics and the private sector. Furthermore, the academic climate was seen as being negatively influenced by the growing use of social media by civil groups and individual citizens in unfounded criticism of, if not direct attacks on, individual academics and academic positions and points of view.

In summary, the findings indicated that four out of the five sources of threats to academic freedom identified and used in this pilot study apply to the situation in Denmark. These sources of threats include threats from government and politics, institutional leadership and management, civil society, and private sector actors. The pilot study did not find evidence for any serious cases of academic intolerance affecting academic freedom. It should be mentioned that several of the threats identified in the Danish discourse have been linked to the 2003 University Autonomy Law, which is regarded as a major cause for various of the negative developments with respect to academic freedom in Danish academia.

Matters related to government and politics have played a significant part in the Danish debates on academic freedom. As indicated, the 2003 Law was found to form the basis for several points of contention, amongst other things, when it comes to the possible effects of the introduction and development of executive powers in the leadership structure on the conditions under which academic freedom is exercised. Additional political pressure occurred in 2021, when two members of parliament submitted a question to the then minister asking him whether he agreed that “there are problems with excessive activism in certain research environments in the humanities and social sciences at the expense of scientific virtues.” Furthermore, the Minister was asked whether he agreed that, “such tendencies require action similar to the initiative of the French government which has started a formal examination of the extent of the problem.” It is rather remarkable that we see this reference to another EU Member State, in the sense of politicians in one EU Member State referring to the measures taken by a government in another Member State in political debates on academic freedom, given the controversial nature of the debates and the measures by the government in question (see chapter on France in this report).

As a response to the question, parliament adapted a motion “on excessive activism in certain research environments” expressing its expectation that “university leaders continuously ensure that ensure that the self-regulation of scientific practice works.” The motion states that “academic self-regulation is the basic principle of the free university” but called on universities to make sure that “politics is not disguised as science.” Furthermore, the motion acknowledges that lawmakers should not control what is researched but at the same time declares that parliament is within its rights to “express views on research results.” While the motion does not mention any disciplines or fields, in the parliamentary debates around the motion, specific fields such as race, migration, gender and post-colonial studies were attacked and characterised as “pseudoscience.” In addition, during the debates leading up to the motion, a professor from the University of Copenhagen, Jacob Skovgaard-Petersen, was mentioned by name and attacked in a speech given from the official lectern in the parliament. This can be regarded as a direct interference of politics with academic freedom.

The responses from the academic community to the motion was generally critical. Jesper Langergaard, director of Universities Denmark, stated, for example, that “On the one hand, the

parliament recognises the ability of the scientific system to regulate itself. On the other hand, they want to remind the universities of that responsibility. It doesn't make sense. Danish universities are concerned about what appears to be a political campaign against certain areas of research. The consequence is that some researchers will withdraw from the public debate, and that is not good either for democracy or for freedom of research" (Matthews, 2021). Furthermore, in response to the motion an open letter was drafted by Danish academics, heavily criticizing the motion and the precedent set by political intervention in the responsibility of the academic community to guard academic freedom. The letter found widespread support in the Danish and international academic community¹¹⁹.

Regarding the impact on academic freedom of changes in university leadership and management, the pilot study indicated that the influence and labour conditions of academics are generally seen to have been changed in the context of the executive leadership structure that has emerged since 2003. While there was general agreement that there was a need for reforming the then university governance structure (The Danish University and Property Agency, 2009), the 2003 University Autonomy Law is argued to have caused an imbalance between executive leadership principles and academic self-governance (see, e.g. Wright et al., 2020).

The universities currently have a unitary board structure with non-elected internal members and an appointed external majority of representatives. While the executive and managerial roles of the board have been enhanced, the room for academic self-governance and co-determination has been reduced, in part due to the specific nature of the board's composition. Other concerns amongst academics include mistrust in institutional leadership and their ability to represent academic interests, fear of criticizing leadership and management, and layoff anxiety.

Concerns were raised around hate and threats directed at academics associated with research fields dealing with controversial topics. The COVID-19 pandemic provides a recent example of academics being exposed to attacks from civil society following disagreement among certain civil groups with political decisions on the handling of the pandemic and the involvement of academic experts in providing the knowledge basis for these decisions. In some cases, the involved academics have withdrawn from public debate.

Finally, the growing reliance of academic researchers on external funding was argued to have led to several cases of undue pressure from leading members of funding organisations and private sector funders to influence the research results.

In recent Danish public debates on academic freedom, the impact of the University Autonomy Law of 2003 continues to attract attention. Many participants in the debates blame the 2003 Law for introducing changes in university governance that have weakened the conditions for exercising academic freedom. These changes are argued to incorporate a strengthening of executive dimensions and external influence in university governance at the expense of the principle of self-governance, that is, the involvement of academics and students in institutional decision-making (see, for example, Degn and Sørensen, 2014). This continuous attention on the impact of the 2003 Law is also visible in the papers on threats to aspects of academic freedom published by The Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters (2019; 2021), the initiative of the then Minister of Higher Education and Science to start a dialogue with academics following the "Freedom Letter" (Myklebust, 2022a; Rasmussen, 2022), and the evaluation of the 2003 Law in the second part of 2022 (Baggersgaard, 2022c; Mayoni, 2022a). A complicating factor in this is that the 2003 Law contained both a general article (2.2) on the protection of the basic conditions of academic freedom, and a more specific article as well (17.2), which has been seen by many academic staff members of the

¹¹⁹ See e.g. Myklebust (2021)

universities as a major symbol of the controversies around the Law, as it gave the institutional leadership the formal power to tell individual staff members which academic tasks to perform.

The report of the evaluation by the Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy (DFiR) was published May 2023 (Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023a). The report is seen as a comprehensive and unique contribution to debates surrounding academic freedom in that it represents the government's willingness to further discuss the state of the sector under the 2003 University Autonomy Law, in addition to providing interview and survey data reflecting a number of key issues in previous and ongoing debates. The current study will introduce some general points using data from DFiR's report in addition to introducing new cases concerning academic freedom.

4.3.1. Government and politics

The report by DFiR suggests that the current way the government is steering the sector could be detrimental to academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The frequency of comprehensive reforms and the subsequent commitment to each reform have been regarded by academic staff, institutional leadership, and other interest groups as distracting and, at times, damaging to the sector (Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023a, pp. 70-72; 2023b, pp. 10-14, 16). Depending on how reforms are defined, the sector has gone through between 13 (2023a, p. 71) and 29 (Paulsen, 2022) separate reforms the last 20 years affecting strategy, funding, and restructuring plans for the universities. The implementation strategy of the government has been criticised for being too short-sighted in terms of allowing the reforms time to affect the system before implementing new reforms. Another criticism has been the "revolving door" situation of Ministers of Higher Education and Science leading to a "zigzag" of agendas and initiatives (Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023b, p. 14), a point which has been brought up previously in Danish discourse (Baggersgaard, 2021; Oksen, 2021). The frequency and diversity of reforms has led to a feeling of reform fatigue among the universities as well as a perception of the government's close-up steering as outright damaging to the administrative tasks of the institutional boards (Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023c, p. 45).

An important issue in the current debates on academic freedom is formed by the changes in the funding of academic research at universities. In the period 2011-2021 the basic public research allocations increased by 14%, while the volume of the external funding of research grew by 53%, resulting in external funding now representing almost 50% of the total volume of research funding at universities. Recent studies discuss both positive and negative consequences of this change in the balance between basic and external funding. One negative impact highlighted is the risk that universities lose promising, younger researchers due to uncertain funding conditions (Sandborg, 2023). Another problem is that private foundations, whose investments in university research are growing strongly, do not pay overhead, implying that universities must cover overhead expenses themselves when one of their academic staff acquires a grant from one of these foundations. In this we can also identify the possible threats to academic freedom emerging from the size and scale of the involvement of one or more of these foundations with a specific university, for example, the relations of Novo Nordisk with the University of Copenhagen.

Overall, the changes in the funding of research mean that an increasing proportion of the research carried out is defined by external funding organisations, such as foundations and other private funders, implying that researchers to an increasing degree lose opportunities to define their own research agendas. This is a crucial aspect of decreasing academic freedom.

The developments in this category can be illustrated by a number of cases, the first of which concerns the governmental proposal for a major restructuring of master's programs, predominantly within the humanities and social sciences (The Government of Denmark, 2022). The reform proposes to introduce one-year degree-granting programs aimed at easing the transition to professional practices by reducing the required time without sacrificing the quality of the education (pp. 18-20).

In practice, as many as 8 out of 10 two-year master's programs in the humanities and social science might be affected by the reform. Furthermore, universities are required to introduce new highly specialised two-year programs focused on research and technology. The proposal was criticised for being poorly planned, costly, damaging to the existing academic climates at the universities, and the resulting programs being of low quality due to the limited timeframe (Bøttcher, 2023; Kølln, 2023; Myklebust, 2022b). There are explicit concerns for academic freedom and institutional autonomy by academics and higher education organisations in the country in reference to the narrow frame of the reform constraining the universities' ability to evaluate and satisfy the demands of the reform on their own terms. An expert on the humanities as a discipline, Associate Professor Jesper Eckhardt Larsen, argues that the proposed reform follows a historical trend in Denmark of anti-intellectual and anti-academic views on higher education associating the elite with the humanities (Myklebust, 2023).

On 27 June 2023 the government announced an agreement on the proposed reform with four other political parties (Ministry of Education and Research, 2023). The agreement is the result of negotiations between the involved parties and implies that from 2028 on 10% of the master students shall be enrolled in 1½ year study programmes, with another 10% admitted to a flexible professional master's programme where the students combine work and study. As part of the reform, the budget for higher education will be increased considerably, while also the number of study places for international students will be increased¹²⁰. The reform has been met with mixed responses, with, amongst other things, several professional associations being critical (Myklebust 2023b).

Another case of government restructuring of the sector is the recently planned move of study places from the big cities to the smaller districts of Denmark (Ejlertsen et al., 2022). The academic community expressed concern over the initial 10% reduction in study places in the big cities, in reference to a potentially weaker academic climate for students and aspiring academics, as well as the inevitable closing of study programmes (Kølln, 2021a, 2021b). The number has since been reduced to 6,4% (Renard, 2022), and the plan now involves a comprehensive evaluation in 2025, following negotiations.

4.3.2. Institutional leadership and management

The practice of academic co-determination at the institutions is perceived as being less than desirable in terms of the involvement and influence of academic staff and students. Besides provisions for the establishment of an academic council and other representative groups among academic staff and students, the law provides no frameworks or guarantees for their involvement in decision-making processes. Researchers report a number of challenges and barriers to their participation in decision-making processes: a lack of access to or information about ways to influence decision-making (55%), fear of reprimand from leadership following criticism of the latter (50%), low self-efficacy with regards to administrative and executive processes (31-37%), and a perception of the boards' level of influence limiting the involvement of researchers (63%) (Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023a, p. 25). Other perceived barriers relate to a lack of administrative support for academics to engage in executive decision-making, a lack of time, and a lack of recognition by the executive board (Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023a, pp. 34-35). While some rectors have stated that the lack of directives in the law allows for greater freedom enjoyed by the universities to develop their own culture and practices for democratic co-determination (Baggergaard, 2022b; Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023b, pp. 23-24), universities struggle in practice with realising desired levels of co-determination and the effective use of representative councils and other channels of

¹²⁰ For a more comprehensive overview of the main features of the reform, see: <https://www.altinget.dk/artikel/her-er-regeringens-uddannelsesreform-kortere-kandidatuddannelser-faerre-bachelor-og-nyt-kandidatvalg>

communication of the academic staff and students with the university leadership and management. Some researchers have strongly expressed a desire for a revision of the 2003 University Law to include specifications for the degree of and practices surrounding the inclusion of academic staff in decision-making (2022a).

A longstanding criticism of the 2003 University Law is the unitary board structure introducing external and professionalised administrative elements without guarantee for the executive board's insight into academic processes or influence from academic staff (Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023b, pp. 19, 25-26), something which risks damaging the board's legitimacy among academic staff (2023a, p. 38).

On the other end of the spectrum, representatives from the business and professional spheres prefer current arrangements over more traditional university management that could be found in Denmark pre-2003 as the boards become easier to relate to for cooperation purposes and allow for a university more receptive to political agendas which take the labour market into consideration (Siegumfeldt, 2020).

December 2022, the Danish School of Education (DPU) at the University of Aarhus became entangled in a controversy related to a series of firings following budget cuts at the school. While the cuts were argued to necessitate a reduction of the academic staff, some academics argue that several firings were suspiciously untransparent. For example, attention was drawn to the firing of a professor, Thomas Aastrup Rømer, who had been critical of the leadership during his 14 years at DPU. A letter of protest was drafted and signed by 40 Danish academics in support of the professor, describing him as someone with an important voice in Danish educational sciences who has made important contributions to the field (Schmidt, 2022). At the same time, 31 academic staff members at the DPU drafted a letter dismissing descriptions DPU being a place where research freedom is under pressure without a space for critical voices in the educational sciences (Bundsgaard et al, 2022). This illustrates the complexity of the relationship between cutback operations and academic freedom.

4.3.3. Academic community

More than 70% of the researchers who work with or consider working with issues that are regarded as controversial from a societal, political, or academic point of view experienced their work as difficult due to the threat of, exposure to, or fear of acts of retribution from society or within academia along with the lack of support from institutional leaders (18% for academic controversies, 12% for political controversies (Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023a, p. 55). It is also reflective of academics' weakened position with regard to job security and their perceived low level of influence relative to institute leaders and the executive board.

Recently, literary historian Marianna Stidsen was accused of plagiarism in parts of her PhD dissertation, something she describes as "an ideologically motivated witch-hunt" (Mayoni, 2022b). Stidsen resigned from her position at the University of Copenhagen due what she experienced as a hostile environment with colleagues asking her to resign over expressed views critical of the #MeToo movement (Baungaard, 2022; Lindberg & Damm, 2020). One month after her resignation, the formal committee at the University of Copenhagen, which handles cases of questionable research, dismissed the accusation (Mayoni, 2022b).

Furthermore, there has been a growing interest in discussing “wokeness”¹²¹, identity politics, and ideological activism at universities and in society more broadly. Ongoing debates have adopted narratives which juxtapose “woke” and related concepts with rational thinking and free expression (Lindberg et al., 2023)¹²². In the aftermath of the parliamentary motion on “Excessive activism in certain research environments”, it can be argued that a broader discussion on “woke” further informs the context for debates about academic freedom and free expression at universities. In a few cases, explicit concern has been expressed for free speech at universities being repressed by outrage-culture and political correctness (Fuglsang, 2022; Højsgaard, 2022). There is also a concern for reducing arguments and efforts in support for academic freedom as a “crusade” against “woke”, identity politics, and critical race theory (Mchangama, 2022).

Related to the woke-debate is a discussion on the Chicago Principles and if similar language should be introduced into law or university bylaws (Friis, 2021; Holtermann, 2022; Lehmann, 2022; J. Petersen, 2022; L. B. Petersen, 2022; Skadegård, 2022). Implied is a discussion on the burden of academic responsibility and whether it should be held by academics and universities or externally by the government. A (small) survey was conducted on the general population's attitude towards identity political viewpoints which found that Danes were by and large not “woke” (Pröschild & Fahrendorff, 2022)¹²³.

4.3.4. Civil society

The latest debates do not reveal any new specific threats to academic freedom by society beyond the threats mentioned in the 2023 report (Maassen et al 2023). At the same time, there is a continuous concern for the possibility of threats and attacks directed at researchers engaging with socially or politically controversial topics.

4.3.5. Private sector actors

The latest debates do reveal continuous worries about threats to academic freedom by private sector actors, through their potential influence on research proposals and research results. To illustrate the nature of the concerns we will briefly present three relevant cases.

The first case concerns a research project on the impact of beef production on the climate in comparison to other food products, conducted by Aarhus University in collaboration with DTU, funded by the *Kvægafgiftsfonden* (Cattle Tax Fund), with amongst other representatives from *Landbrug & Fødevarer*, in the board of the project. The latter is a business organisation for agriculture, the food and agro industry. The controversies around the project's findings and report have been referred to as the ‘beef report scandal’ in Denmark¹²⁴. The core of the scandal concerns the originally denied involvement of interest organizations of the agricultural sector in the development and production of a research report, amongst other things, when it comes to the examined climate impact of meat production. Aarhus University was accused of allowing *Landbrug & Fødevarer* to write entire paragraphs in the project's final report (Bahn et al 2019). The representatives from the private sector provided, for example, data and calculations to be included in the report, and decided

¹²¹ According to the Cambridge Dictionary, ‘woke’ stands for an increased awareness of social problems such as racism and inequality (see: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/woke>). For interpretations of the terms woke and wokeness in the Danish context, see, for example, Pröschild and Fahrendorff (2022). And Wiedemann (2022).

¹²² See e.g. also Dahl (2023)

¹²³ See also the X-post by one of the researchers responsible for the study (https://twitter.com/M_B_Petersen/status/1536248035944108032)

¹²⁴ See, for example: <https://newsroom.au.dk/en/news/show/artikel/koedsagen-faa-overblikket-her/>; and: <https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rr-news-europe-nordics-2021-2-principles-for-sponsored-research-in-wake-of-danish-beef-scandal/>; as well as: <https://danwatch.dk/en/undersogelse/the-pork-report-how-impartial-climate-research-was-dictated-by-danish-crown-and-used-in-pork-advertising/>

how the results should be formulated. This is a clear example of an undue interference by the private sector in academic freedom.

The second case concerns a professor at the University of Aarhus, Stiig Markager, who, after he expressed himself about pollution coming from agriculture, was sued in court by an organisation representing agro-industrial interests. The University of Aarhus clearly supported him, as expressed in a public letter by the university rector, with the involved dean and head of department (Henriksen, Nielsen, and Andersen, 2019). In the letter these university leaders stated that, "It is simply unheard of for an interest organisation to try to intimidate a researcher from participating in the public debate by suing him for libel." Eventually, Professor Markager won the case, but his case was seen as a clear violation of academic freedom.

The third case consists of a conflict around an article in *Nature* produced by two researchers from the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Aarhus University. The conflict attracted a lot of attention in Denmark and beyond.¹²⁵ In the article, the two researchers concluded, among other things, that humans perform better than a computer algorithm in a computer game that simulates a complex quantum physics problem. The article caused a great stir, but was also criticised by, among others, three researchers from the same Department as the article's authors. The article was later withdrawn on the basis of the criticism and a check of the conclusion, where an error was detected in the article's data basis, which meant that the conclusion no longer held. The criticism from the authors' academic colleagues was deemed unacceptable by the then chairman of the Carlsberg Foundation, which had supported one of the article's authors with a grant of DK 1 million after the article's publication. In an email correspondence between the foundation's chair and the two researchers, which he forwarded to Aarhus University's rector, the foundation chair called the critics 'disloyal' 'nest skimmers' and 'baboons', and he called for a gag order. Strikingly, the dean of the faculty in question interfered in the debate by writing to the foundation chair that he was indeed inclined to give the critical researchers a gag order until they would change their mind. While both the foundation chair and the dean have since apologised for their statements, the case shows, amongst other things, that private sector funders can put pressure on academics to refrain from academic criticism they do not like (Andersen, 2021; Vestergaard and Andersen, 2021), which is a form of undue violation of the academic freedom of expression.

of efforts by a prominent researcher in his function as chair of a private foundation to silence academics who had criticised an article in *Nature* which was produced by two of their colleagues from the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Aarhus University. an academic debate about controversial research results. The foundation in question had funded research which was criticised by academic colleagues from the same faculty as the researchers who had conducted the research. The chair of the foundation responded to the criticism by calling the critical researchers 'nest skimmers' and 'baboons.'

4.3.6. Summary of findings

A considerable part of the current debates about, and worries with respect to, academic freedom in Denmark is linked to the continuous impact of the 2003 University Autonomy Law and the multiple sector reforms introduced since. The evaluation of the 2003 law by DFIR argues that the law has succeeded in strengthening the universities' focus on society, but at the cost of a deteriorating democratic culture and possible direct and indirect threats to academic freedom (Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023a; Schou Drivsholm, 2023). The latter is visible in some of the findings of the evaluation, for example, in the number of academics that feel restricted in their freedom of expression. Furthermore, changes in the basic conditions for academic freedom in the form of limitations to self-governance and co-determination, worsening labour conditions, and

¹²⁵ See for an overview of the conflict: Vestergaard and Andersen (2021).

alterations in the public funding, are seen to possibly affect the opportunities of academics to follow their own research and teaching agendas negatively (Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023a). Of relevance is that the report does not identify the 2003 Law as the problem when it comes to the worries with respect to academic freedom. Rather, it argues that the universities' boards and leaders have to do more to strengthen the democratic culture and academic freedom at their institutions. This, the report argues, should be possible within the current governance- and funding framework conditions for the universities (Danmarks Forsknings- og Innovationspolitiske Råd, 2023a, p. 9).

While the diagnosis of the impact of the 2003 law presented in the DFIR report is generally acknowledged, there is some criticism of the recommendations the report presents, in the sense that the recommendations are seen by some as 'toothless,' and do not deal with the main causes of the current imbalance between executive and democratic principles in university governance (Løkeland-Stai, 2023). In this, the opinions are divided between those stakeholders who argue that solutions for the current problems in university governance, including the threats to academic freedom, can be developed within the current University Law, while others argue that the fundamental changes that are needed to address the problems effectively require a new University Law (Løkeland-Stai, 2023).

All in all, the Danish case is characterised by specific features, which together form the backdrop for a continuous debate on possible and real threats to academic freedom. This concerns both direct threats to the basic dimensions of academic freedom, as well as major worries about the short term and long-term impacts on academic freedom of changes in its basic conditions. In the current political and legal university landscape, it looks as if there is broad agreement on the nature of these threats, but a lack of agreement on how to address them most effectively.

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4.4. Estonia

In the pilot study by the European Parliament STOA Panel, *State of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States* (Maassen et al., 2023), Estonia was found to have relatively good conditions for academic freedom, with some pressures stemming from the underfunding of the higher education and research sector. With regards to academic freedom, this is largely noticed in the salary level of academics being unsustainable along with low levels of public funding of basic research, limiting the *de facto* research freedom. Some challenges to academic freedom were covered in the previous study, but none of which were not dealt with or discussed in a manner compatible with academic freedom.

Considering the five potential threat sources to academic freedom followed in this study, the previous findings for Estonia can mainly be identified with government and politics, and institutional leadership and management. With regards to governance and politics of the system, basic conditions for institutional autonomy and academic freedom are present in Estonia; however, the lack of funding in the system hampers the growth and development of the system. Particular issue was taken with a top-heavy distribution of competitive funds combined with poor salary conditions for academic staff.

The threat from institutional leadership and management came in the form of a pact between three of the country's rectors in an effort to coordinate and consolidate the research efforts of the three universities. Academics were highly critical of the nature of the pact as it allowed for fluid interpretations of good research practice and implied the universities' ownership of research results and dissemination thereof, allowing for omission and modification of research.

Since the publication of the pilot study report, many of the potential threats identified in the pilot report remain relevant, while new themes suggest potential threats from worsening funding conditions and leadership practices that have not been sufficiently professionalised. At the same time, there seem to be few discussions concerning threats from civil society and private sector actors. The academic community in Estonia receives high level of trust and there are no debates within the academic community that would point towards self-censorship or social media being a major source for threats.

4.4.1. Government and politics

The debates in Estonia reveal that while there are no reports or debates concerning direct infringements on academic freedom, there is a continued worry about the low level of public funding of the system and its effects on university budgets, academic salaries and careers, and distribution of research funding. While the current funding arrangements are described as unsustainable and underwhelming given the goals set by the government and by comparison to other EU countries, there is an ongoing dialogue between the academic community and the government. Universities are currently operating at a deficit following a stagnation in higher education and research funding from the state.

With regards to both costs of operating costs of universities and research, universities compete for public funding, leading to large differences in dependencies on external funding. Universities Estonia (*Rektorite Nõukogu*) provides data on the funding of the higher education system as a whole and the income profiles of six universities. In general, the funding of the higher education system has not kept up with the growth of the economy of the higher expectations of universities' contribution to the educational level of the country (Universities Estonia, 2023a). With regards to the income profiles of the universities, a large proportion of the funding granted to universities is competitive, including funding for operational support and research grants. This also adversely affects the salaries of academic staff (Universities Estonia, 2023b) as well as the stability and predictability of research funding (Kindisko et al., 2022), making academic careers less attractive and harder to navigate, stifling the development of the sector as well as freedom of research.

The situation has become more critical due to recent crises that strain the public budget, including covid-19 pandemic, the energy crisis related to the war in Ukraine and a high degree of inflation in recent years (inflation rate in 2022 was almost 20%, but has been slowing down in 2023). These conditions have created significant challenges for public funding of the sector in Estonia. Current prognosis also includes further cuts in the overall state budget, making future funding prospects uncertain, something which is pointed out as a concern within the system.

Universities Estonia have advocated for an increase in funding, starting with 300 million euros over the next four years with a subsequent increase to 1.5% of GDP in the state budget, in order to address the budgetary gap that currently exists (Postimees Editorial, 2023; Tallinn University of Technology, 2022). The group of rectors also expressed that representatives of political parties appeared to recognise low levels of funding as a significant issue. In addition to increased state funding, there have been discussions of introducing tuition fees for all students in some form, with the government planning to explore alternatives in future negotiations with rectors (ERR Editorial, 2022, 2023a; Silm et al., 2022).

In contrast to some of the other countries, there seem to be few explicit attacks on specific kinds of research from political actors and existing debates about research do not seem to bring up academic freedom as a key concern. Yet, more indirect threats can be identified. For example, the populist right wing party has attempted to limit internationalisation of higher education and the use of English language in study programmes¹²⁶. At this point, the changes have been framed as a change of policy to avoid institutions being "forced" to internationalise. A secondary rationale for this has been that international student migration could function a pathway for migration¹²⁷. Nevertheless, such changes can also become a constraint on academic freedom when they start

¹²⁶ Eesti Riigikogu. Kõrgharidusseaduse muutmise seadus: eelnõu 291. <https://www.riigikogu.ee/tegevus/eelnoud/eelnou/45d23a97-69b4-4fc3-9ddc-bac6916822a6/korgharidusseaduse-muutmise-seadus>

¹²⁷ <https://www.riigikogu.ee/fraktsioonide-teated/eesti-konservatiivse-rahvaerakonna-fraktsioon/ekre-tahab-seadusemuudatustega-piirata-odava-toojou-sissevoolu/>

limiting particular kinds of academic activities and freedom to teach. While debates about this policy initiative are ongoing, the issue of academic freedom has not been explicitly debated in this context.

4.4.2. Institutional leadership and management

The latest debates do not reveal any specific discussions concerning infringements on academic freedom by institutional leadership and management but concerns of stronger steering of research in the context of highly competitive research funding environment are present. Also, this issue has been linked to the unsustainable levels of funding and the consequences this may have for internal priorities and strategies.

Moreover, analysis of the APIKS survey data¹²⁸ suggested that leadership is an area where about half of the staff found leadership to be competent and high quality. While collegial bodies exist, staff express worries about co-determination and inclusion of academic staff into decision-making processes, suggesting that there may be constraints on how bodies for self-governance function in practice. Moreover, only about two thirds of staff assess their own academic freedom as sufficient concerning matters of research, while almost four out of five experience sufficient freedom in teaching. While these data are at this point a few years old, newer data that would provide comprehensive feedback from academic staff themselves has not been possible to locate.

4.4.3. Academic community

The latest debates do not reveal any specific cases of infringements on academic freedom by the academic community itself.

4.4.4. Civil society

In general, the academic community in Estonia experiences a remarkably high degree of trust from the society¹²⁹ and no specific cases of infringements from societal actors have been identified in the review. Moreover, there also seems to be no specific public discussion concerning potential threats through social media, and no reports from the academic community of self-censorship due to external pressures. The news items that have discussed cancel culture as promotion of self-censorship seem to refer to this as a phenomenon outside of Estonia, rather than as a key issue in the Estonian higher education context.

A highly debated case that could primarily be placed in the intersection of research ethics, academic freedom, and corruption took place in summer/autumn of 2023. The case concerned a survey conducted by the thinktank *Pere Sihtkapital* in collaboration with the University of Tartu. The survey aimed to investigate why Estonian women were childless and had in that regard requested access to data from the national population registry. The survey included several intimate questions, which many recipients of the survey found offensive and intrusive. Potential breaches of research ethics and good practice added to the controversy of the survey (Pärli, 2023). While the researchers had submitted the study for approval with University of Tartu ethics committee, they had not yet received approval prior to sending out the surveys. A central issue in the scandal was that the contract between the University of Tartu and *Pere Sihtkapital* was signed by the dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UT. This became controversial, as it was reported that the dean also sat on the board of the foundation behind the thinktank, leading to a potential conflict of interest, and the process had not followed internal procedures at the University. The case ended with the dean resigning his position before his contract being terminated (ERR Editorial, 2023b, 2023c; University of Tartu, 2023). The parliament's (*Riigikogu*) special committee on state budget control had a special

¹²⁸ https://etag.ee/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/APIKS-Eesti_2019.pdf

¹²⁹ Eesti Teadusbaromeeter. https://www.etag.ee/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Eesti_Teadusbaromeeter.pdf

session discussing the circumstances under which the study received funding (Riigikogu, 2023), and the Estonian police have launched an investigation into contractual aspects of this case (ERR Editorial, 2023d).

While much of the public discussion has been predominantly about data protection, research ethics, contract practices, and the reaction of the recipients of the survey, the case has become politicised and partially linked to issues of academic freedom. The controversy has by some been described as an infringement on research freedom by way of the government interference (Jõesaar, 2023). Moreover, in a letter to his colleagues at UT, the dean, professor Eamets himself, described the ordeal as an “ideological/political attack, or ideological cancellation” launched by the media (ERR Editorial, 2023e). That said, there appears to be a consensus that the main elements of the scandal concern violations of research ethics, contractual aspects, and data protection, rather than academic freedom.

4.4.5. Private sector actors

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom by private sector actors. However, as with other countries with severely constrained public research funding, an overly strong reliance on external funding from the business sector may have negative consequences for academic freedom in the long run.

4.4.6. Summary of findings

In sum, the latest debates did not substantially alter the picture presented in the pilot study, which indicated that overall, there appear to be few instances of direct infringements that have been discussed in the public domain. In general, academic freedom does not seem to be an issue which receives attention. Institutions in Estonia also appear to have a reasonably high degree of institutional autonomy. The recent major debate concerning the survey appeared to be a case where academic freedom was raised as an argument, yet the case largely appeared to be more a case of contractual mismanagement and research ethics. While a few discussion pieces concerning self-censorship and cancel culture can be found, these predominantly focus on issues in “other” countries, and no active local debate on such issues has been identified.

In general, there are continuous concerns and worries expressed about the low degrees of public funding of the higher education sector, which may over time also affect conditions for academic freedom. There is considerable societal attention to this issue, especially concerning the continuous challenges for increasing public funding and the demands on the state budget, which suggest that additional funding may be difficult to obtain. This degree of dependence on external funding, and the highly competitive nature of such funding, may influence academics’ opportunities to choose their research priorities, yet some of this effect may also remain underreported.

4.4.7. Resources

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4.5. France

In the 2022/23 pilot study on the state of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States commissioned by the European Parliament STOA Panel (Maassen et al 2023), France was found to have relatively strong de jure and de facto academic freedom. At the same time, as argued in the European University Association's 'University Autonomy Scorecard, France has consistently a

relatively low level of institutional autonomy within a European context¹³⁰, due to the special position of universities in the French science system (Pruvot and Estermann, 2017; Upton, 2022; Pruvot, Estermann, and Popkhadze 2023)¹³¹.

As regards the central dimensions of academic freedom, the pilot study identified potential political, academic, and societal threats to the freedom to research, teach and study. This interference is exemplified in political and academic efforts to delegitimise academic subjects that were deemed to support “Islamism”, such as post-colonial studies. In this, the pilot study argued that the tensions around academic freedom concern, “the diametrically opposed currents of the “patriotically correct” on the one side, and the “politically correct” on the other”. In essence, both perspectives – the political worry about the possible link between certain academic fields and terrorism, and the critics who argue that the worry is exaggerated – could be argued to be legitimate (Beaud, 2022, p. 220; Maassen et al. 2023). Therefore, what is of relevance here is not “who is wrong and who is right,” but rather whether the extent to which the involvement of various non-academic actors in the debates pose a serious threat to the basic principle that the responsibility to determine what is scientific and what is not should rest with the academic community. Further, the pilot study referred to academic and student activism, and the use of SLAPPS (Strategic lawsuits against public participation) by private actors as posing potential threats to the freedom of academic expression (Beaud 2022, p. 227-229). Concerning the conditions for academic freedom, the study indicated that in addition to relatively low institutional autonomy, French universities and colleges also faced the emergence of a “subtle form of hierarchisation” (Legrand 2008, p. 2242). This is the result of growing leadership positions, and the professionalisation of institutional administration and management, which can be argued to affect the conditions for effective self-governance negatively. Further, financial conditions which favour the research institute sector and relatively low academic salaries were argued to affect the academic labour conditions and financial conditions under which academic freedom can be exercised.

In summary, the pilot study indicated that there are worries in France with respect to four of the five sources of threats to de facto academic freedom identified in the study. First, the funding conditions for research in France combined with political interference in academic work indicated possible threats from government and politics. Second, increasing institutional restrictions on the freedom of research and teaching indicated a potential threat to academic freedom by institutional leadership and management. Third, certain forms of academic staff and student activism against activities, in particular academic subject areas, could potentially form an internal threat to academic freedom. Finally, the efforts to silence critical voices in academia, by using SLAPPs against individual academics (Beaud, 2022, pp. 227-229), amongst other things, suggested a possible threat to academic freedom by private sector actors.

An issue that was not addressed explicitly in the pilot study is how security concerns in international collaborations might affect academic freedom. In this chapter, the relevance of this issue for France is discussed briefly on the basis of a parliamentary report by the initiative of the *Rassemblement des démocrates, progressistes et indépendants* (RDPI) group, chaired by Etienne Blanc (Les Républicains, Rhône) with André Gattolin (RDPI, Hauts-de-Seine) as rapporteur (Gattolin, 2021).

In this follow-up study, recent debates on worries about and possible threats to academic freedom in French academia are presented. These debates concern the *de facto* state of play of academic freedom in France and indicate that many of the same challenges identified in the pilot study persist

¹³⁰ The latest report of the University Autonomy Scorecard covers 35 European university systems (see: <https://eua.eu/resources/publications/1061:university-autonomy-in-europe-iv-the-scorecard-2023.html>)

¹³¹ For a historical study of the development of the French university system from 1806 to this century, see: Musselin (2001), and France Universités (2022)

in the country. For example, a continued discussion on the basic conditions under which academic freedom is to be exercised, including the relatively low level of university autonomy, insufficient increases in the public funding of higher education, and unattractive academic labour conditions¹³², is underlying persistent worries about the possible impact by government and politics on academic freedom. Furthermore, there are still worries about the possible impact of institutional leadership and management on academic freedom which create an environment which is un conducive to academics' freedom to set their own research and teaching agendas. Finally, worries persist about the possible impact of internal academic debates and conflicts on academic freedom, while threats to academic freedom from certain groups in civil society and private sector actors continue to be regarded as problematic. While these worries do not necessarily reflect structural threats to, or violations of, academic freedom, they combine to create an increasingly worrying environment for academic freedom.

4.5.1. Government and politics

The issue of academic responsibility for academic freedom. In March 2021, the European University Association (EUA) announced that it supports the then *Conférence des Présidents d'Universités* (an organisation of French university presidents, since January 2022 referred to as *France Universités*), which had called for an end 'to sterile polemics.'¹³³ *France Universités* made this call in response to an announcement by the then French Minister for Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Frédérique Vidal, which said that she was planning to organise an enquiry into French university research focused on colonialism and race. Vidal indicated that her aim with this enquiry was to identify those "wanting to fracture and divide" the country. In essence, Vidal's aim was to distinguish "real" academic research from activism. This was inspired by the assumed impact of what was referred to as "Islamism-leftism" on research¹³⁴.

France Universités' call, and the EUA's support for it, are grounded in a core principle with respect to academic freedom, which is that guarding academic freedom and determining what is "real" scientific research must be the responsibility of the academic community. An enquiry announced by a member of government into university research in certain academic areas, more specifically research on colonialism and race in order to determine whether the research in these areas is scientific, can be regarded as an important threat to academic freedom. In the section below on 'the impact of academic intolerance,' we will discuss internal academic debates on possible threats to academic freedom of the academic activities that are argued to represent the possible threat of "Islamism-leftism" in French universities.

The issue of university autonomy and public funding. As indicated, debates on academic freedom in France continue to refer to the possible impact of to the relatively low level of university autonomy (Pruvot et al., 2023). This worry was mentioned in the pilot study and characterised as a consequence of the unique structure of higher education in France, where certain specialised higher education institutions (*grandes écoles*) hold most of the prestige and a large part of the publicly funded research is undertaken in non-university research institutes (Musselin 2001; Paradeise, 2017; France Universités 2022).

¹³² See, e.g., the EUA Funding Observatory, chapter on France (pp. 19-21): <https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/compendium%20pfo.pdf>. This chapter argues that the funding increase (2008-2019) for public universities in France has been lower than economic growth. Furthermore, rising student numbers have not been met by sufficient investment so far. As shown in the report, in 2008-2019 student numbers have increased by 16% at French universities, while academic staff positions have increased by a mere 4%.

¹³³ In French: « Islamisme-gauchisme » : stopper la confusion et les polémiques stériles; see: <https://franceuniversites.fr/actualite/islamisme-gauchisme-stopper-la-confusion-et-les-polemiques-steriles/>

¹³⁴ See: <https://franceuniversites.fr/actualite/eua-supports-the-conference-des-presidents-duniversites-france-in-its-call-to-protect-academic-freedom/>

In 2019, *France Universités* devoted its annual conference to the question of institutional autonomy. The conference concluded with five suggestions: rethinking how the state is organised as a higher education regulator; giving universities more room to experiment by “extending the scope of application of the December, 12, 2018 decree to all universities;” giving universities full autonomy in regards to hiring; expanded financial and legal tools to achieve energy efficiency on campuses; and “endowing the five-year contracts signed between universities and the government with substantial means” (France Universités, 2019).

The 2018 decree referred to by *France Universités* the order to allow the *Communautés d’Universités et Établissements* (COMUEs; in English: Communities of universities and institutions) to benefit from a new status of experimental institutions (“EPE”), with a larger autonomy in defining their status, offering especially more leeway to define the composition of their decision-making bodies. In particular, the executive board (*‘conseil d’administration’*) must be composed of at least 40% of staff and student elected members, implying that internally elected members can be outvoted. For some observers, this decree compromises the fundamentals of university democracy and the principle of self-governance (Guiselin, 2019; Eyraud, 2021). As of January 1st, 2023, 15 institutions had chosen the status of EPE.

In March 2023, the topic of university autonomy was discussed by Thierry Coulhon, the President of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education in an article in *Le Monde* lamenting the low position of France in the European Universities Association’s scorecard of university autonomy in Europe (Pruvot, Estermann and Popkhadze, 2023). Coulhon argues that “the President of the Republic confirmed, in January 2022 during the fiftieth anniversary of *de France Universités*, that he wanted to go clearly in this direction, but the acceleration of developments is slow in coming and the loosening of legal constraints lacks a concrete implementation”¹³⁵ (Coulhon, 2023). At the same time, the slow enhancement of institutional autonomy is argued to not only be caused by external political factors, but also by the concern, and at least passive resistance, of the academic staff who fear that within the specific French university context, the enhancement of institutional autonomy might pose a threat to their professional autonomy and academic freedom (Upton, 2022).

Within this context, characterised by worries and uncertainties about the enhancement of institutional autonomy, there have been continuous debates on the deteriorating public funding conditions for French universities, and the unattractive labour conditions, especially for academic staff with temporary contracts. This led, amongst other things, to a 2021 petition signed by many academics, demanding the resignation of then Minister Vidal¹³⁶. The petition was particularly triggered by the adoption of the Law LPR in December 2020. This law was criticised by many French academics because it created the ability for higher education institutions to recruit academics on a contract basis, which means that it introduced junior tenure-track positions with a limitation of 50% of each institution’s annual academic recruitment. Furthermore, the Law incorporated the abolition of the CNU (National Council of Universities), which historically played an important role in assistant professors’ applications to professor positions. Article 5 of the Law now allows assistant professors to directly apply to open positions of professors within universities. Since the law can be expected to enhance institutional autonomy, some scholars argue that it may lead to an erosion of academic freedom (Harari-Kermadec et al. 2020).

¹³⁵ This quote is a translation of the original quote, which is in French. The original quote is as follows: “Le président de la République a confirmé, en janvier 2022 lors du cinquantenaire de France Universités, qu’il souhaitait aller clairement en ce sens, mais l’accélération des évolutions tarde à venir et le desserrement des contraintes juridiques manque d’une concrétisation à la hauteur.”

¹³⁶ See: <https://universiteouverte.org/2021/03/03/lettre-dune-fourmi-a-une-ministre/>

4.5.2. Institutional leadership and management

The possible impact of institutional leadership and management on academic freedom continues to be an issue of various studies and debates (e.g. Mignot-Gérard, Sponem, Chatelain-Ponroy and Musselin, 2023; Upton 2022). As identified in the pilot study (Maassen, et al, 2023), the more executive and hierarchical university leadership practices that have developed over the last 10-15 years in France have been argued to lead to situations where it becomes more difficult for academics to pursue their own research and teaching agendas and preferences, thus impacting academic freedom. As a result, it is important to carefully monitor the further development of university leadership and its impact on academic freedom in France.

There are indications of a continued insecurity in the labour conditions of the academic university staff. For example, an article from April 2023 that was published in Le Monde newspaper by “a collective of teacher-researchers and elected officials” discusses the insecure labour conditions of university staff in France. In the article, the collective calls on university presidents to increase the wages of temporary university teachers, who number 130,000 and make up over 60% of the teaching staff in the university sector, yet continue to make under minimum wage (Collective, 2023). These numbers, with many staff in underpaid and impermanent positions, emphasise the insecure labour conditions faced by academics in French universities.

The issue of academic labour conditions can be regarded as a responsibility of both the government and the university leadership. As such, the issue is related to the level of institutional autonomy and room to manoeuvre that university leadership possesses. For getting a better understanding of the role of institutional leadership in the development of academic labour conditions, a more focused and detailed monitoring would be required.

4.5.3. Academic community

Another continuous worry with respect to the state of play of *de facto* academic freedom in France is related to the issue of the changing nature of internal academic debates, and the purported growing impact of academic conflicts on certain academic fields and research issues. Growing academic tensions and conflicts are identified as a possible threat to academic freedom in the pilot study (Maassen et al., 2023), especially in the social sciences and humanities, where, according to some academics, a climate of “fear” reigns at French universities (Lombard-Latune, 2023). This is exemplified in the debates focusing on areas such as Islamic studies, decolonisation, and post-colonial studies, addressing the question of whether teaching and research activities in these areas are truly academic or a form of academic activism. While it can be argued that the conflicts and disturbances that are accompanying some of these debates violate academic freedom, in essence, the debates are also part of the way in which the academic community takes care of its responsibility to determine “what is scientific and what is not”? The complexity of the extent to which the current internal academic debates, for example, with respect to “Islamism”, form a threat to academic freedom is further compounded by the ways in which the internal academic debates are linked to, and in some cases overlap with, external debates. For example, academic debates and activities, and individual academics, have faced political criticism from both right-wing and left-wing politicians, as well as from certain civic groups. This combination of threats to academic freedom from inside and outside the academic community is new, and it deserves to be monitored closely in France, as well as in other EU Member States. In these debates, accusations of, and references to, ‘wokeism’ have been made (e.g., Lombard-Latune, 2023; Lisnard, 2023). One important issue in this situation is whether the university leadership has the legal right and other means to adequately take care of its role in protecting academic freedom. For example, a recent article in Le Monde raised the question “is the academic debate on radical Islam possible within universities?” (Ayad et al., 2023).

This complexity and nature of the debates can be illustrated by the following examples. To begin with, a recent controversy at the Sciences Po Grenoble reveals the continuation of this struggle. In

2021, two university professors were accused of islamophobia, and had their names slandered by anonymous posters placed throughout the university. Additionally, a student union asked students for testimonials of islamophobia from their courses (Ouest-France, 2021). The professors and some politicians claim that this is an attack on their academic freedom by leftist student groups (BFMTV, 2021), and one of the professors sued the president of the student union for defamation, with the case having undergone trial in January 2023 (Le Nevé, 2023).

Additionally, another recent controversy surrounds Florence Bergeaud-Blackler's release of her book on the Muslim brotherhood titled *Le Frérisme et ses Réseaux, l'Enquête*. According to *Le Monde* newspaper, Bergeaud-Blackler has had "three complaints for "death threats", one for "public insult", two for "public defamation" and placement under police protection"¹³⁷ since the release of her book in January 2023 (Ayad et al., 2023). Bergeaud-Blackler claims that these threats are spurred by other academics, such as former CNRS research director François Burgat, who "excited social networks, which led to more serious threats,"¹³⁸ according to *Le Monde*. Conversely, Burgat argues that their research was attacked by Bergeaud-Blackler, and they also receive death threats due to their work. This case shows that these accusations of academic intolerance over Islamic research come from both sides of the political spectrum, and from inside and outside of the academic community. However, other academics on Islam interviewed for the *Le Monde* article point out that plenty of research on Islam is undertaken in France without backlash, and that perhaps it is the non-scientific method of communication chosen by some researchers that attracts backlash, although threats against academics are never acceptable.

Further, another recent example concerns an attack by activists on academics at the Pantheon-Sorbonne University during a law conference titled "The Universal Republic put to the test of trans identity"¹³⁹ in June 2023 (Sugy, 2023). During this attack, the masked activists threw paint and objects at the academics and yelled that the university was theirs. This attack comes amidst calls to cancel the conference over charges of transphobia. The president of the University, Stéphane Braconnier, denounces the protests as attacks on academic freedom.

From the examples discussed here, in addition to the examples from the pilot study (Maassen et al., 2023), there are strong indications that the impact of internal academic debates and conflicts on academic freedom in France requires careful monitoring. While academics continue to exercise their freedom to teach and research in practice, physical and reputational threats could result, for example, in academics self-censoring for fear of retribution. This will certainly be the case if these internal debates relate to, or feed into, growing external efforts to interfere in the internal responsibility for guarding academic freedom and the openness of academic debates.

4.5.4. Civil society

The external threats to academic freedom in France come not only from government and politics, but also from civil groups (e.g. *les Vaxxeuses*),¹⁴⁰ who increasingly focus on both specific academic debates and the involvement of leading academics in national policy groups, e.g. during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, as indicated in the pilot study (Maassen et al. 2023), there are worries in

¹³⁷ This quote is a translation of the original quote, which is in French. The original quote is as follows: "Trois plaintes pour « menaces de mort », une pour « injure publique », deux pour « diffamation publique » et un placement sous protection policière."

¹³⁸ This quote is a translation of the original quote, which is in French. The original quote is as follows: "ont excité les réseaux sociaux, ce qui a conduit à des menaces plus sérieuses."

¹³⁹ This title is a translation of the original, which is as follows: "la République universelle à l'épreuve de la transidentité."

¹⁴⁰ France is argued to be one of the most vaccine-sceptical countries in the world (see, e.g. BBC News, 2021; France24, 2022), with this scepticism leading to severe attacks also on scientists involved in the development of governmental measures.

France about the ways in which private sector actors have tried to silence critical voices in academia, such as by using SLAPPs (Strategic lawsuits against public participation) against critical academics (Beaud 2022, p. 227-229). In this study, we have not identified specific new developments or cases. However, the impact of these new, external threats to academic freedom requires serious attention; for example, when it comes to their influence on academic self-censorship.

4.5.5. International collaboration, security, and academic freedom

Like other EU Member States¹⁴¹, in France there is also a broad acknowledgement that as a result of geopolitical, technological and societal developments, the international collaboration of higher education institutions is becoming more and more complex and requires adequate political attention. This is addressed in a parliamentary report addressing non-European state influences on the French university and academic world and their impacts (Gattolin, 2021). With the report, the authors want to prepare French institutions for what they argue will be one of the largest challenges of the 21st century: preserving and protecting the French scientific heritage or properties, academic freedom, and scientific integrity. The report provides a description of the threat coming from international scientific collaboration and weaknesses in the French system, an assessment framework of influences, the impact of foreign powers on the university sector and the related government policy. The report shows the complexity of any measure taken to protect the French academic sector. On the one hand, there is an academic tradition in which knowledge and ideas circulate freely, and on the other hand there are the new national strategies, designed for the long term and implemented with significant resources by governments that can sometimes be considered 'hostile.' The report argues for differentiation: the response to foreign interference must be 'multivariable' and scalable, given that strategies of foreign actors are changeable and are specifically aimed at exploiting weaknesses (Gattolin, 2021).

4.5.6. Summary of findings

In conclusion, the state of play of de facto academic freedom in France continues to face multiple challenges. To begin with, the basic dimensions of academic freedom and especially the freedom of academic expression, have been deteriorating further, especially in the social sciences and humanities. In this, an emerging combination of internal and external threats can be identified, consisting of growing internal conflicts around certain academic activities, and the intensifying interference of politics and civil groups in these conflicts. This 'coalition of various sources' threatening academic freedom in France is, on the one hand, rather uniquely concentrated around the issue of 'Islam-Leftism', while on the other hand, external threats to academic freedom are also visible in areas that are more in line with the situation in other EU Member States, such as the attacks on academics involved in the development of COVID-19 measures. When it comes to the conditions under which academic freedom is exercised, the relatively low level of university autonomy is an issue in the French debates on academic freedom. However, this not only concerns worries about the possible impact of a low level of university autonomy, but also about the possible impact of enhanced institutional autonomy on individual professional autonomy and academic freedom. Furthermore, the deteriorating public funding basis for French universities and the rather unattractive academic labour conditions can be argued to have a negative influence on the conditions for exercising academic freedom.

The French case is, in several respects, unique among the EU Member States, both because of the specific nature of its political order and state bureaucracy (Beaud, 2022), and of the unique organisation and structure of the French science system. In this specific setting, a number of threats to academic freedom can be identified that in their basic nature might be interpreted as uniquely French. However, at the same time, worries about emerging links between intensifying internal

¹⁴¹ See, for example, the chapter on the Netherlands in this report.

academic conflicts, especially in the social sciences and humanities, and external sources of threats to academic freedom, especially from politics and civil groups, can be observed in other EU Member States too. This clearly forms a new type of threat to academic freedom that requires more detailed studies and monitoring, both within specific national settings, such as France, as well as comparatively, in order to identify specific national developments and threats that are affecting various EU Member States.

4.5.7. Resources

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4.6. Hungary

In the pilot study by the European Parliament STOA Panel, *State of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States* (Maassen et al., 2023), Hungary was found to have severe threats to academic freedom affecting institutional autonomy, freedom of research, and freedom of expression. The system is showing signs of direct government interference, increased government influence, control of universities and other key higher education agencies, unpredictability in governance arrangements by way of frequent reforms, and weak conditions for individual freedom of research and freedom of expression. Considering the five potential threat sources to academic freedom followed in this study, the previous findings for Hungary can mainly be identified as threats from government and politics, institutional leadership and management, and civil society.

The government's influence on democratic public institutions, including universities and key higher education agencies, constitutes a substantial threat to the conditions for academic freedom. Particular attention has been drawn to the "model change" of the governance structure of Hungarian universities, effectively transferring the ownership of institutions from the government to "public interest trusts" in a stated aim to increase their autonomy. Members of the boards of the trusts serve on a lifetime basis by appointment of the government with limited transparency as to the appointment process, with many members being previous or active politicians with a connection to Orbán's government, or openly sympathetic to the government ideology. This has raised serious questions regarding aspects of academic freedom, including institutional autonomy and academic representation in governance, given the authoritarian tendencies of the current lineage of governments.

Concerns for the state of the national debate were also raised, due to the current political environment and the reluctance of academics to speak out on issues and go against government politics. Although national outlets had reported on the individual cases of "Lex CEU", the closing down of the Gender Studies programme as a publicly recognised master programme, and the occupation of the University of Theatre and Film (SZFE) as examples of the consequences of the

“model change,” few contributions had been made to discuss the general deterioration of academic freedom in Hungary. Some explanations can be found in government media control through the KESMA media group and the risk for individual academics and institutions to suffer professional, reputational, and financial costs. Overall, the direct government influence on public institutions and the possibility for the current political elite to continue to exert influence by way of occupying key roles in society, even after a potential government change, poses serious threats to *de facto* academic freedom.

4.6.1. Government and politics

Since the previous STOA study, the issue around the model change and the transfer of ownership of the universities from the government to public interest trusts has developed further, with an intensification of debates regarding its effects on academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Overall, twenty-one universities have been transformed by the government from public entities into foundations governed by boards of trustees. These boards consist of appointees and close supporters of the government. Similar trusts have also been established in the culture sector, and in other parts of science and teaching. In February 2023, active politicians resigned from the trusts and were replaced by non-politicians, many of which are reported to have ties to Fidesz, even if indirectly. Moreover, while active politicians resigned, former ministers, state secretaries, commissioners, mayors and so forth stayed in their positions, as well as members of the economic elite. Thus, concerns about academic freedom, institutional autonomy and academic representation have intensified.

A decision by the European Council in December 2022 to withhold Union funds from the Hungarian government has led to an ongoing dispute between the Hungarian government and Brussels, centred on the public interest trusts. The decision cuts 55% of EU funding from three operational programs targeting Hungarian areas for development, in addition to prohibiting the commitment to legal agreements between the Union and any public interest trusts or entity maintained by the trusts (Council of the European Union, 2022a, p. Article 2). The European Commission had notified the Hungarian government in April 2022 about concerns related to the handling of EU funds. The public interest trusts were specifically referenced, in addition to systemic irregularities and weaknesses making parts of the public procurement process susceptible to conflicts of interest, corruption, and fraud. The Hungarian government presented a “service package” meant to address these issues, which the Commission deemed sufficient if the measures were fully implemented in their entirety, including an anti-corruption taskforce and a number of audit, control, and monitoring mechanisms. The measures were not found to be implemented to a satisfactory degree and did “not sufficiently address the identified breaches of the rule of law and the risks these entail for the Union budget” (Council of the European Union, 2022b), leading to the decision in December 2022.

Since then, the discourse has intensified, with the situation regarding the funding as well as the model change in general having garnered increased national and international attention, and it can be divided into two themes: *first*, the tenuous negotiation process between the Hungarian government and Brussels, aimed at restoring access to Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ funds; and *second*, a greater awareness and general concern for the effects of public interest trusts on academic freedom and institutional autonomy. In addition to the EU and the Hungarian government, several European and Hungarian national academic organisations have voiced various concerns.

While both the Hungarian government and the EU Commission have been publicly open to negotiation, they present two distinct narratives, placing the burden of responsibility for the blocked funds on the other party. The Hungarian government has disputed elements of the decision, including the timeframe, unclear communication from the Commission, and its legality (Brent, 2023b, 2023d). Further, the government claimed that it had fulfilled the commitments agreed upon in relation to the service package (2023a). Additional statements by Hungarian ministers describe the decision as “ideological discrimination” (Erudera Editorial, 2023b), and an

“anti-Hungarian” move in retaliation to the government’s stance on migration and LGBTQ+ communities, amounting to blackmail by Brussels (Hungary Today, 2023; Szumski, 2023). Six universities have taken to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) to contest the decision, claiming the move is unreasonable, disproportionate, and unfounded (Brent, 2023c). At the same time, the rectors of the model change universities wrote to the Commission to support the model change and its success. Higher education institutions that have not changed their model also receive pressure through funding to change their model.

However, statements by MEP Christian Ehler place the responsibility on the Hungarian government for not protecting the academic community, referring to “Mr. Orbán’s attack on democracy, the rule of law and other European values like academic freedom” (Brent, 2023d). EU Budget Commissioner, Johannes Hahn, has commented that the Hungarian government has been informed several times of the Commission’s expectations, and that “nothing has changed” regarding addressing the identified issues, expressing doubt regarding when an agreement can be reached (Valero & Csasky, 2023).

The European University Association, following the decision as well as their own scorecard report, including a separate report on Hungary (European University Association, 2023b), has urged the Hungarian government to take the necessary steps to address the state of academic freedom and institutional autonomy threatened by the model change (European University Association, 2023a). In particular, the EUA report points out that while the model change is presented as a means to enhance institutional autonomy, it *“only offers an appearance of greater autonomy but can be likened to a creative restructuring of higher education granting further and long-term control to the current government on the sector as a whole.”* The report points out that this is a model that fails to find a balance between *“institution’s accountability to society and the state through the involvement of external members and the university’s self-governance.”* Similar sentiments can be found in a statement by the European Student Union and the National Union of Students in Hungary (HOÖK) (European Students' Union, 2023), as well as a report by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2022). Another point of concern is the possibility of these changes leading to self-censorship among academics on controversial topics along lines counter to the position adopted by the government, for instance on the topic of COVID-19 (Brent, 2023e).

While negotiations are ongoing, they are tense and without sign of, or progress towards, an agreement being reached by the end of 2024. Meanwhile, the public interest trusts and their boards continue to be a threat to academic freedom and institutional autonomy, as fundamental changes have yet to happen. Compared to other systems with similar dual governance models, only the Hungarian model combines a fully externally elected board with significant decision-making powers, including the approval of budgets, and institution’s rules of organisation and operation (European University Association, 2023b). The boards can also withdraw all the decisions from the Senates that also concern academic matters and internal elections of leadership. We can refer, for example to the election of the Rector of the Moholy Nagy university, where the University Senate received the assurance that it could select the new Rector. However, this commitment has been withdrawn by the Board of the public interest trust at the last moment, without notifying the Senate. In the end, the new Rector who was nominated was not the one selected by the Senate. Another recent case concerns the Tokaj Hegyalja University, where the chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr Stumpf, resigned over a conflict to appoint the new Rector. While formally the University Senate is responsible for selecting a rector candidate, in this case the Board of Trustees overruled the Senate and appointed another candidate than the one nominated by the Senate. Mr Stumpf stated that the

decision of the Board of Trustees to select the new Rector is violating institutional autonomy and is invalid¹⁴².

While not impossible, the inclusion and representation of academic perspectives in governance becomes arbitrary, depending on the local circumstances of the collective competencies, the experiences and interests of the externally appointed board members, and how they elect to formally include academic staff and students in decision-making. Furthermore, the model change was not featured in any of the government's published strategy documents for the sector, nor are there any published definitions of the role the boards play or the selection criteria for board members (Kováts et al., 2023, p. 9). It can be argued that the bureaucratic (and direct) control by the government has been replaced with a political (and indirect) control through pro-government representation in the boards, which is less transparent and regulated, as it depends on relationships and political affiliations, rather than formal frameworks of governance.

The Hungarian government have seemingly turned the issue into one of victimisation of Hungary as a nation at the hands of the EU Commission. The negotiations are affected by the Hungarian government's rhetoric of injustice and overstep by the Council, and the Commission's dismay at the lack of progress towards meeting the goals set in 2022.

Currently, the National Research, Development and Innovation Office in Hungary (NKFIH) has set up a "Horizon Europe guarantee fund" to cover research projects that have been accepted by the Horizon Europe scheme but are unable to receive funds following the EU Commission's "discriminatory decision" (NKFIH, 2023). Furthermore, also a budget for international student exchange was made available. It is important to note that only model change universities can apply to these funds, which discriminates non-model-changed universities and violates academic freedom.

The major concerns about political control of university boards referred to in the previous section and the specific institutional governance context are expected to lead to serious future threats to academic freedom in the involved Hungarian universities.

Recently, a case emerged in relation to the establishment of battery factories in Hungary. The factories would be a Chinese initiative to produce batteries that would be used in electric cars. A number of local civil initiatives have strongly opposed these factories, due to environmental hazards. One such factory was planned to be built in Debrecen. István Fábián, the former rector of the local university, himself a professor of chemistry, wanted to hold a presentation about the effects of factories, but the presentation was prohibited by Ferenc Kun, the dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology (TTK)¹⁴³. The specific argument for the prohibition was that the university does not allow discussion of "current political issues" and that if such an event or seminar would be held, it could not be a university event and take place on the university premises. Fábián disputed the political nature of the event and referred to a similar lecture being given at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The lecture was finally carried out, but outside of the university premises. At the same time, reports indicate that the minister of finance gave a lecture on the impact of war and sanctions at the university, arguably a current political issue.

Another example of possible pressure is the recent resignation of ten lecturers at the METU Centre for Journalism¹⁴⁴, after the dean dismissed a number of high-profile staff who had been teaching at

¹⁴² See: <https://newsbeezer.com/hungaryeng/he-is-a-confidante-of-orban-who-did-sagreed-with-his-fellow-curators-and-therefore-resigned-from-the-position-of-president-of-the-board-of-trustees-of-tokaj-hegyalja-university/>

¹⁴³ <https://www.szabadeuropa.hu/a/letiltotta-a-debreceni-egyetem-a-volt-rektor-eloadasat-az-akkumulatorgyartasrol/32351961.html>

¹⁴⁴ <https://media1.hu/2023/09/11/fokozodik-a-balhe-egyszerre-mondott-fel-10-tanar-a-budapesti-metropolitan-egyetemen/>

the faculty. Both staff and students at METU protested this decision. The dismissal was not clearly explained to existing staff but has been linked to political interference and unprofessional management.

4.6.2. Academic community

Recently, the Hungarian Psychiatric Association has been involved in controversies involving the use of the association's name and its journal, *Psychiatria Hungarica*, to promote politically left-leaning views. These cases have been linked to debates about the amendments Hungarian legislation aimed at protecting children from paedophile offenders, amendments regarded by the wider international community as highly discriminatory towards LGBTQ+ people. With regards to academic freedom, the cases touch upon censorship and the politicisation of scientific debate, which infringes upon the rights to publish, free academic expression, and academic representation and organisation.

A paper written by a political scientist Gergely Szilvay outlining the critique of gender theory was accepted for publishing in the *Psychiatria Hungarica* in 2021 but was postponed until 2023 before being withdrawn entirely after intervention from the association's leadership (Konopás, 2023). The issue raised some controversy and became highly politicised. The paper was later published in *Magyar Bioetikai Szemle [Hungarian Bioethics Review]* with a foreword written by its editor-in-chief, Zoltan Turgonyi, describing the situation as regrettable and calling for more open and free scientific debate (Turko, 2023). A petition in defence of "conservative scientific opinions" was started in May 2023, demanding that the Hungarian Psychiatric Association publishes the paper, respects and protects academic freedom, and prevent ideological bias from hindering the publication of academic studies, and it has since received close to 16000 signatures (CitizenGO, 2023). There is no clear information as to whether the article was in fact a peer-reviewed paper, and independent information on the case and the process around publication of the article is difficult to track down.

In another related case, the Hungarian Psychiatric Association and the Hungarian Psychological Association made a public statement critical of the Child Protection Act (Szilvay, 2022). The post, which has since been taken down, was criticised for assuming the role of representing the expert community and the scientific field on an issue which is both politically and scientifically controversial and contentious. Also here, independent accounts have been difficult to track due to several media outlets having clear political orientation.

4.6.3. Civil society

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom by the civil society, but concerns remain regarding the authoritarian influence on societal institutions that was observed in the pilot study. Since then, this tendency has not been weakened, and can thus represent a potentially increasing concern for academic freedom in the future. As an example of this trend, in September 2023, Fidesz has announced a new plan for legislative measures to protect sovereignty "against left-wing journalists, pseudo-NGOs, and dollar politicians", likely making the climate for free expression in the civil society more difficult in the future,¹⁴⁵ and legitimising specific ideological opinions rather than free open discussion concerning academic activities.

4.6.4. Private sector actors

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom by private sector actors, but the power of political and economic elites is playing a role here, amongst other things, through their position in the board of trustees of the twenty-one model universities. An example of

¹⁴⁵ <https://telex.hu/english/2023/09/21/a-sovereignty-protection-bill-to-be-tabled-in-autumn-against-left-wing-journalists-pseudo-ngos-and-dollar-politicians-in-hungary>

the impact of these actors on academic freedom is the dismissal of Zoltán Ádám, an associate professor at Corvinus University Budapest. Professor Ádám recently refused to examine a student who allegedly failed to meet essential requirements. The student's family (stakeholders in the Hungarian energy giant MOL of which the president, Mr. Zsolt Hernádi, is also the president of the board of trustees of Corvinus University) put pressure on the University to allow the student to take the exam, which Prof. Ádám refused. In response to the irregular exam arrangements, which still enabled the student to pass the exam, Ádám alerted the university's ethics committee. In the first instance, the committee condemned three university leaders, and the rector later resigned. However, the committee's ruling was later overruled by the university's board of trustees, led by Mr Hernádi. Following a subsequent dispute with university leaders, Ádám was dismissed.

4.6.5. Summary of findings

Overall, Hungary is the only EU Member State in this study where serious threats to academic freedom were identified in a structural and systematic manner. The ongoing case of the European Council to withhold EU funds is a dispute where academic freedom has also been emphasised and is an example of an explicit concern. Several Hungarian and European academic organisations have voiced their concerns about the state of play of academic freedom in Hungary, showing a broad consensus of the restricted and problematic situation with academic freedom in Hungary.

In some of the dimensions, this analysis did not identify specific cases of infringements. It should be noted that in this instance, the specific authoritarian political context may also inhibit the ability to speak freely about infringements of academic freedom, which could mean considerable underreporting of individual cases in the public debate, e.g., concerning pressures from civil society or private sector actors.

4.6.6. Resources

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4.7. The Netherlands

The 2022/23 pilot study on the state of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States commissioned by the European Parliament STOA Panel (Maassen et al, 2023) indicated that the de facto situation with respect to academic freedom in the Netherlands was slowly deteriorating in comparison to most other EU Member States. Furthermore, the report concluded that the legal protection of academic freedom in the Netherlands needs to be strengthened. This is in line with the Academic Freedom index 2023 update, where only three EU member States had a lower score than the Netherlands¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴⁶ See, Academic Freedom Index.

The main factors influencing this negative trend in *de facto* academic freedom were found to be the efforts of part of the political system to interfere in the responsibility of the academic system to guard academic freedom; certain features of the institutional governance structures, with possible impacts on academic self-governance and co-determination; the decreasing opportunities for basic, curiosity driven research; personnel policy practices in the academic world¹⁴⁷; worrying levels of intimidation of academics via social media; and the negative impact on academic freedom of the growing involvement of the private sector in the funding of scientific research. The political interference in the academic responsibility for guarding academic freedom referred to concerns the focus of some political parties in Parliament on a possible lack of political diversity among academic staff at universities and colleges.

An important initiative is the establishment (in November 2022) of a platform (called SafeScience) where academics and students can report threats, intimidation and hate speech, and get help to find the right support for dealing with these. The Netherlands is the first EU Member State to establish such a national platform, which can be seen as a potentially important step in the strengthening of the support for, and protection of, *de facto* academic freedom. SafeScience provides an important frame of reference for the European Parliament and other EU Member States.

Furthermore, the issue of possible threats to academic freedom from within academia was referred to in the pilot study, but there is no agreement on the nature of this threat, as was argued in some responses the European Parliament STOA Panel received. A central question concerning this possible threat is the extent to which recent debates, tensions, and conflicts in the Netherlands, with respect to academic texts, meetings, and positions, should be regarded as part of the necessary academic diversity. Alternatively, some of these academic conflicts could have a potential negative impact on academic freedom by limiting the freedom of academics to follow their own scientific agenda or expressing themselves on academic matters. The complexity of this possible threat to academic freedom requires a more thorough investigation, which preferably should cover all EU Member States where discussions have taken place about possible impacts of academic conflicts on academic freedom¹⁴⁸.

An issue that was not addressed explicitly in the pilot study is how security concerns in international collaborations might affect academic freedom. In this chapter, the relevance of this issue for the Netherlands is discussed on the basis of a recent advisory report by Dutch Advisory Council for science, technology, and innovation (Adviesraad voor wetenschap, technologie en innovatie, 2023)¹⁴⁹.

In this chapter, recent debates on worries about, and possible threats to, academic freedom in Dutch academia are presented. These debates and worries concern the *de facto* situation of academic freedom in the Netherlands and indicate that many of the same challenges identified in the pilot study persist in the country. For example, a continued discussion on the basic conditions under which academic freedom is to be exercised, including unattractive academic labour conditions, underlies persistent worries about the possible impact by *government and politics* on academic freedom. Furthermore, there are still worries about the possible impact of *institutional leadership*

¹⁴⁷ The pilot study report referred especially to the so-called revolving door policy (in Dutch: *draaideur beleid*), that is, contract constructions at universities where temporary contracts are strung together so as not to have to give young scholars a tenured employment contract.

¹⁴⁸ For relevant considerations and recommendations on how to strengthen academic freedom, see, for example, the report produced by the Stoker committee for the University of Amsterdam (Stoker, Stoker and Waaldijk al., 2023).

¹⁴⁹ See also the paper by Stalenhoef, Kanetake and van der Wende (2022), discussing the implications of the EU's Dual-Use regulation 2021/821, amongst other things, for academic freedom. In addition, the president of the Dutch Academy of Sciences has raised relevant worries about the impact of knowledge security policies on academic freedom (see: <https://dub.uu.nl/nl/nieuws/knaw-president-dogterom-over-kennisveiligheid-gooi-de-deur-niet-dicht>).

and management on academic freedom. This includes limitations on academic self-governance and democratic co-determination in university governance structures and practices. Finally, worries persist about the threats to academic freedom from certain groups in civil society and private sector actors continue to be regarded as problematic¹⁵⁰. While these worries do not necessarily reflect structural violations of academic freedom, they combine to create circumstances where threats come from various sides, creating an increasingly worrying environment for academic freedom (see, e.g., Verburgt and Duyvendak, 2023).

4.7.1. Government and politics

The Netherlands is experiencing continued discussions, in both politics and within academia, on academic freedom as an issue of importance. Politicians, including the current Minister of Education, are actively discussing and investigating challenges to academic freedom, of which freedom of academic expression, various aspects of job security, potential infringements from reforms and legislation, and possible polarisation of the academic climate have been identified (De Jonge Akademie, 2022; ScienceGuide Editorial, 2023). In general, while parliamentary discussions and comments from the minister would indicate a careful approach that tries to consider academic, social, and political aspects of the sector, the government's interventions have received mixed receptions when it comes to their impacts on academic freedom. At the same time, the academic freedom platform, SafeScience, is seen as a welcome and fitting initiative, which provides structural and practical support in addressing and dealing with worries and infringements of academic freedom reported by academics (Upton, 2022, 2023a).

Overall, the government seems intent on addressing various issues threatening academic freedom. The SafeScience platform and ambitions to improve the research environment are indicative of the commitment of the current government to protect and promote academic freedom. In responding to written parliamentary questions about the STOA Panel pilot study on the state of play of academic freedom (Maassen et al. 2023), the responsible Minister indicated that further research is needed to be able to follow up the study's conclusions¹⁵¹ (DUB Editorial, 2023). This concerns, for example, the conclusions of the report on the hierarchical governance practices at Dutch universities, and the academic labour conditions with a special focus on junior researchers with a temporary contract. With respect to the report's emphasis on the importance to develop a common, generally agreed upon definition of academic freedom in Europe, the Minister referred to the definition presented by the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (KNAW), 2021) for the Dutch academic system. The KNAW defines academic freedom as, "the principle that staff at scientific institutions can freely conduct their scientific research, publish their findings and provide their education"¹⁵² (KNAW, 2021, p. 22). The Minister indicated that until the results of the ongoing and further research on academic freedom in the Netherlands are available, he will use the KNAW definition.

Furthermore, the KNAW report contains a detailed overview of the formal responsibilities of public authorities for academic freedom and institutional autonomy. In addition, the report provides relevant overviews of the formal responsibilities of the higher education institutions and academic hospitals, the responsibilities of individual academics, and the responsibilities of society (citizens,

¹⁵⁰ See the platform Openness challenged at Utrecht University for more details about the possible impact of these threats on universities as key institutions of an open society (<https://www.uu.nl/en/research/institutions-for-open-societies/interdisciplinary-research/academic-foundations/openness-challenged-the-university-at-risk>).

¹⁵¹ See: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2023/05/24/beantwoording-kamervragen-over-het-rapport-state-of-play-of-academic-freedom-in-the-eu-member-states-overview-of-de-facto-trends-and-developments>.

¹⁵² In Dutch: "het beginsel dat medewerkers aan wetenschappelijke instellingen in vrijheid hun wetenschappelijk onderzoek kunnen doen, hun bevindingen naar buiten kunnen brengen en onderwijs kunnen geven".

the private sector, and civil society) for academic freedom (KNAW, 2021). In this, the KNAW report can offer a relevant frame of reference for the efforts to develop a common definition of academic freedom and strengthen the legal frameworks for the protection of academic freedom in Europe.

4.7.2. Institutional leadership and management

The University of Groningen has been criticised for its treatment and dismissal of a professor and researcher in economics, specialised in employment policies, in response to her publication of a paper critical of the management practices at the university (Gulland, 2023). The professor, Dr. Susanne Täuber, had been employed by the university for nearly a decade when she filed in 2018 a complaint over having been passed over for promotion, arguing that she was as qualified as other professors with similar research metrics. The complaint was not upheld, something which Täuber addressed in 2019 in a paper critical of the discrepancies between gender equality policies and practice at the university. The dean of the Faculty of Economics and Business wrote to the journal describing the paper as having “several negative effects” and could not be used as evidence of practices at the university, given its inappropriate personal tone (Upton, 2023b). These sentiments were also communicated by email to all faculty members. In 2021, Täuber co-authored another report on harassment at the university—this one with Young Academy Groningen (YAG), a collective of RUG researchers. In 2022, the university filed a case with the local district court to terminate Dr. Täuber’s contract on the basis of a “permanently disrupted employment relationship,” something which gives legal grounds for terminating tenured staff in the Netherlands. The court ruled in 2023 in the university’s favour; however, it stated that the university had played an “important, if not a decisive, role” in creating the “seriously disrupted working relationship”¹⁵³. The court did not decide on whether discrimination or harassment took place. Furthermore, the court left open whether a dismissal of Täuber would constitute an unjust infringement of the (academic) freedom of expression.

After the verdict, the university engaged in dialogue with elected groups of the university to improve social safety within the university (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2023a, 2023b). A delegation of students had demanded the return and reinstatement of Täuber, which the university was unable to discuss due to privacy concerns. The students have subsequently staged several sit-ins protests along with other students and staff in support of Professor Täuber, during one of which police officers have violently removed protesters (NL Times, 2023).

The events have given rise to concern among Dutch as well as international academics for what is described as harassment of an employee and an attack on academic freedom¹⁵⁴. The course of action taken by the Faculty of Economics and Business and the university is seen as highly unprofessional and vindictive, and there are concerns for a potential chilling effect on academics wishing to address issues of management or other controversial issues. This is further indicated by campaigners supporting Täuber’s case, taking to X (formerly Twitter) under the hashtag #AmINext?.

The case is particularly concerning given the background, academic recognition, and employment status of Professor Täuber. High profile cases of abuses of power and harassment in Dutch universities have previously been documented (Bronkhurst, 2020; Hermans, 2020; Mantel, 2017; van der Hee & Strikkers, 2019; Visser, 2020), and there is concern that Täuber’s case further confirms a pattern of academic freedom, and especially the academic freedom of expression, being under threat, in this case of undue responses from university leadership.

¹⁵³ For the full court ruling, see: <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/#/details?id=ECLI:NL:RBNNE:2023:854>

¹⁵⁴ See also the interpretation of Scholars at Risk of this case which is presented as an example of an attack on academic freedom in the Netherlands: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2023-03-08-university-of-groningen/>

At the same time, the Täuber case also raises fundamental questions about the possible tensions between labour laws and academic freedom. For example, in the event of the alleged non-functioning of a tenured academic staff member at a university, labour laws do not allow such a case to be made public, while publicity and public debates are highly desirable for alleged infringement of academic freedom.

4.7.3. Academic community

The University of Amsterdam (UvA) has recently been part of a controversial debate regarding academic freedom and a concern around what was referred to as a “woke-culture,” without the term “woke” being clearly defined¹⁵⁵. In January 2023, Laurens Buijs, a lecturer in social sciences at UvA, made a report to the UvA executive board about the threat to academic freedom and the academic climate due to the influence of “woke-culture” at the department of social sciences (Buijs, 2023). Buijs described a situation in which the university is undermining intellectual diversity and integrity by catering to “woke” ideas that are socially and politically fashionable. In particular, he raised issue with the academic community’s ability to engage in academic debates in a civil manner. Topics such as gender theory and Covid-19 policies are used as examples, which he argued that he experienced as being marked as discriminatory towards various social groups, rather than being engaged with in academic debate. The article written by Buijs as well as the initial report made to the executive board of UvA became a source of controversy, given other academics’ experiences at the university and accusations of mischaracterizing both the academic climate and his own role in creating a challenging work environment. In response, the UvA leadership commissioned a report, known as the Stolker-report, which concluded that there was no serious infringement of academic freedom due to wokeness or related concepts at the department, but made some general recommendations on how to promote and protect academic freedom (Stoker et al., 2023).

Although the Stolker-report found no immediate threats to academic freedom at UvA, it recognises an increased societal and political tension around certain issues, something which may affect debates within academia by way of self-censorship and peer pressure. The Stolker report has been criticised for not challenging Buijs’ presentation of “woke” being the primary threat to academic freedom, and that it inadvertently turns questions regarding intellectual and social diversity into a debate about “woke” and “anti-woke,” which is in line with narratives pushed by right-wing political groups (Janse, 2023). Other academics have also commented that there is a lack of a normative framework for academic debates, which allows difficult topics to be discussed, while upholding principles of academic freedom and scientific practice (Bergstra & Duwell, 2023; Brannan & van Dijk, 2023).

Shortly after publishing the article, Buijs went on medical leave due to the increasingly hostile environment that he was experiencing, in addition to what he perceived as poor dialogue with the executive board (Velzel, 2023). UvA has since terminated Buijs’ contract, with both parties taking to court in dispute over the conditions of termination (Nederlands Dagblad, 2023). Buijs argues that UvA did not provide him sufficient support and protection when he came forward as a whistleblower, while UvA’s lawyer in the case has referenced Buijs’ “unfounded accusations and insults” towards his critics.

The Stolker report presents a number of reflections and recommendations that urges the academic community to discuss and develop cultures and practices to better support and promote academic freedom. Several of the contributions to this debate also indicate that the discussions were poorly handled and that there are better ways to conduct academic dialogues in an inclusive and constructive manner.

¹⁵⁵ For a discussion of ‘the spectre of woke and the reality of academic freedom’, see, e.g. Van Oenen (2023).

4.7.4. Civil society and private sector actors

The KNAW report (2021) presents a number of possible tensions that can emerge between academic freedom and the societal responsibility of science. The overview presented in the report and the discussion of key features of the tensions, and the responsibilities for handling them, provide an appropriate insight into the nature of the debates on the possible impact of civil society and the private sector on academic freedom. According to the report, it is up to the public authorities and the higher education institutions to find the right balance between academic freedom and societal responsibilities. To illustrate the tensions, the report presents several cases. The first case concerns the organisation of research funding in three so-called streams, where the report points to the danger of the shifts from open to strategic funding, and from basic to contract funding. In this, the report warns of the threat of Dutch academics becoming too dependent on contract funding, with the danger of undesirable dependencies and the risk of unacceptable influences on the working methods, interpretation, and publishing of research results (KNAW, 2021, pp. 39-40), which might violate academic freedom. The next three cases address the collaboration between academia and the private sector (KNAW, 2021, pp. 40-42). They show that there are several possible impacts on academic freedom emerging from the growing involvement of the private sector in research conducted at universities. The report refers, amongst other things, to the threats from collaborating with high-tech firms not only for research but also for the academic freedom of education. The way forward for decreasing the threats to academic freedom in this collaboration lies, e.g., in the development of transparent and balanced partnerships and contracts, making sure to always mention the funders/clients in the publications of externally funded projects, and seeing to it that there remains an appropriate balance between fundamental research and contract research. For example, the latter implies that if the volume of contract research increases, the public authorities and universities should make sure that the volume of fundamental, curiosity driven research also can grow accordingly.

A fifth case addresses the application requirements for certain public basic research funding programs (NWO and ZonMW). These requirements make the researchers in question dependent on their university or research institute. The report indicates that the support of their institution required for applying for research funding in the programs in question, might incorporate certain forms of institutional selection and pressure, which can be regarded as an undue limitation of academic freedom (KNAW, 2021, p. 44).

The final case concerns public debates and presentations at universities. The report points to the importance of respecting the freedom of academic expression, also in cases of possibly controversial academic positions and opinions. However, the report clearly emphasises that any open debate or public speaker at a university should be serving science. In this, the academics or students organising a public debate and inviting a possibly controversial speaker to their institution should make sure to explain how the event/speaker is related to scientific research, education, or valorisation (KNAW, 2021, p. 45). Furthermore, the report strongly recommends that public authorities and politicians always respect the responsibility of the universities to guard and protect academic freedom and keep aloof from internal discussions about possibly controversial speakers or events.

One issue that is not explicitly mentioned in the KNAW report is the responsibility of civil society and individual citizens to respect the academic responsibility for academic freedom, and for determining which activities and positions are scientific, and which are not. The attacks on individual academics by individual citizens and civil groups is also a deteriorating problem in the Netherlands, and, as indicated by the responsible Minister, a problem that requires further research and action.

Finally, for the growing worries in the academic sector in the Netherlands about the increasing involvement of private sector actors in the funding of academic research, we can refer to the study

by Jerak-Zuiderent et al. (2021, p. 5), which identified three main overall problems for ‘good science’ resulting from this trend in the Netherlands, that is:

- The pressure to produce externally defined relevance in short research projects.
- Serious threats to the position of fundamental, curiosity driven research.
- Deteriorating labour conditions at the universities, and a lack of diversity of voices, associated with a small diversity of subjects, method, and theory.

In his answers to the parliamentary questions referred to above, the responsible Minister indicated that the Executive Boards of the universities are responsible for safeguarding academic freedom and the independence of science, irrespective of the funding source (see also, Verbeek, 2023). According to the Minister, it is important that all information about external funding, for example, of professor positions, is up to date, complete, and publicly accessible. In this, the Dutch Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity (*Nederlandse gedragscode wetenschappelijke integriteit*) is crucial in offering academic researchers a basic guideline for their daily academic activities and decisions¹⁵⁶.

4.7.5. International collaboration, security, and academic freedom

Like in other EU Member States¹⁵⁷, in the Netherlands there is also a broad acknowledgement that, because of geopolitical, technological and societal developments, the international collaboration of higher education institutions is becoming more and more complex. This complexity is addressed in a recent report by the Dutch Advisory Council for science, technology, and innovation (*Adviesraad voor wetenschap*, 2023). In the report the Council refers to the national knowledge security policy, which is aimed at preventing or at least mitigating three specific risks attached to international relations and collaboration. These are: 1. Undesirable transfer of knowledge and technology, with negative consequences for national security or innovative power; 2. Unwanted influencing and interference activities in higher education and science; 3. Problematic ethical issues (AWTI, 2023, p. 20). With respect to the second risk, the report indicates that knowledge security is focused on covert influence on education and research by other states. This interference is argued to endanger academic freedom and social security. In discussing the impact that security issues can have on academic values, the report mentions, for example, that institutional autonomy can be at stake, because of financial dependence on a foreign funder. Furthermore, academic freedom might be threatened when academics are covertly influenced by a foreign power, resulting in (self)censorship, an influence on the choice of research problems, and the violation of research integrity. Academic values can also be threatened when knowledge security practices become too rigid, in the form of long bureaucratic procedures or an undue limitation of the possibilities for international academic collaboration (AWTI, 2023, pp. 67-68). The report presents a number of recommendations and argues that all involved stakeholders and organisations should contribute to the further development of the conceptualisation of knowledge security. Furthermore, the report recommends a sector-wide approach to the professionalisation of knowledge security and an extent of the knowledge security capacity at the higher education institutions. The latter is also from the perspective that there is a need to enhance the protection of academic freedom in international academic collaborations.

4.7.6. Summary of findings

There is broad acknowledgement in the Netherlands that there are various trends originated from different sides and various stakeholders, that might have a negative impact on the state of academic

¹⁵⁶ This Code is a thorough revision and expansion of the code of conduct, which has been in existence since 2004. It was signed by all Dutch universities and other relevant organisations 1 October 2018 (see: https://storage.knaw.nl/2023-02/Nederlandse-gedragscode-wetenschappelijke-integriteit_2018.pdf)

¹⁵⁷ See, for example, the chapter on France in this report.

freedom in the country's science system. These threats are caused by developments at the system level; intra-institutional science governance modes, structures, and practices; developments in society leading to more intense impacts on scientists in the form of threats and harassment; and trends in research funding, including the growing impact of external funding from the private sector. The responses to these threats have been important. For example, the establishment of SafeScience in November 2022 as a platform where academics and students can report threats, intimidation and hate speech, and get help to find the right support for dealing with these, is an important step in the strengthening of the support for, and protection of, de facto academic freedom in the Netherlands.

Nonetheless, in order for these responses to be effective, it is important to first agree upon a generally accepted definition of academic freedom, for example, the definition presented by the KNAW (2021), and implement a better legal protection of academic freedom in a several areas. Second, the knowledge basis on the nature and intensity of the threats to academic freedom is currently insufficient, and it is not clear to what extent the SafeScience platform will contribute to the enhancement of the academic knowledge basis in the country. Third, academic policy instruments and procedures, for example, in the area of institutional personnel policies and knowledge security, can be improved in order to enhance academic freedom in practice.

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4.8. Poland

In the pilot study commissioned by the European Parliament STOA Panel, *State of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States* (Maassen et al 2023), Poland was found to be characterised by a slight deterioration of de facto academic freedom. In regard to the central dimensions for academic freedom, the study found that government interference in academia posed a risk to the freedom to teach and research, the freedom to study, and the freedom of academic expression. As regards the conditions for academic freedom, government reform attempts were found to pose a potential risk to institutional autonomy, despite an overall respect for institutional autonomy in the country. Further, government interference was found to pose a risk to self-governance, despite an overall respect for academic self-governance in the country. Additionally, academic labour conditions and low research funding were found to be risk areas for the conditions for academic freedom.

Considering these findings from the previous study, Poland was found to face three of the five potential threats to the de facto state of play of academic freedom investigated in this study. First, the most often identified threat to academic freedom mentioned in the first study came from government and politics. Primarily, this threat was found in the form of government attempts to silence academics and fields that challenge the desired social narratives of the Polish government. For example, the study found attempts to delegitimise gender studies, silence holocaust historians, and block the promotion of an academic who studies the psychology of genocide. Second, Polish academic freedom was found to face threats from civil society, as exemplified by the woman who sued two holocaust scholars for writing about her uncle's Nazi collaboration. Finally, this lawsuit case is also an example of the threat of internal academic tensions and conflicts, as the woman attempted to silence this academic work, and the courts initially took her side and ordered the academics to apologise, although an appeals court later overturned the ruling.

Since the pilot study (Maassen et al., 2023), the state of play of academic freedom in Poland has continued to be a source for worry. The Polish government has attempted to strengthen the legal protection of academic freedom via an amendment to the Law on Higher Education, known as the academic freedom package (Rzeczpospolita, 2021). The responsible Minister of Education and Science, Minister Przemysław Czarnek, assured in an interview that once the law is implemented in Poland there will be "academic freedom on a scale not found in Western Europe." However, the Law amendment was controversial and was negatively assessed by, amongst others, the General Council for Science and Higher Education, the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, the Conference of Rectors of Polish Universities, and the Academy of Young Scientists. A key criticism is that the amendment misinterprets the difference between general freedom of expression and academic freedom of expression. As argued by academics involved in the Free Science Initiative, including Dr. Kamil Kopij, Dr. Piotr Kołodziejczyk and Grzegorz Bąk-Pryc: "We are struck by the complete misunderstanding by the authors of this amendment of the difference between, for example, religious views and beliefs (to which, of course, everyone has a full right) and the science practiced in the academic world" (Rzeczpospolita, 2023). The minister disagreed with critics of the amendment. "Freedom is not easy, because in freedom you need to discuss, you need to exchange arguments - real ones, not lies. Not shouting, but discussion. Hence, this full academic freedom does not suit those who do not want to speak the truth and argue truthfully, but count on the fact that they can win by shouting, by some totalitarian behavior and by pushing away from the discussion those who are inconvenient" (Rzeczpospolita, 2023). However, also the Polish Ombudsman was critical to the amendment and stressed in his opinion that the drafters do not refer to any specific cases or provide information on the steps they have taken to identify the real extent of the problem. The stated purpose of the proposed solutions offered by the amendment is to guarantee the possibility of free expression, particularly by academics. In turn, the Ombudsman noted that scientific debate presupposes the use of arguments that are scientific in nature, rather than appealing to the researcher's worldview or religious beliefs.

Despite the 2021 Law amendment, the deterioration in 2022 and 2023 of the *de facto* state of play of academic freedom in Poland was widely acknowledged in the Polish academic community and was attracting attention also outside of Poland, with a May 2023 European Parliament fact-finding mission on academic freedom concluding that academic freedom is being “attacked” by the government in Poland (Magee, 2023). The findings in this study corroborate the findings of this European Parliament fact finding mission. Specifically, this study finds that academic freedom in Poland was in the period 2021-2023 under growing threat from government and politics¹⁵⁸. Additionally, this study finds some cases of threats from institutional leadership and management. Further, multiple of the cases examined are examples of academic intolerance, where academics are silenced or professionally punished for their professional opinions.

4.8.1. Government and politics

Based on media and academic sources used in this study, the main threat to academic freedom in Poland comes from *government and politics*. Both members of the government and individual politicians have put undue pressure on academics and institutions in recent years. These cases reveal a concerning trend of government interference in academic affairs, which requires close monitoring.

To begin with, a recent and highly publicised case of government interference in academic freedom is a continuation of a case examined in the previous study (Maassen et al., 2023) in which the scientists Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski faced litigation over their book on the holocaust titled *Night Without End*. Specifically, while the original case was overturned (*Polish appeals court overturns ruling against Holocaust historians*, 2021), the historians continue to face political backlash over their claims of Catholic Polish complicity in the Jewish genocide of WWII. In June of 2023, the Minister of Education and Science, Przemysław Czarnek, announced that his Ministry would withhold the basic funding for 2023 (800 thousand zlotys) to the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, where Engelking is head of the holocaust research group (Rzhevkina, 2023). Minister Czarnek stated that he “will not finance any research that will be aimed at slandering the good name of Poles, and this is the purpose of Mrs. Engelking's activity”¹⁵⁹ (Giedrys, 2023). In a TV interview Minister Czarnek indicated that he realises that withholding this research funding is a controversial decision, but he argued that “we, within the framework of freedom and science, cannot allow heinous lies slandering the Polish nation.” - This is not within the bounds of scientific freedom” (Giedrys, 2023). However, massive protests by Polish and foreign academics against this position and other statements and decisions of the Minister show that a considerable part of the Polish academic community does not agree with the Minister's interpretation of the bounds of scientific freedom (Gmiterek-Zabłocka, 2023).

Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski were ultimately protected by the appeals court in their litigation case, and the announced financial punishment from the Minister against Engelking was in the end not materialised. Initially, the talks of the president of the executive board at the Foundation for Polish Science, Maciej Żylicz, with the ministry on the legality of the case and Polish MEP Kamila Gasiuk-Pihowicz “putting down a formal parliamentary question regarding the case” (Rzhevkina, 2023) did not seem to influence the Minister's position. The Minister even began to carry out his threat by not granting the Institute the funds for the legally required increases in minimum salaries in science. However, in August 2023 he announced that funding for 2023 would be resumed and that the Ministry would transfer 800 thousand zlotys to the Institute. While the Institute of

¹⁵⁸ This study covers the period until Fall 2023, and therefore did not examine the possible impact of the new Polish government, installed December 2023, on the state of academic freedom in Poland.

¹⁵⁹ This quote is a translation of the original quote in the article, which is in Polish. The original quote is as follows: “Jako polski minister edukacji i nauki nie będę finansował żadnych badań, które będą miały na celu szkalowanie dobrego imienia Polaków, a to ma na celu działalność pani Engelking.”

Philosophy and Sociology and its scientists Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski in the end avoided to be financially punished for their academic work, the pressure of the responsible Minister and other politicians on academic researchers to refrain from doing research on topics that might be politically sensitive can be regarded as an undue interference in the responsibilities of the academic community to guard academic freedom and to determine what is scientific research and what is not.

Additionally, another recent attack against these two historians strengthens the concern for their academic freedom. Specifically, on May 30th, MP Grzegorz Braun interrupted and attempted to physically stop a lecture by Professor Grabowski at the German Historical Institute in Warsaw. According to reports, Braun interrupted the lecture and “not only refused to leave the hall of the German Historical Institute, but also destroyed the sound equipment and asked guests to leave the institute”¹⁶⁰ (Płuciennik, 2023). This violent attack by a politician against Grabowski’s academic freedom to research and teach contributes to a disturbing concern for academic freedom in Poland.

Another worrying case of political threat to academic freedom in Poland involves government interference in academic bibliometrics. Specifically, in February 2021 the Polish government published an update to the “list of scientific journals and peer-reviewed materials from international conferences,”¹⁶¹ which is used to evaluate researcher’s scientific activity (*Oświadczenie Komisji Ewaluacji Nauki*, 2021). The government did not confer with the Scientific Evaluation Committee on this update, and the publications added to the list and the publications with increased scores tended to be those that support the education minister’s beliefs (Turko, 2023). This caused backlash from the Scientific Evaluation Committee, as well as some academics and institutions, because it was seen as government interference in academic freedom. However, no changes resulted from this backlash.

Another case that was recently brought to light as a threat to academic freedom from the government involves the education minister Przemysław Czarnek’s influence at the Catholic University of Lublin, where he taught before his current political career. The influence was brought to light when Fr. prof. Alfred Wierzbicki left the university staff after 30 years, citing an opposition to Czarnek’s control over the university as his reason for leaving (Domagała, 2022). In addition to Fr. prof. Alfred Wierzbicki, other staff at the university express concern over the education minister’s meddling in the university’s affairs. One staff member told the *Gazeta Wyborcza* that this meddling is exemplified “in the increase in the scores of journals related to the Catholic University of Lublin, which increased their rank.”¹⁶² Sources of the *Gazeta Wyborcza* imply that the education minister is using these tactics in order to exercise control over the university management. Examples such as this demonstrate a concerning impingement on institutional autonomy, and in turn, the academic freedom at the university.

Considering these political threats to academic freedom in Poland, an alarming trend is developing. Specifically, the case of the attack on Professor Grabowski and the case of Czarnek’s influence at the Catholic University of Lublin may be interpreted as interferences from individual politicians. However, the cases of threats to withhold government funding and bibliometric interference are systemic infringements on academic freedom. As these systemic infringements have so far withstood despite some backlash, these cases raise serious concerns.

¹⁶⁰ This quote is a translation of the original quote in the article, which is in Polish. The original quote is as follows: “Poseł nie tylko odmówił opuszczenia sali Niemieckiego Instytutu Historycznego, ale także zniszczył sprzęt nagłaśniający i wyprasał gości z instytutu.”

¹⁶¹ This quote is a translation of the original quote in the article, which is in Polish. The original quote is as follows: “rozszerzony wykaz czasopism naukowych i recenzowanych materiałów z konferencji.”

¹⁶² This quote is a translation of the original quote in the article, which is in Polish. The original quote is as follows: “Widać to chociażby po podniesieniu punktacji czasopism związanych z KUL, co zwiększyło ich rangę.”

4.8.2. Institutional leadership and management

In addition to the growing threat from *politics and government* to the state of play of academic freedom in Poland, recent news from the country suggests a potential threat to academic freedom from *institutional leadership and management*. Specifically, there have been a couple of recent cases in which university management has been accused of suppressing academic freedom in order to appease government interests. While these cases are outliers and not the norm for university management in Poland, they are important to monitor, in case more instances, such as these start occurring.

To begin with, the aforementioned case regarding the education minister Przemysław Czarnek's influence at the Catholic University of Lublin is also a potential case of university management impingement on academic freedom. Specifically, in addition to accusations of minister misconduct, employees also claim that the management allows the minister to influence the governance of the university. One staff member told the *Gazeta Wyborcza* that "The style of governance is also worrying. The previous rector met with employees, he was not afraid of discussion. Now decisions are handed over by third parties without any possibility of dialogue"¹⁶³ (Domagała, 2022). If these academics are to be believed, this external influence of government on university management is a breach of institutional autonomy and academic freedom¹⁶⁴.

Another recent case of institutional leadership imposing on academic freedom in Poland involves the cancellation of political scientist and human rights activist Dr. Hanna Machińska's lecture at the University of Warsaw, which resulted in protests from students and staff (Paś, 2023). Dr. Machińska's lecture on politics of the Polish eastern border titled "And the walls will fall, rune, rune" which was scheduled for January 17th, was cancelled by university leadership due to unspecified "technical reasons."¹⁶⁵ This cancellation is suspected to be a cover for cancelling the lecture due to political reasons, and comes after Dr. Machińska's dismissal from the position of deputy ombudsman at the end of 2022, which was also suspected to be politically motivated. After much negative press and protest, the rector of the University of Warsaw decided to hold the lecture after all and apologised to Dr. Machińska (Karpieszuk, 2023). While the lecture was reinstated, this case is a potential example of attempted university leadership suppression of academic freedom, and the situation should be monitored.

These potential infringements on academic freedom from institutional leadership and management are isolated cases. Further, in the case of the University of Warsaw, the potential infringement was unfulfilled. However, as threats from government and politics continue to grow, these cases are important because they are alleged to be motivated by a desire on the part of university leadership to appease political entities. Consequently, it is important to monitor for similar cases in order to ensure that a trend of government appeasement at the expense of academic freedom does not occur amongst institutional leadership and management.

4.8.3. Academic community

Multiple of the aforementioned cases are also examples of the impact of internal academic tensions and conflicts, where academics have had the freedom to set their own research and teaching agendas threatened. While these cases are exceptional, when combined with the cases discussed in

¹⁶³ This quote is a translation of the original quote in the article, which is in Polish. The original quote is as follows: "Niepokoi także styl sprawowania władzy. Poprzedni rektor spotykał się z pracownikami, nie bał się dyskusji. Teraz decyzje są przekazywane przez osoby trzecie bez jakiegokolwiek możliwości dialogu."

¹⁶⁴ See also the case of the Pedagogical University of Cracow: [https://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/7,44425,29935475,sad-uznal-ze-na-universytecie-pedagogicznym-z-zwalniaja-z-razacym.html](https://krakow.wyborcza.pl/krakow/7,44425,29935475,sad-uznal-ze-na-universytecie-pedagogicznym-zwalniaja-z-razacym.html)

¹⁶⁵ These quotes are a translation of the original quote in the article, which is in Polish. The original quotes are as follows: "A mury runą, runą, runą" and "przyczyn technicznych"

the pilot study on academic freedom (Maassen et al., 2023), there appears to be a growing threat of *academic conflicts* in Poland.

First, the case of withheld funds to Dr. Engelking's workplace, coupled with the case of physical attack during Dr. Grabowski's lecture, reveals a troubling continuation of academic intolerance against the two scientists. This continued impact of academic conflicts, despite international criticism, is a worrying situation which must be closely monitored.

Further, the alleged attempt to silence Dr. Hanna Machińska through cancelling her lecture is also an example of academic intolerance. While public support for Dr. Machińska succeeded in getting her lecture reinstated, it is important to note its existence and continue to monitor university leadership's treatment of academics in Poland.

These cases of academic tensions and conflicts all share a common political motivation, where academics which challenge certain political narrative face backlash. Additionally, the source of backlash differs in all three cases, with one case of government backlash, one case of backlash from an individual politician and one case from university leadership. As a result, these cases potentially reveal a concerning trend where academics who challenge political agendas face ramifications from multiple sources in society.

4.8.4. Civil society

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom from civil society actors. Yet, the growing polarisation of political debate can be a worry in the future. As an example, cases such as the book *Night Without End* may also be instances where politically oriented civil society actors may become involved.

4.8.5. Private sector actors

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom from private sector actors.

4.8.6. Summary of findings

In conclusion, academic freedom in Poland appears to be under threat in several respects, primarily due to pressures from *government and politics*, where both isolated threats from individual politicians and threats from the government have been identified. Additionally, isolated cases of alleged infringements from *university leadership and management* in attempts to appease government actors have been identified. While these cases are relatively few, they are important to monitor, as growing government interference could potentially result in more violations from university management and leadership. Finally, multiple of the cases discussed are the result of *internal academic conflicts*, where academics which do not conform to narrative that aligns with government interests are professionally attacked in attempts to silence them. Altogether, based on these findings, the de facto state of play of academic freedom in Poland is worryingly declining, and requires close monitoring, so that it does not decline further.

4.8.7. Resources

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4.9. Portugal

In the pilot study (Maassen et al., 2023), Portugal was found to have overall relatively strong *de jure* and *de facto* academic freedom, with few recent incidents of infringements identified. The study found no infringements on the central dimensions of academic freedom. In regard to the conditions for academic freedom, the study found some examples of government interference with institutional autonomy. For example, 2018 legislation that could affect hiring procedures and that changed enrolment numbers was perceived by some as an encroachment on institutional autonomy. The study also stated that academic labour conditions could potentially influence the conditions for academic freedom in Portugal.

Considering these findings from the pilot study, Portugal was found to potentially face two of the five *de facto* threats to academic freedom that are identified in this follow-up study. First, the interference on university autonomy by the government can be perceived as a possible threat from *government and politics*. Secondly, worries around academic labour conditions in Portugal could be seen as a threat especially from *institutional leadership and management*.

Like the pilot study (Maassen et al., 2023), this study finds that the *de facto* state of play of academic freedom in Portugal faces relatively few threats. Based on cases identified from recent news reports, Portuguese academic freedom faces a potential threat from *private sector actors* interfering in university affairs. Additionally, this study has identified a potential infringement from *institutional leadership and management*, although the identified case appears to be an outlier rather than a clear-cut case. At the same time, there are worries about constraints on labour conditions, which represent a more informal but nevertheless potentially worrying constraint on academic freedom.

4.9.1. Government and politics

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom by government initiatives or politics. At the same time, specific regulations for labour conditions remain in the domain of government, and if such conditions deteriorate to the extent that they also may infringe with academic freedom, this may create challenges in the future. There seem to be worries about the general reform trends concerning governance and management at Portuguese higher education and how this may in turn affect academic freedom. As an example, the 2007 reform (RJES) fundamentally transformed the relationship between the state and the higher education institutions, and five universities and one polytechnic institute have adopted the foundation model at this point in time.

4.9.2. Institutional leadership and management

While there appears to be a general respect for academic freedom from institutional leadership and management at Portuguese universities and there are not clear-cut cases of infringements in this respect, there are more general worries concerning strategic steering and evaluative regimes that may create a more constrained environment for academic freedom in the future. The foundation model that was proposed in the 2007 RJES reform has formally enhanced some aspects of institutional autonomy (e.g. financial autonomy), but has at the same time also strengthened the managerial power and influence of external stakeholders, and, at the same time, weakened self-governance structures within the institutions. In addition, the reforms have also reconfigured the relative power of different internal governance structures, and there are reports of more centralised power in the institutions. These trends represent a worry concerning the relationship between academic freedom and the specific institutional conditions in which it operates.

A recent example of these worries is when an academic who is a member of the university council at *Universidade Nova de Lisboa*, criticised the business school, NOVA SBE, the “School of Business and

Economics” and the quality of the education provided.¹⁶⁶ More specifically, they called the business school a “sausage factory,” as the business school charged high tuition fees and accepted many international students. The comment initially appeared on his Facebook wall but was picked up by other members of the school. As a result, a series of complaints were issued to various bodies, and the academic has expressed worries of disciplinary action being brought against himself. The academic has since written about his experience in a media outlet, but final decisions concerning the matter are pending at the time of writing this report.

In addition, the study also found another outlier case of a potential violation identified in recent news. In May 2023, a professor and former director of the Center for Russian Studies at the University of Coimbra, Vladimir Pleassov, was dismissed from the university apparently without any hearing to defend himself, as is regular practice at the university (Ramalho, 2023). The reason given by the university for Pleassov’s dismissal was the use of the *Russkyi Mir Foundation* logo on the center’s web page, despite the university cutting ties with the foundation after the Ukrainian invasion, due the foundation’s association with Russian president Vladimir Putin. Aside from the reasons for his dismissal, this case has been identified by some individuals as a breach of academic freedom, because the professor was apparently dismissed over email and given no opportunity to defend himself. This has resulted in sixty professors signing a petition against Pleassov’s termination until he gets this chance to defend himself. While this case appears to be incidental, it is important to monitor the situation, in case a trend was to develop.

4.9.3. Academic community

The latest debates do not reveal many cases of infringements on academic freedom by other academic staff. A case which may fall under this category is the controversy around a book that was retracted at Routledge. The book covered themes of sexual misconduct in academia, and the authors outlined their experiences with sexual misconduct in one of the book chapters. The chapter became particularly controversial when it became evident that the chapter was based on autoethnographic methods and outlined experiences in a manner that made the person accused of misconduct identifiable¹⁶⁷. While identification and accusations in this form can be debated, some of the critique also debated autoethnography as a method, raising questions as to whether this is legitimate scientific method, and in this manner, posing a debate which also challenges the very existence of this method.

4.9.4. Civil society

The review did not identify a broad and systematic issue with civil society constraining academic freedom.

4.9.5. Private sector actors

Recent news reveals examples of private sector actors exerting influence over academic activities. While these are only a few unique cases, they reveal a potential threat to academic freedom, and thus require observation.

Considering the debate around Professor Vladimir Pleassov’s dismissal due to the administration’s concern over potential political influence at the Centre for Russian Studies by the *Russkyi Mir Foundation*, it has been pointed out that the controversial Confucius Institutes continue to exist at five Portuguese universities (Lopes, 2023). Confucius Institutes are centres for learning about Chinese language and culture that are tied to the Chinese government, and they operate in many European universities. However, over recent years, many countries have shut down their Confucius

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.publico.pt/2023/10/08/opiniao/opiniao/liberdade-opiniao-universidade-2065805>

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/sexual-misconduct-book-chapter-spiked-after-professor-objects>

Institutes over concerns around academic freedom and their function as propaganda units. One example of this comes from Portugal, where in 2014, officials from the Confucius Institute at the University of Minho censored conference materials that were critical of the Chinese Communist Party (Lopes, 2022). Despite this instance, five universities in Portugal continue to operate Confucius Institutes, including the University of Minho. While disputed, there is concern that these externally funded institutes are a potential source of threat for academic freedom in Portugal.

Another case of private sector actors exerting influence over academic activities concerns the public business university, NOVA SBE, which is a part of the NOVA University of Lisbon. In 2020, the Restricted Council of Professors at the university attempted to ban professors from writing their university affiliation when publishing opinion pieces. This attempt then moved to the Restricted Council of Associates and Professors, which decided that it was okay to use the university name when writing scientific knowledge, but not opinion (Lopes, 2020). Many believe that this was a response to economics associate professor Susana Peralta's column in the newspaper *Público*, and a fear that the column was unpopular with private investors at the university (Oliveira, 2020). As Peralta's column is related to her academic discipline, this attempt to distance the university from the column could be perceived as an attempted infringement on academic freedom in order to appease private sector actors who invest in the university. However, it is important to note that as of August 2023, Peralta continues to sign her column with her university association.

Further, the controversy has spurred debate surrounding the Legal Regime of Institutions Higher Education (RJIES), which makes public universities "into public foundations governed by private law" (Carmo, 2020). Specifically, as this law allows for more private sector involvement in university operation, some argue that the Peralta case shows the negative effect of this involvement on academic freedom.

4.9.6. Summary of findings

In general, the Portuguese case shows few dramatic examples of infringement of academic freedom, and the cases identified seem to be outliers or very specific examples, rather than systemic problems, e.g. in the cases of critique of institutional leadership and management, or when debating the specific issues of freedom of expression.

A key concern is arguably the potential threat from private sector actors. In addition, the controversies around the Confucius institutes represent an ongoing issue in a number of countries, including Portugal.

Another, more indirect concern are key reform trends on higher education governance and labour conditions, and how these change the institutional context in which academic freedom is being exercised. At this point, clear cut data on this is difficult to identify.

4.9.7. Resources

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4.10. Romania

In the pilot study by the European Parliament STOA Panel, State of play of academic freedom in the EU Member States (Maassen et al., 2023), Romania was found to have its academic freedom and institutional autonomy threatened by various political instabilities, governmental interference in academic affairs at the institutional and system level and limited financial manoeuvrability by academics within a generally underfunded research and innovation sector. The system appears to be exposed to interplay of a nepotistic nature between political and academic actors, potentially damaging academic integrity by introducing political considerations into academic affairs, e.g., in reference to the consequences of plagiarism or the election of university leadership. Considering the five potential sources of threat to academic freedom followed in this study, the previous findings for Romania can be identified as two out of five threats: governance and politics, and institutional leadership and management.

Government and politics were found to be one of the more significant contributors to a weakened state of de facto academic freedom in Romania. The then draft for the new higher education law was heavily criticised by academics for attempting to remove the limit of terms served by rectors, and to create protocols for plagiarists to “opt-out” of legal or academic consequences. While the removal of term limits would be unprecedented in the Romanian system, legislative loopholes allowing rectors to effectively serve more than the two-term limit existed in the previous iteration of the law. Academics also took particular issue with the draft law allowing plagiarists absolution by renouncing their degree, given the number of prolific cases of plagiarism among career politicians. Both issues point to a broader concern amongst academics in Romania for the relationships between institutional leaders and high-ranking public servants, and corrupt behaviour affecting university leadership and governance. Another example of political infringement on academic freedom was a proposed ban on gender studies, and activities based on gender critical theories, causing an international uproar, which was later found to be unconstitutional by the constitutional court of Romania. The continued concerns about corruption and nepotism among institutional leaders also has implications for the leadership and management of the institution, with regards to the power of the leaders relative to academic staff, and the improper influence of political actors on executive decision-making.

In the current study, the new cases identified primarily concern interference from government and politics, while these are also related to potential interferences from institutional leadership and management.

4.10.1. Government and politics

The Romanian system struggles with the influence and abuse of political power in dealing with issues of an academic nature. In particular, recent debates have predominantly been focused on multiple cases of high-profile plagiarism, the academic community’s inability to sufficiently deal with breaches of academic principles, and the influence of the political elite on elements of the new higher education law. These issues are exacerbated by a revolving door of individuals in influential positions.

Another worry is that Romanian institutions are subject to highly restrictive funding regulations, which, according to some, are not suitable for universities, resulting in constrained financial autonomy. Universities face regulations concerning their hiring, pay and funding policies and practices. Indirectly, this also influences the conditions for academic freedom. Overall, there is also a general worry about the consequences of low levels of funding – which is considered a fundamental issue, in this manner potentially also constraining debates about other kinds of challenges in the system, as there are severe issues with available funding.

The most prominent specific cases in Romania are related to plagiarism and political relationships. Plagiarism cases have been found to be particularly widespread and largely undetected, unreported or rejected by universities and their ethics committees, with five universities going so far as to accept papers with up to 50% similarity to other published works (Popescu, 2019). It appears that the academic community is hindered in its ability to follow up on cases of academic fraud, due to a number of structural weaknesses in the process of reporting and assessing cases, as well as the involvement of influential individuals minimizing legal and academic consequences.

A significant wave of plagiarism cases surfaced in 2018-2019, following evidence collected by journalists and the subsequent legal requirement to implement plagiarism software. However, recent cases provide examples of current challenges with regards to dealing with plagiarism and an influential political elite. An issue with many of these cases is that they end up being decided in courts which focus on procedural rather than substantive elements, thereby moving academic judgments outside of academia.

In the case of former Minister of Education, Sorin Cîmpeanu, personal and professional ties to his alma mater, the National Council of Rectors (CNR), and the Council of Ethics and University Management (CEMU), have seemingly obscured, delayed, and downplayed accusations about plagiarising a university course he taught¹⁶⁸. The CNR issues two separate statements casting doubt over the accusations, as well as praising Cîmpeanu's previous achievements and abilities as head of the CNR (Editorial, 2022b; Pantazi, 2022b). Cîmpeanu had downplayed the issue by arguing in an interview that since the course material copied had no ISBN, there was no copyright issue and that it was akin to copying the instructions of a coffee machine (Stanescu, 2022). Although Cîmpeanu resigned from his position as minister a few days following the allegations, he was promptly reinstated, without announcements, to his former positions as rector of the University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest (USAMV), and as chairman of the National Council of Rectors (CNR) (Editorial, 2022c). With respect to the evaluation of the allegations, a major point of concern is that the main responsibility for assessing and reporting the matter falls on the institution which issued the accompanying degree, which in this case can be problematic given Cîmpeanu's previous and current position as rector. The university's ethics board dismissed the allegations, stating that it was a practical work guide rather than a piece of scientific work, while the National Ethics Council of Scientific Research, Technological Development and Innovation (CNECSDTI) and CEMU declined taking responsibility for investigating and following upon the case (Armanca, 2023). Additionally, Cîmpeanu, along with former Minister of Digitalisation, Florin Roman, were recently promoted to Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies and Vice President of the Senate within parliament (Iliu, 2023).

Another case concerns the allegations of plagiarism related to the doctoral dissertation of former Prime Minister Nicolae Ciucă's. This case of plagiarism was recently dropped by the General Prosecutor's Office, due to a statute of limitation of five years in relation to plagiarism cases (Editorial, 2023). Furthermore, former Minister of Interior Affairs, Lucian Bode, was recently absolved of any allegations, despite a report made by the ethics committee at Babeş-Bolyai University finding

¹⁶⁸ See: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/romanian-education-minister-resigns-after-plagiarism-accusations-2022-09-30/>

overwhelming evidence of plagiarism (Coşlea, 2023; Sercan, 2023a, 2023b). Another case is former Minister of Digitisation, Florin Roman, being instated as a Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies after having served a mandatory exclusion period from politics following his own plagiarism case in 2021 (Benea, 2021; Iliu, 2023).

Until the recent adoption of the new higher education law, The National Council for Attestation of University Titles, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU) was the governmental body responsible for doing plagiarism checks of doctoral degrees and assessment of cases reported by the ethics boards of universities. However, the CNATDCU is prevented from proactively and prematurely assessing doctoral degrees and is dependent on formal requests by the universities to find evidence of plagiarism. Since the CNATDCU is unable to act unless a request is made, there is the possibility of cases being resolved or managed internally by the university ethics boards, such as in Cîmpeanu's case, or in the court system without the testimony of CNATDCU or any other independent body, such as in Ciucă's case (Dumitru, 2022).

Another issue is the lack of transparency surrounding the National Council of Rectors with respect to the statements made in support of Cîmpeanu following the evidence of plagiarism and the internal organisation of the council. The statement and its language assumed the full support of all the members of the council. However, some rectors were not notified of the statements and the inclusion of their names in support, with at least three rectors having confirmed as much, in addition to disagreeing with the language used in the statement (Pantazi, 2022b).

The concern for a network of political collaborators holding important positions of influence in the higher education system extends to recent discussions about the new higher education law. Although Cîmpeanu resigned as Minister of Education in 2022, he has continued to influence deliberations on the law through the CNR. A controversial aspect of the law has been any kind of extension or exceptions to limits on the number of rector terms someone can serve. As Minister of Education, he has proposed changing the terms from four to five years, in addition to allowing universities to set the limit of number of terms. This was heavily criticised as it would allow rectors to serve indefinitely (Pantazi, 2022a). Although it was rejected by the Ciucă government, Cîmpeanu has continued to advocate in favour of extended rector terms through the influence of the CNR (Editorial, 2022a).

The new higher education law itself has also been heavily criticised by the academic community. The new law states that rectors can serve two terms of five years each, not counting terms already served after the new law takes effect. Additionally, the framework for university management positions allows for a grace-period of five years after retirement age, in which holders of a position can continue to serve after the expiration of their term for an additional five years. In practice, this means that rectors that have already served multiple terms in the old system can serve an additional 10 years as two terms, in addition to another 5 years after retirement on the basis of an annual review.

The rector of the University of Bucharest, Marian Preda, condemned these changes as a "disservice to the education system" by allowing an individual to hold the seat of rector for up to 12 years, including previously served terms, and expressed concern for "politically connected rectors" perpetuating their control over the universities (Pantazi, 2023). The rector of Babeş-Bolyai University, Daniel David, commented that the academic tradition of a two-term limit would be beneficial as there is "a tendency at the level of the country and at the level of the institutions to concentrate power" (Ghilas, 2023).

These examples illustrate some of the factors that potentially hinder universities and the academic community in their ability to promote and uphold academic principles and scientific good practice. In particular, new legislation and the influence of politically connected individuals challenge the academic interests of universities and the academic community. Concern has also been raised for

the culture that is created in Romanian academe, and how it affects the reputation of its researchers and students (Cocea, 2023). There are worries that the issue will take decades to improve in order to meet international standards (Dumitru, 2022; Upton, 2022). Some Romanian senators have also expressed the opinion that the universities “were de facto handed over to rectors to found dynasties and diploma factories” (Peneş, 2023). The worrying trend of decreasing media freedom and an aggressive media discourse against journalists is relevant, considering the general freedom of academic expression, and more specifically, due to the role that journalism has played in detecting and reporting cases of plagiarism (Taylor & Neagu, 2022). Overall, these cases point towards problematic relationships between politicians and institutional leadership – as these open for political interference with institutional autonomy and academic freedom. For example, having rectors who are also members of the parliament can lead to an unfortunate blurring of roles.

4.10.2. Institutional leadership and management

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom of individual institutional leadership and management, yet the debates concerning rector appointments, and the revolving door between higher education leadership and political appointments in the public administration, may suggest that the two sources for threats may, in this instance, be difficult to disentangle. Moreover, there are indications that the climate of public debate concerning critique of institutional management is not sufficiently open.

4.10.3. Academic community

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom from fellow academics.

4.10.4. Civil society

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom from civil society.

Earlier, there have been certain examples of interference from the Romanian Orthodox Church and the ability, or willingness, of Faculties of Theology to engage in research that would be critical of the church. As an example, the faculties also set boundaries on the religious affiliations of their students, and no religious studies programmes exist which would have a free and open nature.

4.10.5. Private sector actors

The latest debates do not reveal any specific infringements on academic freedom from private sector actors. Yet, the severe underfunding of the system may pose challenges in the future if higher education institutions become too dependent on external funding from private sector actors.

4.10.6. Summary of findings

The Romanian case represents a rather different political context than a number of the other countries in this study. While there appear to be few debates concerning infringements and threats to academic freedom rising from academic conflicts and tensions, or from civil society, chronic political interference and underfunding of the system may create unfavourable conditions for academic freedom.

The key concerns in the system seem to be related to academic norms, the recent changes in the law that extend university leadership positions, and concerns for corruption and nepotism. Such developments can lead to improper influence from internal and external actors and create problematic aspects for how the institutional conditions for academic work function, which may threaten academic freedom both in the short term, and ultimately the long term.

4.10.7. Resources

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Academic freedom is widely acknowledged both as a fundamental value of present-day higher education and science, and as a prerequisite for well-functioning democratic societies. Yet in recent years, major concerns about the state of academic freedom in the European Union have been raised by various stakeholders. The European Parliament launched an annual EP Academic Freedom Monitor in 2022, aimed at helping to strengthen the protection of academic freedom in the European Union. This report presents the 2023 edition of the EP Academic Freedom Monitor, consisting of two studies and their joint key findings and proposed policy options.

The first study, entitled 'Systematising existing measurements of academic freedom in EU Member States', has used various monitors and other measurements across the EU Member States to identify the main challenges and threats to, and worries about, academic freedom in the EU.

The second study, entitled 'Academic freedom across the EU 2023: Latest trends analysis', has analysed the main threats to academic freedom and their impacts in ten EU Member States. The study is conducted as a qualitative analysis of several data, with input from stakeholder organisations and academic experts.

On the basis of the two studies, this report proposes EU-level policy options for legislative and non-legislative initiatives to support academic freedom in the EU.

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