

## **EASA Working Group on Human Rights and Academic Freedom**

### **Mandate and Operating Principles**

The Working Group on Human Rights and Academic Freedom serves as EASA's dedicated body for monitoring and addressing academic freedom and human rights issues. It aims to monitor violations, gather evidence, initiate policies, create supportive structures (including university guidelines and "best practices"), organize events on academic freedom, and connect and network with existing similar initiatives across Europe and the world. The group provides a forum for discussing these issues within EASA and promotes a culture of academic freedom across Europe in response to growing concerns over censorship of and retaliation against academics.

The Working Group was established following a two-stage approval process. Initially proposed at the December 2023 Annual General Meeting through a [Motion](#) submitted by EASA members, the Working Group was later approved through an electronic vote open to all EASA members in April 2024, with overwhelming support (93% in favor from a 37% turnout of 761 voting members). Following this vote, the group was formally constituted through an executive committee selection process from the submitted applications following an open call. Its membership includes scholars with expertise in human rights research and/or demonstrated engagement with academic freedom issues through research, advocacy, or institutional service.

Whereas the Working Group was initially proposed with a one-year mandate, considering the ongoing nature of its mission and responsibilities, the Working Group will be established as a permanent body within EASA's organizational structure. It will comprise five members, from whom four will be appointed by the EASA Executive Committee, and one will be a member of EASA's Executive Committee, functioning as liaison. Members will serve for two years with the possibility of being re-appointed for another two years, subject to a formal selection process by the Executive Committee following an open call.

### **Scope of Independence and Oversight**

The EASA Executive Committee recognizes the expertise of the Working Group members and in that spirit, offers constructive support and guidance to the Working Group to ensure their work aligns with EASA values and principles. The Working Group will act as an advisory board to the EASA Executive Committee and request the Executive Committee to take certain actions (statements, letters, holding meetings, etc.) to protect and promote human rights and academic freedom.

In exercising its mandate described above, the Working Group may also draft letters of support, reports, and other documents in its own name. These documents shall be approved by the EASA Executive Committee with the following procedure: The Executive Liaison shall share the relevant document for the review of EASA Executive Committee, which then will provide their input within 48 hours for urgent documents and two weeks for non-urgent documents. When submitting any

relevant documents, the Executive Liaison will clearly mark documents as urgent or not. Both the Executive Committee and the Working Group shall operate in accordance with principles of ethical integrity in anthropology, with particular emphasis on matters pertaining to human rights and academic freedoms.