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The Realities of Academic Freedom in Norway

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The Realities of Academic Freedom in Norway: an Empirical Perspective



- ❖ LEGAL INSTRUMENTS & INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES
- ❖ *AUTONOMY*
- ❖ *GOVERNANCE*
- ❖ *TEACHING*
- ❖ *RESEARCH*
- ❖ *TENURE*
- ❖ *EXPERIENCES AND THREATS*

Are you familiar with the following international instruments to protect academic freedom?



Response	1997 UNESCO Recommendation		Difference Norway and EU
%			
No	86.2	83.1	-3.1
Yes	13.8	16.9	

N.B. Figures may not sum to 100%, owing to rounding to one decimal place



Knowledge of national legal/constitutional protection for academic freedom

(%)			Norway - EU
Constitution only	3.8	7.8	-4.0
Specific Laws	22.7	17.4	5.3
Constitution & Laws	10.7	10.2	0.5
No protection exists	3.0	9.1	-6.1
I don't know	59.8	55.4	4.4



How high do you think is the level of protection for academic freedom in your country of residence?

(%)			Norway - EU
Very Low/Low	9.8	27.7	-17.9
Average/Adequate	42.3	45.5	-3.2
High/Very High	47.8	26.8	21.0



How high do you think is the level of protection for academic freedom in your university?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Very Low/Low	14.0	29.0	-15.0
Average/Adequate	43.0	44.1	-1.1
High/Very High	43.0	26.9	16.1



The protection for academic freedom provided by my university is very important to me.

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	48.4	46.5	4.2
Agree	40.3	38.0	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9.9	16.6	-6.7
Disagree	1.2	1.5	-0.7
Strongly Disagree	0.2	0.6	



Does your university, in which you work, have an official policy document on academic freedom?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
No	22.9	29.1	-6.2
Yes	17.8	13.0	4.8
I Don't Know	59.2	57.9	1.3



My university's regulations and practices effectively protect academic freedom

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	4.3	3.8	11.5
Agree	29.0	18.0	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	41.4	42.0	-0.6
Disagree	20.6	23.6	-11.0
Strongly Disagree	4.7	12.7	



Has the protection of academic freedom in your university altered in recent years?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Greatly Diminished	8.4	18.5	0.5
Diminished	39.7	29.1	
Unchanged	27.7	21.3	6.4
Increased	3.4	4.1	0.6
Greatly Increased	0.6	0.5	
I Don't Know	20.2	26.6	-6.4 ¹⁰



I have an adequate working knowledge of the concept of academic freedom

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	12.2	11.1	17.9
Agree	52.6	35.8	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	23.5	23.6	-0.1
Disagree	9.4	22.2	-18.0
Strongly Disagree	2.2	7.4	



My university has provided me with an adequate introduction to the concept of academic freedom

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	3.0	1.9	8.6
Agree	15.5	8.0	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27.2	16.9	10.3
Disagree	30.6	33.8	-19.0
Strongly Disagree	23.7	39.5	



Academic freedom includes comments made by academics outside of their subject specialisms

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	27.7	33.8	1.1
Agree	47.0	39.8	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21.0	19.8	1.2
Disagree	4.1	5.3	-2.2
Strongly Disagree	0.2	1.2	



There should be specific protection for academic freedom, beyond that existing for freedom of speech

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	31.0	39.8	1.1
Agree	45.3	35.4	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19.0	20.7	-1.7
Disagree	4.3	3.5	0.7
Strongly Disagree	0.4	0.5	

I would welcome additional information on the concept of academic freedom

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	26.8	34.6	-3.3
Agree	52.4	47.9	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	15.3	12.5	2.8
Disagree	4.8	3.9	0.4
Strongly Disagree	0.6	1.1	



Universities should organise academic freedom readings and discussions for staff

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	25.6	33.2	-1.8
Agree	51.3	45.5	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19.1	15.4	3.7
Disagree	3.4	4.4	-1.9
Strongly Disagree	0.6	1.5	



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My institution's autonomy is very important to me

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	47.8	48.1	1.6
Agree	39.2	37.3	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	10.7	11.8	-1.1
Disagree	2.1	2.1	-0.6
Strongly Disagree	0.2	0.8	



My institution's autonomy has declined in recent years

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	7.1	15.0	-3.6
Agree	38.8	34.5	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	32.0	31.4	0.6
Disagree	18.5	14.1	3.1
Strongly Disagree	3.7	5.0	



Public universities should be less under the control of the government

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	15.3	23.1	-11.7
Agree	29.0	32.9	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	32.7	28.9	3.8
Disagree	18.6	12.2	7.7
Strongly Disagree	4.3	3.0	



Public universities should not be too dependent on the government for funding

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	8.2	10.3	-11.1
Agree	13.7	22.7	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27.6	27.8	-0.2
Disagree	34.3	27.6	11.4
Strongly Disagree	16.3	11.6	



Public universities have become too dependent on fees for foreign students

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	1.2	15.3	-36.8
Agree	5.9	28.6	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	41.5	30.2	11.3
Disagree	30.7	18.9	25.5
Strongly Disagree	20.7	7.0	

Public universities should be available without fees for (at least) national students

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	57.3	41.4	18.1
Agree	30.5	28.3	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.3	15.2	-6.9
Disagree	2.6	11.5	-11.3
Strongly Disagree	1.2	3.6	



Marketing their products and services should be a central activity of publicly funded universities

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	0.4	2.4	-12.0
Agree	4.9	14.9	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27.6	25.5	2.1
Disagree	40.4	33.2	10.0
Strongly Disagree	26.8	24.0	



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My institution's self governance is very important to me

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	49.0	50.0	2.8
Agree	42.1	38.3	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7.0	10.1	-3.1
Disagree	1.4	1.1	0.3
Strongly Disagree	0.4	0.4	



My institution's self governance has declined in recent years

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	17.3	24.7	-0.2
Agree	36.3	29.1	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	28.9	29.1	-0.2
Disagree	15.5	12.9	0.5
Strongly Disagree	2.1	4.2	



The Rector should be appointed from the university, and staff should be able to determine the process of nomination, election and appointment

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	33.2	30.8	6.0
Agree	35.0	31.4	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21.4	22.9	-1.5
Disagree	7.1	10.8	-4.5
Strongly Disagree	3.3	4.1	



The Dean/Head of Department should be appointed from the university, and staff should be able to determine the process of nomination, election and appointment

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	32.7	35.7	-4.2
Agree	36.3	37.5	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20.5	17.1	3.4
Disagree	7.5	7.4	0.8
Strongly Disagree	3.0	2.3	



The senate should be competent to determine strategic issues (e.g. the university's budget)

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	24.4	28.3	0.8
Agree	47.9	43.2	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21.2	21.4	-0.2
Disagree	5.1	6.4	-0.6
Strongly Disagree	1.4	0.7	

Universities should have a governing body with a majority of members externally appointed

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	4.9	8.1	-11.3
Agree	17.4	25.5	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	32.3	31.4	0.9
Disagree	30.7	25.0	10.5
Strongly Disagree	14.7	9.9	



There should be fewer representatives from industry and business on universities' governing bodies

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	24.4	24.4	4.0
Agree	30.9	26.9	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	32.5	28.9	3.6
Disagree	10.4	15.7	-7.7
Strongly Disagree	1.8	4.2	



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My individual academic freedom for teaching is very important to me

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	63.5	63.6	0.7
Agree	32.6	31.8	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3.7	3.7	0.0
Disagree	0.0	0.6	-0.7
Strongly Disagree	0.2	0.3	



Individual academic freedom for teaching has declined in my institution in recent years

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	4.3	12.2	-14.1
Agree	20.7	26.9	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	37.5	34.1	3.4
Disagree	29.8	20.8	10.7
Strongly Disagree	7.7	6.0	

In my h.e.i. performance assessment is too dependent on devotion to teaching

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	2.8	6.6	-2.1
Agree	13.8	12.1	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27.4	26.0	1.4
Disagree	42.9	38.3	0.7
Strongly Disagree	13.0	16.9	



The unity of research and teaching is an ideal that should be upheld by university academic staff

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	52.3	45.3	7.5
Agree	39.4	38.9	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	6.3	10.9	-4.6
Disagree	1.6	3.8	-2.8
Strongly Disagree	0.4	1.0	



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Individual academic freedom for research is very important to me

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	76.7	70.4	1.2
Agree	21.0	26.1	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2.1	2.9	-0.8
Disagree	0.0	0.3	-0.4
Strongly Disagree	0.2	0.3	



My individual academic freedom for research has declined in recent years

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	5.8	12.8	-5.1
Agree	31.1	29.2	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	32.0	32.6	-0.6
Disagree	23.9	19.8	5.8
Strongly Disagree	7.2	5.5	



In my h.e.i. performance assessment is too dependent on the number of shorter publications, and not longer, higher quality outputs

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	25.3	22.5	9.9
Agree	36.0	28.9	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20.4	26.0	-5.6
Disagree	14.7	16.9	-4.2
Strongly Disagree	3.6	5.6	



In my university personal performance assessment is too dependent on attracting research funding

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	16.6	14.7	11.5
Agree	33.0	23.4	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27.3	28.3	-1.0
Disagree	20.2	26.8	-10.6
Strongly Disagree	2.8	6.8	

Having to apply for funds for specific projects stops me from choosing topics that my “academic instinct” tells me are worth while

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	23.4	23.7	3.3
Agree	40.2	36.6	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19.7	25.6	-5.9
Disagree	13.8	11.5	2.5
Strongly Disagree	2.8	2.6	



Research funding is more effective when it is concentrated among a few elite institutions

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	1.8	1.0	4.2
Agree	9.6	6.2	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18.3	15.2	3.1
Disagree	40.2	31.7	-7.3
Strongly Disagree	30.1	45.9	



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- ❖ *EXPERIENCES AND THREATS*



Employment protection (i.e. tenure) for academic staff is very important to me

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	59.2	62.0	1.6
Agree	35.7	31.3	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4.3	5.3	-1.0
Disagree	0.6	0.9	-0.6
Strongly Disagree	0.2	0.5	



Employment protection (i.e. tenure) for academic staff in my university has declined in recent years

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	8.2	29.6	-27.2
Agree	24.1	29.9	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	32.6	21.7	10.9
Disagree	26.8	15.0	16.3 ₄₇
Strongly Disagree	8.2	3.7	

Tenure for academic staff is essential to the quality of higher education

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	43.6	46.1	2.5
Agree	39.3	34.3	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13.5	13.0	0.5
Disagree	2.7	5.8	-2.9
Strongly Disagree	1.0	0.8	



Tenure for academic staff is essential to maintain academic freedom

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	52.3	47.2	4.3
Agree	31.6	32.4	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	11.2	14.1	-2.9
Disagree	3.3	5.5	-1.5
Strongly Disagree	1.6	0.9	



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- ❖ *TENURE*
- ❖ *EXPERIENCES AND THREATS*



In my nation public respect for academics has declined over the last decade

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	19.8	30.2	-3.8
Agree	42.5	35.9	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	24.5	22.2	2.3
Disagree	11.0	9.9	1.4
Strongly Disagree	2.0	1.7	



In my nation academic salaries have declined so much that they are too low to attract and retain high quality staff

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Strongly Agree	18.9	27.7	-8.9
Agree	30.9	31.0	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	28.9	23.8	5.1
Disagree	18.9	14.8	3.9
Strongly Disagree	2.4	2.6	



Because of your academic views, have you ever practised self censorship?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	22.0	31.9	-9.9
No	78.0	68.1	



Because of academic views you expressed in your teaching, have you been subjected to/threatened with disciplinary action?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	2.0	6.6	-4.6
No	98.0	93.4	



Because of academic views you expressed in a research publication, have you been subjected to/threatened with disciplinary action?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	3.5	3.1	0.4
No	96.5	96.9	



Because of views you expressed in a non-public forum in your university, have you been subjected to/threatened with disciplinary action?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	9.8	7.6	2.2
No	90.2	92.4	



Because of your academic views have you been subjected to/threatened with denial of promotion?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	5.5	16.0	-10.5
No	94.5	84.0	



Because of your academic views have you been subjected to/threatened with being given different/fewer/additional teaching or research duties?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	9.6	16.9	-7.3
No	90.4	83.1	



Because of your academic views have you been subjected to/threatened with being given different/fewer/additional administrative tasks?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	8.4	16.4	-8.0
No	91.6	83.6	



Because of your academic views have you been subjected to/threatened with being moved to another department/centre/unit?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	3.3	6.6	-3.3
No	96.7	93.4	



Because of your academic views have you been subjected to bullying by academic colleagues?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	17.1	23.7	-6.6
No	82.9	76.3	



Because of your academic views have you been subjected to psychological pressure by someone in your institution?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	16.7	22.2	-5.5
No	83.3	77.8	



Because of your academic views, have you ever had false charges brought against you by someone in your institution?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	7.2	8.8	-1.6
No	92.8	91.2	



Because of your academic views have you been subjected to/threatened with sexual abuse or assault in your university?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	0.4	0.9	-0.5
No	99.6	99.1	

Because of your academic views have you been subjected to/threatened with sexual harassment in your university?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	2.6	0.3	2.3
No	97.4	99.7	

Have you been subjected to/threatened infringement of your academic freedom by some one in your university because of your political views?

Response (%)			Norway - EU
Yes	2.9	2.6	0.3
No	97.1	97.4	

Thank you for listening! 😊

**There is still time to complete the
on-line survey – go to:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AcademicFreedomSurvey>

**If you would like a copy of this
presentation, or copies of articles
and papers on academic freedom,
then please contact me by email:
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