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# ALLEA STATEMENT ON RESEARCH COLLABORATION AND RESEARCH SECURITY IN A SHIFTING GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE

*The European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities (ALLEA) acknowledges the challenges that European and global research collaborations face in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment. Within this shifting landscape, it is crucial to reaffirm the principles of openness, integrity, and freedom of scientific research for a responsible internationalisation. These principles, which form the core of both ALLEA's mission and scientific progress in general, must be safeguarded even as legitimate concerns on research security are addressed.*

*This statement is directed to policymakers, research funders, and academic institutions across Europe and beyond, and serves to inform the ongoing dialogue on research collaboration and security. It aims at contributing to a "European way", projecting a distinctly European perspective into national and global debates for sustainable and secure partnerships. Building on existing frameworks such as the EU Council Recommendation on enhancing research security<sup>1</sup> and the EU Toolkit on tackling foreign interference<sup>2</sup>, ALLEA seeks to work with European and national authorities, and international partners, to ensure secure and open scientific cooperation and a European approach towards responsible internationalisation.*

## Responsible Internationalisation

ALLEA advocates for a framework that safeguards standards of research ethics and integrity, emphasising that openness should serve as a guiding principle—not an end in itself—to achieve broader values such as inclusivity, progress, peace, and prosperity. To achieve these noble objectives, research policies must take into consideration emerging security concerns and create nuanced frameworks that recognise and mitigate the diverse risks associated with international research collaboration.

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1 Council of the European Union, *Council Recommendation on Enhancing Research Security* (ST 9097/2024 REV 1), Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9097-2024-REV-1/en/pdf> [accessed 2 December 2024].

2 European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *Tackling R&I Foreign Interference: Staff Working Document*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/513746> [accessed 2 December 2024].



In an era of international collaboration in which universally shared values of freedom and autonomy can no longer be taken for granted, it is key to balance principles of openness and academic freedom with the need for security and integrity. ALLEA encourages European research and (foreign) policy to take on a balanced approach towards responsible internationalisation. Authorities and institutions should ensure that scientific progress continues, and research is shielded from undue interference, while at the same time protecting the integrity and security of research activities.

Collaboration with partners in environments that may not, or not fully, respect academic freedom and institutional autonomy requires a clear guidance framework. Such guidelines must address risks that go beyond academic values, encompassing national security considerations and complementing academia's efforts to safeguard research integrity.

## Capacity Building in the ERA

To effectively protect European research and guarantee its freedom and openness, a harmonised approach across the European Research Area (ERA) is essential to guide collaborations at the international level. ALLEA supports efforts to establish harmonised rules clarifying the responsibilities of European and state authorities, institutions, and individual researchers. Policymakers across Europe should ensure a level playing field, building on initiatives like the EU Council Recommendation, to foster international collaboration. States and institutions should assume the primary role in ensuring research security, as well as in safeguarding academic freedom and the principles of open and inclusive science, raising awareness, and providing individual researchers with the tools and capabilities needed to evaluate risks in research collaborations.

Researchers and institutions must retain their autonomy in selecting collaborators based on the principles of both openness and responsibility, respecting applicable regulatory frameworks, and avoiding collaborations with partners that lack proper ethical and research integrity standards. This approach must be supported by, and achieved through, targeted capacity-building measures that equip researchers at all career stages and research institutions across the ERA with equitable access to research security resources and information.

## Integrating Security, Freedom, and Responsibility

Research security frameworks must be developed to respect academic freedom, autonomy, and independence while recognising the shared responsibility of researchers, institutions, and authorities to address security risks. Researchers should recognise that having *academic freedom* comes with the responsibility of adhering to principles of research integrity and good research practice and must carefully consider threats to research security<sup>3</sup>.

Europe's approach to research security must be balanced and centred around managing risks without closing doors, thus enabling scientists and institutions to make informed choices. ALLEA invites policymakers, research funders, and institutions to engage in a collaborative process that recognises the interconnectedness of research security, freedom and responsibility, and integrity. ALLEA's network

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<sup>3</sup> For initiatives stressing that academic freedom comes with responsibilities and must be exercised with respect to ethical standards and social responsibility, see, for instance: UNESCO and International Science Council (ISC), Conference on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility, UNESCO, 2023, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386476> [accessed 2 December 2024].

of academies is committed to contributing to this endeavour to ensure that Europe's research landscape remains open, secure, and globally relevant, and is prepared to support and collaborate with the European Commission, national governments, and other stakeholders to refine existing frameworks and guidelines.

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## About ALLEA

ALLEA is the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities, representing more than 50 academies from about 40 EU and non-EU countries. Since its foundation in 1994, ALLEA speaks out on behalf of its members on European and international stages, promotes science as a global public good, and facilitates scientific collaboration across borders and disciplines. Learn more: <http://www.allea.org>.

## About this statement

This ALLEA statement has been prepared by a dedicated task force including the ALLEA President and Vice Presidents as principal authors, with further input from members of the [ALLEA Working Group on the European Research Area](#). Through its working groups and task forces, ALLEA provides input on behalf of European academies to pressing societal, scientific, and science policy debates, and their underlying legislations. With its work, ALLEA seeks to ensure that science and research in Europe can excel and serve the best interests of society.

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