

## Europe's Universities must stand up for democracy

**The Guild calls on Europe's governments, and the EU, to enable our universities to support Ukrainian students and staff on our campuses, and through the provision of distance education where needed.**

In recent years, we have seen a growing recognition of universities underpinning European societies and free political institutions, as places where the universal values of human rights – as articulated by the United Nations, adopted by the European Union, and expressed by Europe's national constitutions and political systems – can be learnt, articulated, and defended. Now, in this dark day of European history, Europe – and our values of democracy and freedom – are under attack.

In response, the Presidents of The Guild's member universities call on Europe's universities, European governments, and the European Union, to commit to four immediate actions:

1. We must ensure that all Ukrainian students in our communities are cared for and supported at this trying time, and we will endeavour to support all students and staff who have been affected by this crisis, as much as it is in our power to do so.
2. We will continue to take the greatest care that our communities remain distinguished by free debate and respect. Prejudice – whether it is based on nationality, ethnic origin, or any other characteristic, has no place in our university communities. All must continue to feel welcome.
3. We call on governments to enable universities to support Ukrainian students in continuing their education, and to support Ukrainian academic staff as much as possible, so that their education and work can continue as seamlessly as possible under the circumstances. Where students and academics are forced to flee, we need urgent government assistance in supporting them.
4. Universities have developed important capacities to provide distance learning courses. We call on governments to support us in opening up distance learning opportunities for students in Ukraine, to ensure that they are supported academically as much as possible. Opening up such opportunities is less a technical question, but requires careful pedagogy, as well as linguistic support, and it is important that Universities are enabled to develop this support for students at speed.

We are called to solidarity that brings all democratic states in Europe together. We are committed to support Ukrainian students and staff to the best of our abilities as individual universities, but also collectively, sharing our knowledge, ideas, and creativity across borders. We also honour and recognise the academic communities in Russia that are speaking out against this violence. As universities in Europe, we stand for democracy, for human rights, and for the right to critical enquiry and the pursuit of knowledge. We urge our political leaders to support us in doing whatever we can to extend this right to Ukrainian faculty and staff.