In Defense of Academic Freedom and Autonomy

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We, members of the academic community, hereby express our full support to the Editors-in-Chiefs, the Editorial and Scientific Advisory Board who resigned *en masse* from the *European Law Journal*, owned by Wiley. The conduct of the publishing house has shown total lack of appreciation of the values of academic integrity and autonomy. The Scientific Board's brave move seeks not to be praised as heroic, but it firmly posits decency and respect for these principles above all other considerations.

Academic journals cannot merely be considered as random venues for professional publications. They are not isolated entities, nor are they mere commercial products to be owned and fructified. They exist only by virtue of scientific networks of (most often free) cooperation that allow for the production and the sharing of independent, original and reliable knowledge. These are part and parcel of a dense yet fragile ecology of knowledge that runs from universities and research centers to public libraries, students but also to a wider public of medias, representatives, NGOs, etc. The autonomy of the academic community is pivotal to this invisible architecture and is a crucial condition for the quality of public debate and democratic deliberation. In other words, all those who engage in the activity of publishing academic journals should recognize its public value.

European Law Journal has beautifully played that part over the past 25 years. We strongly believe that it is important to keep alive the legacy of the journal. Further, we deem it essential to maintain and preserve the existence of a distinctive platform for theoretical and critical thinking as well as for meaningful exchanges between disciplines and approaches. Independent voices and analyses are all the more necessary in the current turbulent times that the European integration process is going through.

We, as a community, must demonstrate that we have learnt the hard lesson that this deplorable situation is teaching us. In order to voice our disapproval:

We reaffirm the importance of making sure that any new publishing enterprise be developed under conditions in which it is fully owned by the academic component.

We encourage our colleagues to not submit papers, act as referees, or cooperate in any other form with a commercial publisher who does not respect these fundamental academic values.

We also invite all academic institutions, EU funding bodies, as well as national agencies funding public research to consider adopting rigorous policies to guarantee academic freedom.

The initiative has been initially promoted by Alessandra Arcuri, Francesco Costamagna and Antoine Vauchez and the letter is open for signature here here with the updated list of signatories.

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