

Topic for discussion EUR University Council	
Title	Strengthening Academic Freedom and the Freedom of Expression at the EUR.
Expected to be included in the cycle of	7 th cycle
Date submitted	19-04-2024
Subject	Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression
Submitted by	Nawin Ramcharan & Wesley Hennep
Explanation	This proposal seeks to strengthen academic freedom and freedom of expression at Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR). In light of growing concerns regarding the decline of these fundamental rights within Dutch higher education, evidenced by national and European reports, this document outlines a strategic response. The goal of this initiative is to safeguard the university's commitment to fostering a vibrant academic community where ideas can be freely exchanged and intellectual diversity is celebrated. It includes concrete action plans to address issues impacting academic freedom. Through this proposal, we aim to reinforce the university's mission of creating positive societal impact by ensuring that all members of the university community have the freedom to express diverse and dissenting opinions without fear of repercussion.
If applicable reason for urgency or emergency	The urgency of this proposal stems from a documented decline in academic freedom and freedom of expression across Dutch higher education, which aligns with troubling trends across Europe. Recent evaluations, including the Academic Freedom Index and studies by the Education Inspectorate, indicate that the environment for free academic discourse is deteriorating rapidly. These issues are not only pressing but potentially damaging to the reputation and effectiveness of our institution. Action is required to address these challenges to prevent further erosion of academic integrity and to ensure that our university remains a leader in upholding democratic values and academic excellence. Additionally, upcoming national policy discussions and university evaluations make it imperative that we address these concerns promptly to shape positive outcomes and reinforce our commitment to academic freedom.
Specific Questions	<p>This proposal raises and addresses several critical questions that are pivotal to understanding and improving the current state of academic freedom and freedom of expression at Erasmus University Rotterdam:</p> <p>What is the current state of academic freedom at our university, as reflected in national and international indexes?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What specific challenges and barriers are currently impacting the ability of our community members to freely express their academic and personal viewpoints? 2. How does the experience of academic freedom and freedom of expression among our students and faculty compare to those at other Dutch and European institutions?

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. What have been the outcomes of recent discussions between (1) our deans, and (2) national educational bodies (UNL) and our Minister regarding academic freedom? 4. What actions have been proposed or implemented by the University to address the declining trend in academic freedom? 5. How can the university better integrate and prioritize academic freedom and freedom of expression in its strategic planning and daily operations?
Accompanying documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiatiefvoorstel – Versterken Academische Vrijheid en Vrijheid van Meningsuiting op de EUR (NL) 2. Initiative proposal - Strengthening Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression at the EUR (ENG)