



## **Initiative of Academics NO POLICE ON CAMPUS**

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### **Greek Universities Targeted, Democracy under Threat The New Bill on Higher Education Threatens Academic Freedom and Brings Police Rule on Campuses**

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Under conditions of pandemic and strict quarantine measures, Greek society was suddenly informed that the Greek government decided to establish a new security force for university campuses. Pro-government media orchestrated during the previous months a slanderous campaign aiming to defame the universities and represent them to the Greek public as “centers of lawlessness” and delinquency, an allegation totally unfounded on relevant research or statistics. According to the bill, the new security force will not answer to the university authorities but will fall directly under Greek Police. Police officers, uniformed and equipped with truncheons, will be allowed to patrol freely on campuses, while their duties will be decided without the consent of university authorities. Moreover, according to the bill, the universities will be obliged to implement a system of restricted access on campuses and the university authorities will have to facilitate the new patrolling “Special Forces” in “all possible ways” to implement their duties, which include the systematic surveillance of the campus with special technological equipment and the conduct of preliminary “crime” investigations.

There are many reactions. The great majority of the university senates, as well as the university teachers’ and students’ associations, have opposed publicly the bill. The Federation of Greek Police Officers issued also a dismissive statement. The new bill is a clear violation of the Greek constitution as it infringes upon the principle of university self-rule and transforms the Greek institutions of higher education in fortresses of control, repression and policing. The bill threatens and undermines democracy and

obstructs the free circulation of ideas between Greek universities and Greek society. At the same time, its implementation will unavoidably lead to widespread troubles and violent conflicts.

The “Initiative of Academics: NO POLICE ON CAMPUS” has issued a petition, signed by more than 1.000 university professors and teachers throughout the Greek universities, inviting all the democratic forces to resist the voting and implementation of this anti-constitutional intervention in university life which breaches upon the principle of university autonomy and self-rule. At the same, it denounces the coordinated attacks targeting the members of the academic community, fueled, on the one hand, by the extreme hate rhetoric towards public universities in newspapers and TV broadcasts and, on the other hand, by the violent and sexist posts in social media and the Initiative’s Facebook page NO POLICE ON CAMPUS [OXI AΣTYNOMIA ΣΤΑ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΑ] <https://www.facebook.com/OxiAstynomiaStaPanepistimia>

The doctrine of shock that the new policing bill is attempting to impose on universities, as well as the orchestrated offenses against the Initiative of Academics “NO POLICE ON CAMPUS” raise serious issues of legality and constitutionality and threaten democracy. For all this, the Mitsotakis government bears sole the responsibility.