



University Council
Via: university.council@eur.nl

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Subject
Response to 38706 Request evaluation
institutional ties

Our reference
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Your reference
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Dear members of the University Council,

Thank you for your letter in which you address the institutional ties with Israeli universities, and Bar Ilan University in particular.

First, we would like to express that we are indeed shocked and saddened by the extreme violence and the many victims resulting from the violence in Israel and the Palestinian territories since October 7. We deeply sympathize with the victims, and everyone affected by this violence.

In your letter, you request an assessment of the exchange agreement with Bar Ilan University. We have considered your request to scrutinize the institutional ties with Bar Ilan University, and Israeli universities in general, and would like to observe the following:

We must be cautious when it comes to limiting institutional collaborations without a clear legal basis. Staying connected with Israeli partner institutions, even in times of war and conflict, can facilitate science diplomacy, while severing or suspending ties also means severing relationships, including those with critical voices within Israeli universities.

Legally, the preliminary judgment of the International Court of Justice is binding on the State of Israel and Hamas and may also have legal implications for other states, such as the Netherlands, but the judgment does not impose any legal obligations on universities.

At the same time, there are indeed moral considerations. Institutional collaborations in the framework of research and education need to be evaluated regularly, also in light of the values of an institution, and to be reconsidered if necessary.

The recently adopted *Global Engagement Policy* and the *Global Engagement Checklist* of Erasmus University (appendix 1) provide criteria and guidelines to evaluate partnerships. Following an evaluation of a partnership, which usually takes place once an agreement is about to expire, a partnership may be continued, put on hold, or discontinued.

In view of the recent developments and the concerns raised, we recognize that existing agreements may have to be evaluated in an earlier stage. We will take the necessary steps to start this process.

This includes the development of evaluation or 'due diligence' processes as a follow up and elaboration of the Global Engagement Policy, as well as the establishment of an EUR expert committee which can be consulted when ethical questions regarding international collaboration arise. We have requested the Senior Internationalization Policy Officer of Academic Affairs and the Head of the International Office to start taking the necessary steps in this process, under the lead of prof. dr. Ruard Ganzevoort, rector of ISS.

In response to your request to sever the collaboration if a substantiated case of genocide is established, we would like to express that we will naturally be compliant with any such requests from national level (i.e. from our Ministry of Education) or European level, following from such a verdict.

The Executive Board of Erasmus University Rotterdam,



Prof.dr. H. Brinksma
President