



ACADÉMIE
DES SCIENCES
INSTITUT DE FRANCE

PRESS RELEASE
February 18, 2025

Threats to science and scientific research, withdrawal of US aid to international organizations



©AdobeStock_Amir Bajric

Since his investiture on January 20, Donald Trump has taken a series of decisions that will have a major and negative impact on scientific research in the United States, with consequences worldwide, particularly through international collaborations, which are also being targeted. Federal budget cuts have been announced, including layoffs of researchers and civil servants, and the elimination of key programs. The administration of Donald Trump and Elon Musk, his aide in charge of Government Efficiency, who is beyond Senate scrutiny due to not being a member of the federal government, have decided to drastically cut U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) humanitarian aid funds. The latter development agency, which accounts for 42% of the world's humanitarian aid, has seen its funds suddenly frozen, and the disorganization is affecting more than a hundred countries, where the various non-governmental organization (NGO) are in dire straits.

The United States is also threatening to leave the United Nations (UN) World Health Organization (WHO) and is brutally cutting funding to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the nation's medical research agency, while conspiracy theories and anti-vaccine theories are spreading at the highest level of the federal government, fuelling concern. Universal access to healthcare is being called into question, and medical misinformation is spreading through social networks. Funding for universities will also be dramatically reduced, with the authorization of their deductions from their scientists' research contracts with federal agencies now capped at 15%, instead of the previous 60%. The collapse of these tools, essential to university funding, will permanently weaken all public research in the United States.

Donald Trump has decided to censor all research and action related to climate change. The United States has once again pulled out of the Paris Agreement, drawn up at COP21, the conference that led to an international climate agreement. Among his first decisions, Donald Trump cut NASA's Earth monitoring program, which diagnosed greenhouse gases as well as pollution affecting people's health, interrupting the continuity of

observations, and negatively impacting all associated countries. Any interruption ruins the usefulness of these time and space series, and if other countries have similar programs, complementarity with US satellites is vital and must be supported. Donald Trump has attacked the USDA, the federal agency in charge of agriculture, by prohibiting it from pursuing work on global warming. He also removed from federal websites at least 8,000 web pages mentioning subjects that are now banned, such as climate change, the environment, biodiversity and gender studies. He has also dismantled the federal government's plan for ecological and social reforms to protect the environment and develop clean, renewable energies, instead announcing stronger support for the development of the fossil fuel industry.

Under the pretext of fighting "woke" ideology, and defending traditional values, the Trump administration is attacking DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) policies aimed at encouraging the social advancement of disadvantaged minorities. All positive discrimination is now prohibited: this applies just as much to foreign students in the USA as to women and minorities in businesses, universities and academic institutions.

The French Academy of Sciences is deeply concerned by these budget cuts, the brutal dismissal of the most precarious research staff, PhD students and post-docs. Years of training and research are suddenly lost, work interrupted, and international collaborations sacrificed. Today, scientific research is globalized, and all countries will feel the impact of these decisions. What's more, the prevailing obscurantism and the denial of reality through the unbridled use of disinformation show the extent to which the authority of the scientific word is under threat from political decision-makers, as is the place of reason in public debate. Today's censorship will reduce the freedom of research in the most promising sectors, and deprive individual and collective decision-making processes of the insights provided by scientific research and reports from specialist bodies such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The impact on future generations, biodiversity and the health of the planet will prove catastrophic. The damage caused in such a short space of time will take much longer to repair.

The French Academy of Sciences expresses its solidarity with the scientific community in the United States at this chaotic time. It invites our country's researchers to actively seek ways to maintain the scientific collaborations that are already underway. We remain very attentive to developments in the situation, which could later have dramatic consequences for global research and the public's understanding of science. The French Academy of Sciences will do its utmost to contribute to all measures enabling our colleagues in the United States to continue the splendid research they have carried out to date, for the good of their country and humanity.

Contact Press

Françoise Combes

President of the French Academy of Sciences
presidence@academie-sciences.fr

Nicolas Plantey

Director of Communications and Events
presse@academie-sciences.fr
01 44 41 44 27



ACADÉMIE
DES SCIENCES
INSTITUT DE FRANCE

L'Académie des sciences fournit un cadre d'expertise, de conseil et d'alerte à travers des avis et recommandations pour les politiques publiques. Elle soutient la Recherche, l'enseignement des sciences et la vie scientifique dans son ensemble. Ses rapports donnent à chacun les outils pour comprendre le débat scientifique et contribuent ainsi à éclairer les enjeux de société. Elle conduit des réflexions relatives aux enjeux politiques, éthiques et sociétaux que posent les questions scientifiques depuis sa création en 1666. L'Académie participe à la diffusion des savoirs. Impliquée dans les débats sociétaux, elle contribue à l'éducation et promeut la culture scientifique. Pour relever les défis, pour la plupart de dimension mondiale, l'Académie concourt à l'internationalisation des sciences.

—
Secrétaires perpétuels : Étienne Ghys et Antoine Triller
Devise : « *Invenit et Perfectit* »