



# Press release

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## **Karliczek: We have everyone on board – Freedom of scientific research is the foundation of the European Research Area**

### **All 27 EU Member States have signed the Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research**

All 27 EU Member States and the EU Commissioner for Research have now signed the Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research. This provides the common basis for taking further steps to protect the fundamental values of the European Research Area (ERA). The Bonn Declaration was initiated in October last year under the German Presidency of the Council of the EU. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, not all Member States were able to sign the declaration at the Ministerial Conference on the ERA in Bonn. The declaration was therefore subsequently circulated to the Member States in order to collect the missing signatures. International partners such as Canada, Israel, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine also support the declaration. Germany's Federal Research Minister Anja Karliczek explained:

“Freedom of science and research is a pillar of our democracy and prosperity. I am very pleased that all EU Member States have now signed the Bonn Declaration. This is a very clear commitment to the huge importance of the freedom of scientific research for Europe. We aim to build on this by introducing specific measures to implement the aims of the declaration.”

“Freedom of science and research can be measured. We therefore want to link the European Research Area more closely with the European Higher Education Area. We have agreed to create similar monitoring systems for both areas. These systems will enable us to identify infringements of scientific freedom. This basis will make it easier in future to point out and defend against infringements of scientific freedom. I therefore welcome and support the scientific community's suggestion to include scientific freedom as a factor in future university rankings. Science and research based on excellence and academic freedom – that is what researchers and students are looking for.”

“Protecting the freedom of scientific research also constitutes an important foundation for trusting and open cooperation, in particular transnational cooperation. I am therefore delighted that important international partner countries of the EU also support the Bonn Declaration.”

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### **Background:**

By signing the Bonn Declaration, all EU Member States and the European Commission, represented by EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth Mariya Gabriel, have confirmed their common understanding of and commitment to freedom of scientific research. With this declaration they show their support for a diverse, creative and independent research landscape for the benefit of our societies. Researchers must have the freedom to define research topics, determine research methods and select publication platforms. The institutional autonomy of research organisations is an important basis for freedom of science and research.

The Bonn Declaration is also welcomed by the large science organisations in Germany and Europe. In its position paper on the further development of Germany's science system, the German Council of Science and Humanities supports the approach of the Bonn Declaration and suggests that the core principles of scientific freedom become key components of internationalisation efforts.

### **Further information:**

Text of the Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research:

[https://www.bmbf.de/files/10\\_2\\_2\\_Bonn\\_Declaration\\_en\\_final.pdf](https://www.bmbf.de/files/10_2_2_Bonn_Declaration_en_final.pdf)

Press release published by the BMBF on the 2020 Ministerial Conference on the European Research Area

<https://www.bmbf.de/files/english.pdf>

Further information of the European Research Area

<https://www.bmbf.de/en/the-european-research-area-enabling-joint-research-and-joint-growth-3237.html>.

Press release published by the Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany

[https://www.daad.de/en/the-daad/communication-publications/press/press\\_releases/bonner-erklarung/](https://www.daad.de/en/the-daad/communication-publications/press/press_releases/bonner-erklarung/)

Position paper published by the German Council of Science and Humanities (in German only)

<https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/2021/8834-21.html>

Report on the 2020 Academic Freedom Index data

[https://www.gppi.net/media/KinzelbachEtAl\\_2021\\_Free\\_Universities\\_AFi-2020.pdf](https://www.gppi.net/media/KinzelbachEtAl_2021_Free_Universities_AFi-2020.pdf)