

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002787/26
to the Commission
Lefteris Nikolaou-Alavanos (NI)
(6 July 2026)**

Subject: Question about an immediate stop to prosecution of academics at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

The president and members of the Board of Directors of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Faculty Union are facing legal charges on the basis of unfounded accusations, because they expressed their support for the fair demands and the protests of students living in halls of residence. This is the first instance of the Nea Dimokratia Government's unacceptable disciplinary framework for public servants (Law 5224/25) being applied. Government and administrations are intensifying efforts to silence universities through a series of repressive measures, so that anti-educational policies that undermine labour and education rights can be pursued without any hinderance. In the same context, Law 5224/25 is using Regulations (EU) 2019/945 and (EU) 2019/947 on drones, with 'safety' as the pretext.

All this demonstrates the perennial downside to public and free higher education, the underfunding of academic institutions, their transformation into incubators for war research, working predominantly on EU war programmes (European Defence Fund (EDF) and NATO's DIANA) as well as Horizon-funded programmes for research into dual-use products.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Where does it stand on the fact that, in the name of 'academic freedom', the implementation of the guidelines of the European Higher Education Area ensures the business operation of institutions by increasingly allowing war research to infiltrate universities, while measures are taken to suppress protestation and limit industrial action, with a view to allowing the unhindered promotion of the European strategy and the interests of monopolies in higher education and research?
2. How does it view the legitimate calls from the academic community for an end to the prosecution of students, professors and university workers?

Submitted: 6.7.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(26 August 2026)**

The Commission does not comment on the legal charges, which fall exclusively within the competence of the Member State concerned. Education remains a Member States' competence, including for the content of teaching.

At the same time, the Commission remains firmly committed to academic freedom and the freedom of scientific research, in line with Article 13 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union ⁽¹⁾.

The Commission will continue to promote these principles across all its policies and interactions with higher education institutions and public authorities.

The Commission also participates actively to the European Higher Education Area as a full member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group ⁽²⁾, alongside all Member States including Greece.

The Tirana Communiqué (2024) ⁽³⁾ reaffirmed that academic freedom is one of six fundamental academic values, next to academic integrity, institutional autonomy, student and staff participation in higher education governance, public responsibility for higher education and public responsibility of higher education, and that these values must be implemented as a coherent whole.

Nonetheless, Council recommendations ⁽⁴⁾ emphasise the importance of external quality assurance conducted in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and by independent quality assurance agencies registered with the European Quality Assurance Register ⁽⁵⁾ to protect the interests of students and staff.

⁽¹⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/char_2012/art_13/oj/eng.

⁽²⁾ <https://eha.info/members/european-commission/>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eha.info/Download/Tirana-Communique.pdf>.

⁽⁴⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC_2018_444_R_0001 ; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/3006/oj/eng>.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.eqar.eu/>.