



2.3.21

Motion: Solidarity with Greek academics - No Uni Police

The Greek government passed a new bill on higher education (11th Feb. 2021), despite the unanimous opposition of the Greek academic community and some Police Unions. It introduces a new police force for public universities, which reports to the Ministry of Citizen Protection rather than the University Authorities. Equipped with truncheons, pepper sprays and handcuffs, they will patrol on campuses, without the consent of university authorities. Their duties include systematic surveillance and on-campus preliminary interrogations. The Greek Police will recruit 1,000 **men** and Universities will have to cover the cost of this operation. The relevant recruitment call does not promote graduates from the relevant Special Forces Institutions of Vocational Training. In contrast, it favours candidates that have completed their military obligation (excluding thus female candidates). The call gives priority to former conscripts in the special forces (commando and parachute soldiers).

Government officials have continued spreading false information that The University of Oxford has a similar police force, despite a statement by [Oxford UCU](#) discrediting such a claim.

- Sheffield UCU stands in solidarity with Greek colleagues, students, parents, and citizens opposing the creation of such a special university police force.
- Sheffield UCU is concerned by the continuous spread of misinformation regarding the existence of such task forces in UK Universities and seconds UCU Oxford's statement that no such force exists.
- Sheffield UCU feels that such a task force, manned by men trained in military special forces and answering to the Ministry of Citizen Protection is not compatible with the spirit of academic freedom. In contrast, given the recent violent intrusion of police forces at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki resulting in the detention of 31 students (22 Feb. 2021), it threatens its very existence.