



To:
Professor Eva Illouz

Date
21st of November 2025

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Page
1/2

Enclosure
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Dear Professor Illouz, dear Eva,

Thank you for the pleasant conversation on Monday, 17 November, during which I had the opportunity, on behalf of the Executive Board, to offer you our sincere and heartfelt apologies for withdrawing the invitation to you to speak at a seminar organised by our university.

This action is a regrettable mistake on our part. We wish to emphasize that you are most welcome at Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR).

We are currently investigating what went wrong here; our preliminary finding is that the withdrawal of the invitation was not motivated by prejudice or specific intentions, but the consequences are nevertheless extremely unfortunate and undesirable.

In this specific case, academic staff within the faculty began to doubt the sensitivity of the invitation in light of your affiliation with the Hebrew University. There was no reason for such doubts, as EUR has not set any limits on collaborating with scholars on the basis of such affiliations. Moreover, feelings of discomfort or doubt should never be grounds for withdrawing an invitation; in principle, such sentiments should be acceptable and accommodated within a university environment. Not only was the withdrawal of the invitation unnecessary, it also raised legitimate questions and indignation, given the context of the current, highly sensitive geopolitical situation.

We regret that you, personally, were hurt, offended, and disappointed by this unjustified course of action on the part of EUR; this should not have happened.

We have learned from this that we, as a Board, still have an important job to do in providing clarity to our faculties about how we deal with inviting external academics to seminars and conferences. Based on the principle of maximum academic freedom, external scholars are welcome at EUR. If an exception is ever considered, we as the Executive Board must carefully assess whether—and on what grounds—it would be justified.

Finally, during our conversation we explored the possibility of organizing a masterclass with you to help clarify how we, as a university community, engage in dialogue about academic freedom in times of unrest and geopolitical tensions. We would like to invite you to the EUR for this purpose.

Kind regards,

On behalf of the Executive Board of
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Jantine Schuit, Rector Magnificus