

GLOBAL UNIVERSITIES URGE G7 LEADERS TO BOLSTER ACADEMIC FREEDOM

EVANSTON, Ill., 24 June 2022 – The U7+ Alliance of World Universities [issued a statement](#) urging leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) to defend academic freedom, warning that a resurgence of autocracy is thwarting the institutional autonomy of higher education and its ability to fulfill its mission.

“The crisis of democracy, evident in rising political extremism and polarization, has threatened the freedom of some university faculty as individual scholars to address controversial topics in research and teaching,” the statement read.

The U7+ Alliance further called on the G7 member states to ensure that faculty are able to conduct their work free from domestic and international political interference.

The statement also emphasized the unique role universities can play in offering scientific evidence to policymakers on a variety of issues, including climate change, public health, inequality, diversity and migration.

“I commend the U7+ member universities for their efforts to work together to address the world’s most pressing challenges,” said Morton Schapiro, president of Northwestern University.

The U7+ Alliance also urged the G7 to support the values of peace and open society, particularly the plight of refugees, and insisted that all those fleeing conflict be treated equally regardless of race or any other identity.

The Alliance started in Paris in July 2019 under the high patronage of French President Emmanuel Macron and continues to convene university leaders each year since then. In 2021, Northwestern University was [elected](#) as the first secretariat of the alliance for a three-year term.

“University leaders this year have shown once again the commitment of their institutions to advocate for important global issues,” said Annelise Riles, associate provost for Global Affairs at Northwestern and executive director of the Northwestern Buffett Institute for Global Affairs, which leads the secretariat. “I look forward to seeing the U7+ Alliance engage more formally with G7 leaders in Japan next year.”

The statement was issued following this year’s U7+ Presidential Summit which was [hosted by Université Côte d’Azur](#).

The next summit will be hosted by Keio University in Japan ahead of the 2023 G7 Summit.

About the U7+ Alliance of World Universities

[The U7+](#) is an alliance of university presidents aimed at structuring and advancing the role of universities as global actors in a multilateral context. As members of this Alliance, university presidents take stock of their institutions’ unique civic and social responsibilities as global actors, and pledge to take collective,



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concrete action for local, regional and/or global impact. The U7+ Alliance includes 90+ presidents and leaders of universities from 19 countries across six continents.

About Sciences Po

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