



9 February 2021

German Historical Association Condemns Restrictions of Academic Discussion in India

The German Historical Association (VHD) joins the American Historical Association (AHA, [statement of 5 February 2021](#)) in strongly condemning the Indian Ministry of Science's new policy that Indian academic institutions may hold international events, including in virtual space, only after ministerial review and approval. Events concerning "Indian internal affairs" or "sensitive issues" are excluded from approval - disturbingly broad formulations that massively restrict the fundamental democratic right to freedom of research.

As historians teaching in Germany, we are particularly aware that free scholarly exchange in democratic societies is a valuable asset worthy of protection, both for research and teaching as well as for society. It should not be restricted or controlled by the state in any way. Moreover, under the given conditions of the pandemic, international exchange is only possible on online platforms, so that restricting these currently poses an even greater limitation of research development and academic culture than usual. We demand a withdrawal of the new policy in order not to jeopardize the cooperation between German and Indian academics, which has been particularly successful in the last decade.

The following organizations have cosigned this statement:

BMBF Käte Hamburger Collegia "Work and Human Lifecycle in Global History"
(re:work), Berlin
Centre for Modern Indian Studies, Göttingen
German Historical Institute London
Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, Munich – Berlin
Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin (ZMO)
Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam (ZZF)

The **German Historical Association (VHD)** is the representative organ of German historical scholarship in the public. The core task of the VHD is to organize the Biennial Convention of German Historians ("Historikertag"). As a lobby group, the VHD is committed to the interests of its members in a variety of ways and, as a professional association, is in constant dialogue with academia, politics, and society. The VHD currently has about 3,400 members.