



A statement published under the authority of the Board of Trustees of the Academia Europaea, on the situation at Boğaziçi University, Turkey.

To whom it may concern

The Academia Europaea wishes to give its full support to the sentiments expressed by the Board of The Science Academy, Turkey - Bilim Akademisi, in their public statement of 3 February 2021 and their addendum of February 8, in connection with the reported events at Boğaziçi University.

We are greatly concerned by the increased political interference with the University system. We continue to see a gradual erosion of the traditional academic freedoms of Turkish institutions of higher education and research, and that these trends are accompanied by the bypassing of the managerial autonomy of the Universities. The recent events at Boğaziçi University are a clear demonstration of this trend.

It must be clear to any observer, that such actions will place at risk, the hard-won international reputation for educational and research excellence that Boğaziçi University exemplifies.

We are very proud of our Turkish members, who are of the highest international calibre and play an active part in the life of our Academy. We are therefore deeply worried to see an increase in intolerance from the state apparatus, directed towards individual faculty members and also those minorities who seek to exercise their academic freedoms in a peaceful way. Imposition of measures that ignore well established processes are negative developments. These also place at risk the natural and essential core European values that are traditionally associated with our Universities - freedom of expression, academic dialogue and cultural interaction. These are markers of quality for any reputable University.

The Academia Europaea (AE) with over 4,000 elected scholars as members, represents a diverse community. The AE benefits greatly from its cultural, religious, disciplinary and national diversity. We see that advances in science for the benefit of society, can only come from positive collaborations and open dialogue. Societal acceptance of the advances that scholars make have to be built on trust. Our collective European community of scholarship – as exemplified through our Universities and including the excellent institutions in Turkey, are therefore the focus for collaboration and dialogue, and for freedom of exchange of ideas that underpin the trust that society demands.

We therefore urge the Government of the Republic of Turkey, in a spirit of constructive criticism, to step back from any further erosion of academic freedom and to reflect on how its Universities can best deliver the future benefits that Turkish society rightly expects and ensure a fairness of treatment, cultural tolerance and a clear support for academic freedom that will serve to strengthen its Universities and society.

Intolerance destroys: tolerance builds.

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