

Letter to the European University Association

### **Regarding Turkey's participation in the EU's research programmes**

As rectors of Norwegian universities and university colleges – all members of EUA – we have been following the recent developments for the higher education sector in Turkey with great concern.

The EUA recently issued a statement condemning the forced resignation of 1,577 university deans and 15,200 academic staff. We fully support this statement.

Since then news have emerged from Turkey that four university rectors have been forced to resign. The media also has reported on a crackdown of movement for academics, with a travel ban imposed on the higher education sector, and a recalling of Turkish academics abroad.

Turkey is both an aspiring member of the European Union and a participant in the European Research Council and Horizon 2020 programmes. We are concerned how developments in Turkey will affect this participation.

We believe that recent developments in Turkey and the specific targeting of the education sector by the authorities are irreconcilable with the democratic ideals and critical thinking underpinning all work in research and higher education. This may damage the opportunities for Turkish academics to participate fully and freely in the EU's research programmes.

We believe that there must be made no concessions to authorities in Turkey, or any other country for that matter, when it comes to the integrity and freedom for researchers involved in programmes funded by European institutions. In this critical hour it is of the uttermost importance that we stand together with our Turkish colleagues, so that they can participate freely in these programmes.

We ask the EUA to bring up this subject with the EU's Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos Moedas, in order for him to make it perfectly clear to Turkish authorities that their actions are irreconcilable with academic values and the country's and its researchers participation in the EU's research programmes.