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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(14.11.2025)

The European Strategy of Universities, the Erasmus+ Programme Guide¹ and the European Research Area Policy Agenda highlight the EU's commitment to fundamental values, including academic freedom² and institutional autonomy, as cornerstones of the European Higher Education Area.

Based on the 2024 Tirana Communiqué³, the Commission works on guiding principles for protecting fundamental academic values.

The Jean Monnet Actions (JMA) aim to promote a better understanding of the EU, reflecting the EU's commitment to democracy, inclusion and free expression⁴. Through targeted funding, the JMA empower universities to engage independently with complex European issues. They foster critical thinking, intercultural understanding and civic engagement, in line with Europe's shared values of freedom, equality and respect for human rights⁵.

The JMA support academic research, teaching and inquiry that critically examines EU policies and institutions. They promote pluralism, open debate and critical thinking, ensuring that all projects respect academic freedom and intellectual diversity.

All Jean Monnet projects are selected through a transparent technical evaluation based on clearly defined criteria, linked to education and research. During this process, all applications are assessed by external experts free from political influence. The Expert Code of Conduct ensures impartiality of their work. In addition, neither the funding authority nor the Commission influences the content of the projects during the grant agreement or implementation phases.

¹ https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-01/erasmus-programme-guide-v2.2025_en.pdf.

² Enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/char_2012/oj/eng

³ <https://chea.info/Immagini/Tirana-Communique.pdf>.

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2023/1339/oj> Council conclusions on the contribution of education and training to strengthening common European values and democratic citizenship, OJ C, C/2023/1339, 29.11.2023.

⁵ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0607\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0607(01)) Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching.