

Forum: Legal Committee (GA6)

Issue: Strengthening international legal protections for scientific autonomy and academic freedom

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TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Scientific autonomy and academic freedom are of utmost significance when it comes to the advancement of two significant areas: science and education. They ensure that researchers and academics as well as students can pursue knowledge, conduct research, and communicate their findings without any type of interference. As scientific research has a vast impact in the way we respond to global challenges, protecting the independence of such inquiry has become an essential issue in regard to international law and legal frameworks.¹

Initially, despite the fact that international law recognizes aspects of academic freedom, existing protections remain constrained and are not always effectively enforced. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the rights to freedom of expression and participation in scientific advancement, while the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights affirms that States must respect "the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity."² UNESCO has further reinforced these principles through the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel and the Recommendation on Open Science,

¹ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

²United Nations, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, art.

15, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights> United Nations, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, art.

19, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>

both of which promote institutional autonomy, research integrity, and international scientific cooperation.³

Despite these legal measures, academic freedom and scientific autonomy continue to face significant challenges on a global scale. Researchers in numerous countries experience censorship and political pressure as well as restrictions on research topics, and interference in university governance. Finally, according to recent reports by Scholars at Risk and the Academic Freedom Index, attacks on higher education institutions and restrictions on academic freedom have increased in recent years, demonstrating that existing international protections are often insufficient.⁴

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

Scientific Autonomy

“Scientific autonomy refers to the independence of scientific research from political, ideological, or economic pressure. It allows researchers to determine their methods, topics, and conclusions based on evidence rather than external influence. The European Commission describes research freedom as a principle that protects “the freedom to conduct scientific research and disseminate knowledge.”⁵

Academic Freedom

³ UNESCO, *Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel* (1997), <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-concerning-status-higher-education-teaching-personnel>; UNESCO, *Recommendation on Open Science* (2021), <https://www.unesco.org/en/open-science>

⁴ Scholars at Risk, *Free to Think 2024*, <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/free-to-think/>; Academic Freedom Index, *Academic Freedom Index 2024 Update*, <https://academic-freedom-index.net/>

⁵ European Commission. “Science Stays Free.” *European Commission*, European Union, https://commission.europa.eu/protect-what-matters-our-democracy/science-stays-free_en.

Academic freedom is the ability of scholars and educational institutions to teach, research, publish, and debate ideas without censorship or retaliation. UNESCO identifies academic freedom as essential for the ability of higher-education personnel to perform their duties independently.⁶

Research Integrity

Research integrity refers to the commitment to honesty, reliability, transparency, and ethical standards throughout the scientific process. It ensures that scientific findings can be trusted by society.⁷

Institutional Autonomy

Institutional autonomy describes the ability of universities and research institutions to manage their academic, administrative, and financial affairs independently. It is considered a key condition for protecting academic freedom.⁸

Scientific Censorship

Scientific censorship occurs when research, publication, or communication of scientific findings is restricted because of political, ideological, or social pressures. Such restrictions can limit innovation and evidence-based policymaking.⁹

Open Science

⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel." *UNESCO Legal Affairs*, 11 Nov. 1997, <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-concerning-status-higher-education-teaching-personnel>.

⁷ European Science Foundation and All European Academies. *The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity: Revised Edition*. European Science Foundation, 2017, <https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>.

⁸ Scholars at Risk. *Free to Think 2024: Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project*. Scholars at Risk, 2024, <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/resources/free-to-think-2024/>.

⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science." *UNESCO*, 2021, <https://www.unesco.org/en/open-science>.

Open Science is an approach that promotes accessibility, transparency, and cooperation in scientific research. UNESCO defines it as a framework aimed at making scientific knowledge openly available and inclusive.¹⁰

International Legal Protection

International legal protection refers to treaties, declarations, and legal mechanisms created by international organizations to safeguard rights and establish standards between states.¹¹

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Relationship Between Scientific Freedom and Human Rights

Scientific freedom is closely connected to several internationally recognized human rights. Freedom of expression allows researchers to communicate their findings and opinions, while freedom of association and peaceful assembly allows them to participate in professional organizations and scientific communities. The right to education is also closely connected to academic freedom because universities require environments in which students and educators can debate ideas openly.¹²

The right to participate in scientific advancement also has an important collective dimension. Scientific discoveries can contribute to improvements in healthcare, environmental protection, agriculture, education and technological development. Protecting researchers therefore does not only protect individual academics; it helps societies retain their capacity to produce knowledge that benefits the wider population.

The UNESCO 2017 Recommendation recognizes science as a common good and emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and the free sharing of scientific knowledge. It also encourages States to create conditions in which researchers can participate in scientific policymaking and exercise an appropriate degree of autonomy.¹³

¹⁰ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science." *UNESCO*, 2021, <https://www.unesco.org/en/open-science>.

¹¹ United Nations. "International Human Rights Instruments." *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-and-mechanisms/international-human-rights-instruments>.

¹² United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 10 Dec. 1948, United Nations, .

¹³ United Nations. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. 16 Dec. 1966, United Nations,



Figure 1¹⁴: Ts 55 Fuwq554<lujtugj fwzsi ymj | twi ijr tsxywfyji ktwhfijr rh kwjjitr 3

Threats to Scientific Autonomy

Political and Ideological Interference

One of the most significant threats to academic freedom is inappropriate political interference. Governments or political actors may attempt to influence which topics researchers investigate, which conclusions are considered acceptable, or how scientific information is communicated to the public.

Political influence can occur directly through censorship or legislation, but it can also occur indirectly through funding decisions, appointments, institutional restructuring or pressure placed upon universities. Even where researchers are not formally prohibited from conducting particular research, the possibility of professional retaliation may encourage self-censorship.

Restrictions on Publication and Communication

Scientific progress depends upon researchers being able to communicate findings and subject them to scrutiny. Peer review, replication and professional criticism allow scientific claims to be evaluated by other researchers.

¹⁴ Protecting Academic Freedom: Study Recommends Four Strategies to Counter Authoritarian Policies
<https://www.volkswagenstiftung.de/en/news/news/protecting-academic-freedom-study-recommends-four-strategies-counter-authoritarian-policies>

The UNESCO Recommendation therefore encourages Member States to facilitate publication of research results and access to scientific knowledge. It also recognizes that restrictions on researchers' ability to publish or communicate results should be strictly minimized and consistent with legitimate public interests.¹⁵

Certain restrictions can nevertheless be legitimate. Research involving national security, personal data, dangerous biological materials or other sensitive information may require safeguards. The legal challenge is to distinguish legitimate restrictions from restrictions designed primarily to suppress inconvenient research.

Restrictions on International Collaboration

Modern scientific research is highly international. Researchers frequently collaborate across borders, share datasets, participate in conferences and work in multinational research teams.

Restrictions on travel, visas, international funding or institutional partnerships can therefore directly affect scientific freedom. The UNESCO framework emphasizes the international dimension of research and encourages States to facilitate scientific cooperation while respecting applicable national regulations and human rights.¹⁶

Threats During Armed Conflict

Armed conflicts can severely damage universities, laboratories, archives and research infrastructure. Researchers may be displaced, imprisoned, threatened or forced to abandon their work.

The consequences can continue long after the immediate conflict ends. Scientific communities depend upon institutional infrastructure, funding, equipment, professional networks and highly trained personnel. Once these systems are destroyed, rebuilding them may require many years.

UNESCO's current work on freedom and safety of scientists specifically emphasizes the importance of protecting researchers and strengthening the enabling environment in which they can work independently and safely.

The Balance Between Freedom and Responsibility

Scientific autonomy cannot mean that researchers are exempt from ethical or legal obligations. Scientific research can have significant consequences for human rights, national security and the

¹⁵ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*. 11 Nov. 1997, UNESCO, .

¹⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Recommendation on Open Science*. 23 Nov. 2021, UNESCO, .

environment. For example, research involving human subjects requires appropriate ethical safeguards. Similarly, technologies with potential military or harmful applications may create legitimate security concerns.

The 2017 UNESCO Recommendation attempts to address this balance by emphasizing both autonomy and public accountability. It calls for researchers to enjoy an appropriate degree of autonomy while recognizing responsibilities concerning ethical, social and environmental consequences.¹⁷

This distinction is particularly important for the Legal Committee. International protections should prevent arbitrary interference without preventing States from regulating research where restrictions are genuinely necessary, lawful, proportionate and consistent with human rights.

Funding and Scientific Independence

Funding is another important dimension of scientific autonomy. Scientific research requires substantial financial resources, meaning that governments, private companies, universities, foundations, and international organizations can exercise considerable influence through funding decisions.¹⁸

Public funding is not inherently inconsistent with scientific autonomy. Governments have legitimate reasons to identify research priorities, particularly where research addresses national health, climate change, infrastructure, or economic development.

However, funding should not be conditioned upon researchers producing predetermined conclusions. Transparent peer-review systems, independent funding bodies, conflict-of-interest rules, and clear publication protections can reduce this risk.

International Scientific Cooperation

Scientific research is increasingly international. Researchers participate in multinational projects, exchange data, attend international conferences, publish with foreign colleagues, and use facilities located outside their own countries.

Restrictions on visas, travel, international funding, international partnerships, or digital communication can therefore significantly affect scientific work.

¹⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. "Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers." *UNESCO*, .

¹⁸ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers*. 13 Nov. 2017, UNESCO, <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-science-and-scientific-researchers>.

International cooperation is also essential for developing countries. Researchers in States with fewer scientific resources can gain access to equipment, expertise, training, and international research networks through partnerships. Such cooperation should, however, be based on equality and mutual benefit rather than relationships in which one side controls the research agenda or disproportionately benefits from the results.¹⁹

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United Nations (UN)

The United Nations is central to the international legal framework surrounding academic freedom, scientific autonomy, and the right to participate in scientific progress. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) recognizes that everyone has the right to participate in cultural life and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) further establishes the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications. These instruments provide an important human-rights foundation for protecting researchers and academics from unjustified interference. The UN also provides a forum through which Member States can discuss how existing international human-rights law can better respond to threats against researchers, universities, and scientific institutions. For GA6, the UN is particularly important because any future international legal instrument on scientific autonomy or academic freedom would need to be considered within the wider UN human-rights framework.²⁰

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO is arguably the most directly involved international organization in this issue because its mandate specifically includes education, science, and culture. UNESCO adopted the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers in 2017, which calls on Member States to respect the autonomy and freedom of research and recognizes intellectual freedom as an essential component of scientific work. The Recommendation also addresses researchers' working conditions, protection from retaliation, international cooperation, open access to scientific knowledge, and the effects of the "brain drain" on developing countries. UNESCO has subsequently strengthened its work on scientific freedom and the safety of scientists, demonstrating that the issue is not limited to theoretical academic principles but also involves the

¹⁹ United Nations. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. 16 Dec. 1966, United Nations, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>.

²⁰ United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 10 Dec. 1948, www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights. Accessed 2 Sept. 2026.

physical and professional security of researchers. UNESCO therefore provides an important model for possible international standards that could be strengthened.²¹

United States

The United States is one of the world's major scientific and academic powers and therefore has significant influence over international research and higher education. American universities, research institutions, and government agencies conduct and fund research across fields including medicine, technology, environmental science, and the social sciences. Because of this role, policies affecting research funding, academic institutions, international collaboration, and the movement of researchers can have effects beyond the United States itself. The country is also an important participant in international scientific cooperation, making its approach relevant when considering how states can balance national interests with researchers' independence. The United States can therefore be considered an important example of how a major research-producing state can contribute to international discussions on scientific freedom, research integrity, and academic autonomy.²²

China

China is one of the world's leading scientific and technological powers and plays an increasingly important role in international research, higher education, and scientific cooperation. Its universities, research institutions, and scientific organizations contribute significantly to fields such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, medicine, engineering, and environmental science. China is therefore an important actor in any international discussion concerning scientific autonomy and the protection of researchers. China also participates in international efforts to promote research integrity and responsible scientific collaboration. For example, Chinese scientific organizations have developed guidance for international research collaborations that refers to principles of research integrity, the UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers, and the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science. At the same time, China's approach is particularly relevant to the debate surrounding the balance between scientific freedom, national priorities, research security, and state regulation. UNESCO's reporting framework asks Member States to explain what legal and operational measures they have in

²¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers*. 13 Nov. 2017, www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-science-and-scientific-researchers

²² National Science Foundation. *About NSF*. National Science Foundation, www.nsf.gov/about.

place concerning academic freedom and the freedom of scientific research, including protections, restrictions, and mechanisms for addressing violations.²³

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
10 December 1948	The United Nations General Assembly adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 27 recognizes the right to participate in cultural life and share in scientific advancement and its benefits. ²⁴
16 December 1966	The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is adopted. Article 15 establishes rights concerning scientific progress and the freedom indispensable for scientific research. ²⁵
3 January 1976	The ICESCR enters into force.
11 November 1997	UNESCO adopts the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel, creating an international framework concerning academic freedom and institutional autonomy.
13 November 2017	UNESCO adopts the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers, providing detailed international guidance on scientific freedom, research conditions, international

²³ Chinese Association of Science and Technology. *Recommendations for Conduct in International Research Collaborations*. 2023, www.cast.org.cn/cms_files/filemanager/583933374/attach/20235/2d1fff7796d34ea5837105d8bfa04055.pdf

²⁴United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 10 Dec. 1948, www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

²⁵ United Nations. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. 16 Dec. 1966, www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights

	cooperation, and researchers' rights and responsibilities.
23 November 2021	UNESCO adopts the Recommendation on Open Science, establishing an international framework for open science and explicitly recognizing academic freedom and research integrity as core principles.
2025	UNESCO continues monitoring implementation of the 2017 Recommendation and strengthens international work on scientific freedom and the safety of scientists.
2026	UNESCO's revision process concerning the 1997 Recommendation enters its formal consultation phase, reflecting continuing international attention to academic freedom and the changing environment of higher education. ²⁶

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) provides one of the fundamental international legal foundations for the protection of scientific and academic freedom. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, the Declaration recognizes rights that are directly connected to this issue, particularly the freedom of thought and expression and the right to participate in cultural life and share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Although the UDHR itself is a declaration rather than a binding treaty, its principles have had a major influence on the development of international human-rights law. For the issue of scientific autonomy, Article 27 is especially relevant because it recognizes the right of individuals to participate in scientific advancement and benefit from it. This establishes an important connection between access to science, human dignity, and individual rights.²⁷

²⁶United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*. 11 Nov. 1997, www.unesco.org/en/higher-education/1997recommendation

²⁷ United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 10 Dec. 1948, www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) strengthened the principles established in the UDHR by creating treaty obligations for its States Parties. Article 15 recognizes the right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications and also emphasizes the importance of conserving, developing, and diffusing science and culture. This is highly relevant to scientific autonomy because scientific progress depends on researchers being able to conduct research, exchange knowledge, and communicate findings. The Covenant also creates a framework through which states can be held accountable for how they protect economic, social, and cultural rights. For GA6, the ICESCR is particularly important because it demonstrates that scientific advancement is not simply a matter of national policy but is connected to internationally recognized human rights.²⁸

UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997)

The 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel is one of the most important international standards specifically addressing academic freedom and institutional autonomy. It establishes principles concerning the professional rights and responsibilities of university teachers and researchers, including freedom of teaching, research, discussion, publication, and participation in academic institutions. The Recommendation also recognizes the importance of institutional autonomy in allowing higher-education institutions to carry out their educational and research functions independently. Although it is not legally binding in the same way as an international treaty, it provides a global reference framework for states and universities. UNESCO currently describes it as the only global standard-setting instrument specifically dedicated to the status of higher-education teaching personnel.²⁹

UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017)

The 2017 UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers is the most directly relevant international instrument for this topic. It recognizes scientific freedom, autonomy, and intellectual freedom as important conditions for scientific progress. The Recommendation states that researchers should be able to pursue and communicate scientific knowledge while being protected from undue influence on their independent judgment. It also addresses researchers' working conditions, equal opportunities, research integrity, international cooperation, open access to scientific knowledge, and protection from retaliation. Importantly, it encourages states to establish appropriate mechanisms that allow researchers to exercise their rights while maintaining

²⁸ United Nations. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. 16 Dec. 1966, www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights.

²⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*. 11 Nov. 1997, www.unesco.org/en/higher-education/1997recommendation.

public accountability. The Recommendation therefore provides a comprehensive foundation from which GA6 could consider whether stronger international legal protections are necessary.³⁰

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Establishing International Human-Rights Standards

One of the earliest approaches to protecting the foundations of scientific and academic freedom has been to incorporate them into the broader international human-rights system. The UDHR established principles concerning freedom of thought, expression, cultural participation, and scientific advancement, while the ICESCR later created treaty obligations concerning the right to benefit from scientific progress. These instruments demonstrate that international law already recognizes important rights connected to science and knowledge. However, they do not provide a single, detailed international system specifically designed to protect researchers from political interference, censorship, retaliation, or restrictions on academic institutions. Consequently, existing human-rights protections provide an important foundation but do not completely resolve the issue.³¹

UNESCO's 1997 Recommendation

UNESCO attempted to address academic freedom more specifically through its 1997 Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel. The Recommendation established international principles concerning academic freedom, institutional autonomy, professional responsibilities, employment conditions, and social protections for higher-education teaching personnel. It created a common international standard that states and universities could use when developing national policies and institutional rules. However, because the Recommendation is non-binding, its implementation depends heavily on national governments and educational institutions. This limits its ability to provide uniform protection when academic freedom is threatened. UNESCO's current work to revise the 1997 Recommendation demonstrates that the international community continues to consider these protections relevant and in need of adaptation to contemporary challenges.³²

UNESCO's 2017 Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers

The 2017 UNESCO Recommendation represented a more comprehensive attempt to protect scientific researchers specifically. It covers scientific autonomy, intellectual freedom, research

³⁰ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers*. 13 Nov. 2017, www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-science-and-scientific-researchers.

³¹ United Nations. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. 16 Dec. 1966, www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights.

³² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel*. 11 Nov. 1997, www.unesco.org/en/higher-education/1997recommendation.

integrity, working conditions, international cooperation, open access, equal opportunities, and the protection of researchers from retaliation. It also recognizes that scientific research must operate with public accountability while still allowing researchers an appropriate degree of autonomy. This approach attempts to balance two potentially competing interests: protecting scientific freedom while ensuring that research is ethical, responsible, and beneficial to society. The main limitation is again its status as a recommendation rather than a binding international treaty.³³

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Establish Minimum International Standards for Scientific Freedom

One possible solution would be to establish a clear set of minimum international standards for scientific freedom and academic freedom. These standards could build upon the existing UNESCO Recommendations and human-rights treaties. They could define the minimum rights of researchers, including freedom to choose legitimate research topics, conduct research independently, communicate scientific findings, publish results, participate in international cooperation, and express professional opinions without unjustified retaliation. Clear standards would also help states and universities distinguish legitimate regulation—such as research ethics and protection of human subjects—from unjustified political or ideological interference. This approach would strengthen the existing international framework without necessarily requiring the immediate creation of a new treaty.

Create National Scientific Freedom Ombudspersons

States could establish independent scientific freedom ombudspersons or similar national offices responsible for receiving complaints from researchers and academics. Such institutions could investigate allegations of censorship, discrimination, retaliation, political interference, or unjustified restrictions on research. They could also provide recommendations to universities and government institutions. This mechanism would provide researchers with a formal avenue for seeking assistance without immediately requiring them to pursue lengthy court proceedings. To be effective, these offices would need sufficient independence from political authorities and adequate resources to investigate complaints.

Strengthen Institutional Autonomy

Another possible solution is to strengthen the institutional autonomy of universities and research institutions. Universities should have sufficient independence to make decisions concerning research priorities, academic appointments, curricula, and publication without inappropriate

³³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers*. 13 Nov. 2017, www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/recommendation-science-and-scientific-researchers.

political interference. At the same time, institutional autonomy should not mean that universities are exempt from national law, ethical standards, or financial accountability. A balanced system could therefore establish clear legal limits on government interference while requiring universities to maintain transparent governance and accountability mechanisms. This would directly address one of the central principles identified by UNESCO concerning academic freedom and higher education.

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