

# ACADEMIC FREEDOM TIMELINE

**12th Century**

## THE BOLOGNA MODEL

Bologna University's unique structure of a student-run university granted early forms of intellectual independence from both church and state.

## THE PARIS MODEL

The university of Paris emphasized faculty-led governance and strong ties to the Catholic Church. However, this model set precedence for institutional independence and legal autonomy

**12th & 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

**14th to 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

## THE RENAISSANCE

University thinkers openly criticized papal authority and church hierarchies, which led to gradual growth in intellectual independence.

## THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Academic freedom (AF) advanced significantly as reason, science, and individual liberty became central values.

**17th and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

## THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The German Humboldtian model: *Lernfreiheit* - the concept that emphasizes the rights of academic staff, particularly the right to teach independently.

**18th & 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

**20th Century**

## THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Academic freedom in Europe was shaken from the wars and the authoritarian regimes, mainly in Italy: censorship and persecution of academia

## NORTH AMERICA CASE: THE AAUP

The university of Paris emphasized faculty-led governance and strong ties to the Catholic Church. However, this model set precedence for institutional independence and legal autonomy

**20<sup>th</sup> Century**

**1948**

## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Although not officially recognised as a right, academic freedom is juxtaposed with the right to education in Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

## INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS – ICCPR

Academic freedom is considered to be included in the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which also includes the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds

**1966**

**1966**

## **INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS - ICESCR**

This document recognizes the protection of academic freedom as the protection of economic, social and cultural rights. An interesting and innovative approach to defending academic freedom

## **MAGNA CHARTA UNIVERSITATUM**

Adopted by rectors of universities in Europe, this document is also a global benchmark for the core values of universities, identified as a seat of research and teaching that must be free from any kind of political, economic or ideological interference because autonomy is seen as a prerequisite for intellectual independence.

**1988**

**1997**

## **UNESCO RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE STATUS OF HIGHER-EDUCATION TEACHING PERSONNEL**

The recommendation tackled several issues regarding academic freedom. The main points are: provides detailed definitions regarding academic freedom in section I, principles of academic freedom in section III, institutional rights and responsibilities in section IV, institutional autonomy in V, self-governance in collegiality in section VI, and the responsibilities of higher education teaching personnel in section VII.

## BOLOGNA DECLARATION

Adopted by European ministers of education, it emphasises the need to promote the independence and autonomy of all higher education institutions, which is a fundamental prerequisite for academic freedom.

1999

2000

## EU CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

First document to ever use and **recognize the term Academic Freedom**

The documents below are highly influenced by **the Syrian crisis (2011)**, which had a great effect on freedom of expression, posing risks on Scholars and Students in the country. Therefore, there was an increase in significance on AF recognition in a normative framework in Europe. The Syrian crisis, as well as the war in Ukraine (2014), both influenced the need for more recognition of academic freedom violations and protection for affected scholars and students. The need for recognition of the importance of AF protection is also affected by the growing threats to democracy and academic freedom globally, including in EU member states. This is translated through the documents that emerged post-2011. Some of the most important ones are highlighted below.

## RECOMMENDATION CM/REC(2012)7 OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY

Adopted by Council of Europe, it came out in response to **Syrian Crisis (2011)** and the **global economic and financial crisis (2008)**, both had consequences on AF globally. It promotes a common approach to academic governance and ensures academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

2012

2017

## JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL - ELEMENTS FOR AN EU STRATEGY FOR SYRIA

This document associates freedom of expression with democracy, human rights and transitional justice. Academic freedom, although not explicitly mentioned, could be part of the broader framework of fundamental rights that the EU intends to protect in Syria.

## DEFENCE OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE EU'S EXTERNAL ACTION

Adopted in response to Hungary's special Law **Lex CEU**, and increasing attacks on academic freedom both inside and outside the EU. The document focuses mainly on third countries and international protection mechanisms for academics and students at risk. However, cases of violations within the EU are also mentioned.

2018

2020

## BONN DECLARATION ON FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Adopted by EU research ministers, it reaffirms the principle of freedom of scientific research as a fundamental value for democracy and societal progress. **It was adopted in response to growing global threats to academic and scientific freedom.**

## BERLIN DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC COOPERATION AMIDST A WORLD IN CRISIS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

G7 and Partners met in Berlin to underline the importance in collaboration to protect Scholars and Students at Risk in times of crises. **This summit was overshadowed by the Russian war on Ukraine.**

2022

2023

## STATE OF PLAY OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE EU MEMBER STATES

Provides context and information on **academic freedom threats in EU member states**, while providing recommendations to strengthen it.

# WORDS THAT RESONATE: QUOTES FROM THE DOCUMENTS WORTH REMEMBERING



**“We believe that our countries and higher education institutions are and should be safe havens for students and scholars.”  
(Berlin Declaration, 2022)**



**“Every humanitarian relief effort should have a higher education component in its portfolio.” (Berlin Declaration, 2022)**



**“We will continue to express our conviction that critical discourses are not disloyalty, but essential elements of a democratic society.” (Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research, 2020)**



**“This connection between academic freedom and its institutional setting is crucial, since the institutional setting has the responsibility for creating and guarding the conditions under which academic freedom can be exercised as best possible. This responsibility cannot validly lie outside academia, since there is no other space in society where academic freedom can be exercised and guarded in an effective and meaningful way.” (State of Play of Academic Freedom in the EU Member States, 2023)**



**“Academic freedom should guarantee the right of both institutions and individuals to be protected against undue outside interference, by public authorities or others. It is an essential condition for the search for truth, by both academic staff and students, and should be applied throughout Europe.”  
(Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)7, 2012)**



**“The importance of education and educational cooperation in the development and strengthening of stable, peaceful and democratic societies is universally acknowledged as paramount, the more so in view of the situation in South East Europe.” (Bologna Declaration, 1999)**



**“The arts and scientific research shall be free of constraint. Academic freedom shall be respected.” A milestone, the word AF used for the first time, as a fundamental human right (EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, 2000)**