

Academic Freedom: Challenges, threats, emerging issues

Early Career Researchers in Austria and Europe:
Freedom is just another Word for ..."

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Global Young Academy



**GLOBAL
YOUNG
ACADEMY**



ICSU

International Council for Science

The CFRS/International Council for Science

- ICSU/CFRS: Committee on Freedom and Responsibility in the Conduct of Science
 - Freedom of movement;
 - Freedom of association;
 - Freedom of expression and communication;
 - Access to information, data and scientific material.



Two parts of the academic world

- “Western world”/developed countries

VS

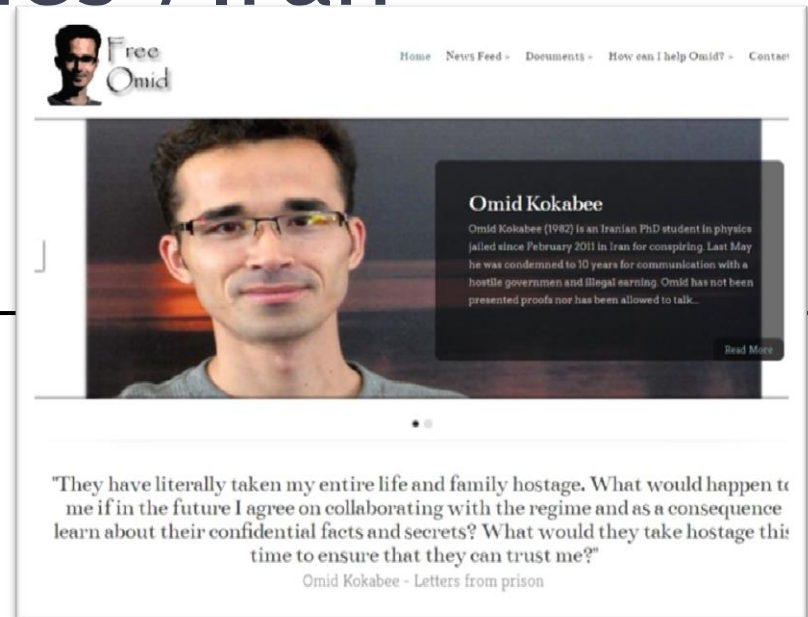
- Developing countries
- Western world: US/Canada + Australia+ Japan + Europe...
 - Europe: North and South

Developing countries / Iran

▫ **Omid Kokabee** (Iran)
Experimental laser physicist
at U. of Texas at Austin

- During a visit to his family in Iran charged with "gathering and colluding against national security"
- Later: acquitted from the primary charges, trialed for "communicating with a hostile government (USA)" and "illegitimate/illegal earnings".
- Omid has not been presented proofs nor has been allowed to talk with his lawyer, and he has denied the charges.

Currently in jail (in hospital)



Developing countries / Iran

▫ Bahá'í community leaders

- Six scientists of the Bahá'í faith in Iran:

Fariba Kamalabadi, Mahvash Sabet, Vahid Tizfahm, Saeid Rezaie, Mahmoud Badavam and Ramin Zibaei.

- In prison for alleged “conspiracy against national security” and “conspiracy against the Islamic Republic of Iran”
- discrimination in science on grounds of religious beliefs



Developing countries

Bahrein

- 48 health professionals imprisoned because of having provided health care to those in need irrespective of their political, religious or ethnic orientation

United Arab Emirates

- Nasser bin Ghaith, scholar of economics, arrested

Pakistan, Egypt, Thailand...

Turkey

- Turkish federal prosecutors have placed under investigation approximately 1,128 scholars, in apparent retaliation for their co-signing a public petition urging Turkish authorities to renew dialogue with factions in the southeastern area of the country.

More: **Scholars at risk**



<http://scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu/>

East vs West /Uzbekistan

- No “Western pseudo-science”

Uzbek president bans teaching of political science

Repressive central Asian regime recalls Soviet era by outlawing what it calls 'western pseudo-science'



Uzbekistan's President Karimov in Samarkand. Photograph: Muhammadsharif Mamatkulov/Reuters

China

- No books promoting Western values



The screenshot shows the top portion of a news article. At the top left, it says "South China Morning Post" and "EDITION: INTERNATIONAL" with a dropdown arrow. Below this is a large blue header with the word "CHINA" in white. Underneath is a "Main menu" section with a home icon and links for CHINA, HK, ASIA, WORLD, COMMENT, BUSINESS, PROPERTY, TECH, LIFESTYLE, CULTURE, SPORT, and MAGAZINE. The article's breadcrumb is "News > China" followed by "EDUCATION" in bold. The main headline reads "Chinese universities ordered to ban textbooks that promote Western values". A sub-headline below it says "Universities told to clamp down on use of foreign textbooks and criticism of the party". At the bottom left, it says "PUBLISHED : Friday, 30 January, 2015, 11:54am".

South China Morning Post EDITION: INTERNATIONAL ▾

CHINA

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News > China
EDUCATION

Chinese universities ordered to ban textbooks that promote Western values

Universities told to clamp down on use of foreign textbooks and criticism of the party

PUBLISHED : Friday, 30 January, 2015, 11:54am

Developed countries/ Japan

- Huge cuts on Humanities and SS in Japan
- Social Sciences and Humanities faculties in Japan are to close after universities were ordered to “serve areas that better meet society’s needs”.



PROFESSIONAL JOBS SUMMITS RANKINGS STU

Social sciences and humanities faculties 'to close' in Japan after ministerial intervention

Universities to scale back liberal arts and social science courses

September 14, 2015

By Jack Grove Twitter: @jgro_the



Developed world/challenges

- Economic crisis
- Less funds: how do we allocate them?
- Research agendas: Netherlands/Germany...
- Excellence/Competition
- High Demands on scientists

Top Sectors

- The Dutch government has identified 9 areas for allocating funds, 9 “sectors of excellence”:




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Enterprise policy and Dutch top sectors

The Netherlands is a global leader in trade and industry. We generate much of our income in the international arena, but our leading position is not a given. We will have to do everything we can to remain competitive. For it is only then that we will be able to maintain sustainable economic growth. At the same time, we must take a firm approach to societal challenges such as an ageing population and climate change. These issues are at the very core of the top sector approach, where industry, science and government work together to tackle them. This unique form of collaboration (golden triangle/triple helix) is designed to promote innovation, to attract talent (human capital) and to ensure a solid position for the sectors in the international context.



Our approach is focussed on the nine sectors in which we are global leaders: our top sectors. The instruments we use include investments, scal incentives, guarantees and cutting down on bureaucracy and red tape.

Sectoren
Agri & Food
Chemie
Creatieve Industrie
Energie
High Tech
Logistiek
Tuinbouw
Life Sciences & Health
Water
Documenten/publicaties
Feiten en cijfers

- Agri-/food
- Chemistry
- Creative Industry
- Energy
- Hi-Tech
- Logistics
- Landscape
- Life Science/Health
- Water

□

The bright side

- Development
- Substantial resources in key areas
- Public-private cooperation = more money

but

- What about freedom of researchers?

The dark side

- Researchers of other disciplines are cut out of substantial funds, even if they are excellent
- Researchers within the discipline are “forced” to cooperate with industry (their research becomes output-oriented)
- Fundamental research is threatened (researchers in the Humanities, in mathematics, in theoretical physics have a hard time finding funds)

The dark side

- Allocation of funds based on excellence
 - No funds for disciplines that are “less fashionable”
 - No long-term planning of research
 - No planning capability of departments/research groups on long-term hiring
 - Huge pressure on researchers on project writing (even on topics that are not exactly of their interest)
 - PhD students forced to work on given topics

Time to act!

- Что Делать?

- Acknowledge the problem
- Look for creative solutions
- Reaffirm the value of independent research
- Fight for freedom 😊

Thanks!