

Munich, 20.05.2026

Dear Karen,

This is now an open letter.

I. On Parties and Protocols

The Konvent protocol you are referring to was intended to share information internally: not confidential, but also not committal. A snapshot of our mood and yes, a mobilization text, written by us students for us students. We do not wish it to be understood as a basis for discussion. The following, however, we do:

II. A fait accompli and its grammar

Your email reached us two weeks after you had spoken at the Konvent about the budget gaps that the Ministry's cultural cuts had torn open. Class funds withdrawn; guest professorship cancelled; cross-class funding; gone. The Akademie is shrinking, and now the annual exhibition is supposed to shrink too. Only a fraction of those interested should be able to see our exhibition; the party is essentially to be abolished altogether (well, until 10 p.m., possibly in the rain); and student bars are to be banned from the exhibition.

At the aforementioned Konvent meeting, we were assured that the framework for the upcoming exhibition would be set collaboratively. Students would actively co-decide. Before that could happen, before the next Konvent meeting (the date of which you knew) could even take place, the so-called "proposal" arrived under the title "New Regulations for the 2026 Annual Exhibition." It reads like an implementing decree. The grammar of this document is telling. A single unresolved factor, posing as openness, reveals the closed determinacy of the measures: one number is missing, otherwise the proposal is complete. No questions, no gaps. The email knows only the present indicative and future tense, the grammatical forms of the factual and the inevitable. You write of compulsion and necessity. But a proposal requires the subjunctive and a space in which it can be discussed. An announcement via mass email cannot provide that.

So you "propose" to block our most important avenue for refilling our class funds through our own initiative and for gaining visibility for our work. We are merely permitted to react. Well, our reactions inevitably take on the character of action when facts are being created that we are not included in and cannot support.

III. Political context: what is actually being negotiated here

This moment is a symptom of a broader political development. At the federal level, the national cultural funds were cut by half last year: the Musikfonds, the Fonds Darstellende Künste, the international production house structure. The [Stiftung Kunstfonds](#) also lost half of its state funding. [Over 36,000 cultural workers signed a petition against it.](#) At state and municipal level, comparable cuts are hitting the independent scene, rehearsal spaces, and studios. In Munich too, bars, clubs, and other cultural venues are disappearing around every corner. But Bavaria presents itself as an exception. The new Hochschulinnovationsgesetz of 2021 is described by Arts Minister Blume as "[Germany's most modern university law](#)," under the banner of agility, excellence, and innovation. [Blume speaks of record investments in art and culture: 1.1 billion euros last year, more than any other federal state.](#) It is worth looking more closely at what the money is actually being spent on.

The funding list reads like an architecture programme: renovation of the Neue Pinakothek, new construction of the State Archive, the Festspielhaus Füssen, Konzerthaus Blaibach, state theatres in Würzburg and Regensburg. All prestige buildings. There is money for houses where culture is supposed to take place, not for culture itself. What is not funded: teaching capacity, class resources, guest professorships, support for students, artistic free spaces. Academies promise no return on investment, and thus do not fit the utilization logic of the Hochschulinnovationsgesetz. Good.

At the same time, missing funds can easily be obtained elsewhere. [In 2024, the Bavarian state parliament passed the Act for the Promotion of the Bundeswehr.](#) This constitutes an amendment to the Hochschulinnovationsgesetz that can oblige universities to cooperate with the Bundeswehr and conduct arms research. Civil clauses, with which universities had previously been able to commit themselves to exclusively civilian research, are now expressly prohibited. Politically, priorities are being shifted: away from cultural funding and toward military research and rearmament. [Since 2022, over 100 billion euros have been made available as a special fund for the Bundeswehr,](#) and [in 2025 a constitutional amendment effectively abolished the debt brake for defence spending.](#) Is the money that has been missing from us for several semesters now flowing into the Leopard 4 and 5 tanks?

And there is something else the Hochschulinnovationsgesetz achieves: it concentrates responsibility in the university leadership as institutional autonomy is expanded. The (federal) state backing that one might once have expected, before universities were restructured into businesses, is absent. Greater legal responsibility rests on the university leadership and its delegates. But personal private liability only threatens in cases of gross negligence or intent. A properly planned annual exhibition with a safety concept does not fall under this. The political consequence of applying a corporate logic to art academies is unmistakable. The withdrawal of the (Frei-)Staat from its funding responsibility appears to be accompanied by a transfer of its liability logic downwards. In case of doubt, the Akademie leadership is liable, so it hedges. But our research found: the principle of official liability (Amtshaftung) still applies. As a rule, it is the Free State of Bavaria that is liable. We request clarification, so that fear of liability no longer substitutes for the will to act.

We refuse this capitalist realism in which alternatives simply become unthinkable. It must not be easier to imagine shrinking and cancelling our cultural events than to stand up to the Ministry. Nor to manage risks rather than fight for room to manoeuvre. You explained to us that you consider opposing the Ministry to be futile. This reflects the complete internalization of this realism. And that is, first and foremost, a political decision we are not willing to share, and a poor showing for an arts institution.

We oppose the militarization of budgets, the logic of utilization within cultural institutions, and authoritarianism as an organizing principle. An art academy must not simply absorb this political development, let alone reproduce it. Somewhere we have to say stop and offer something in resistance. With some courage, that somewhere is here and now. Is this really all about a party? That sounds absurd. yet it is not. Because the party is itself culture: it brings us together, and not least the city; it strengthens community, fills the empty corridors and the empty class funds, and breathes life into a withering Akademie.

IV. Safety as argument and as displacement

We take safety concerns seriously: overcrowding, fire protection, and harassment require responsible handling. This matters deeply to us as well.

But let us look at the logic of the proposed measures: visitor caps, entry stop at 6:30 p.m., a ban on serving drinks in the corridors. All three measures pursue the same goal: fewer people at once. Why are all three needed if just one already reduces the density? Other measures appear not to have been considered at all: guidance systems; floor plans showing alternative stairwells and bathrooms; identification of risk areas; chokepoints that need to be kept clear; designated areas for standing and moving; student stewards; fixed information and awareness points. We would have ideas, we were not asked. At the Konvent, various options have already been researched and discussed. Among other things, we had the concept used by the Düsseldorf Academy explained to us in detail and considered where we might apply it and where it might not fit. We are happy to learn from the systems other academies have developed to manage safety conditions. However, we find it wrong to cite them rhetorically as precedents to legitimize one's own measures. Moreover, direct conversations with students from the Düsseldorf Academy indicate that the conditions there were not accurately represented.

The “safest” option would of course be to cancel the annual exhibition altogether and simply close the Akademie altogether. Then no one can be held liable for what happens here. How convenient. It is puzzling that the proposed measures appear neither logically consistent nor suited to actually solving the stated problems. Restricting parties does not solve the problem of harassment and assault. It merely relocates it outside the Akademie’s area of responsibility. The incidents happen elsewhere, and the Akademie is no longer involved. But that is not a solution, it is an avoidance of responsibility. A method that submits to patriarchal structures rather than combating them. Is that your intention? Prohibitions are rarely the responsible approach that we too are calling for. One may shed legal responsibility, but never interpersonal, social, or political responsibility. Safety discourses here replace genuine political engagement.

V. Awareness, but honestly

The awareness team was founded on the initiative of students. Because it goes without saying that everyone should be able to celebrate equally and safely, and precisely in order to create conditions under which we can continue to hold events that matter to us, that strengthen our community, and that honestly represent an important part of Munich’s cultural landscape. The awareness team has received little genuine support from the university leadership or administration. Apart from a symbolic honorarium of 250 euros in total (to be shared among all team members), they have worked entirely without pay. It is particularly troubling that the awareness team was neither consulted during the drafting of the measures nor permitted to contribute their experience, despite having the most immediate knowledge of the situation. After the last annual exhibition, the awareness team reported the documented incidents to the administration in order to collaborate and find solutions for future years. To now use the awareness team’s own diligence against the very aims of that team is not an indication of respectful cooperation. We are genuinely concerned that we must ask whether the reporting of incidents by the awareness team is being counted as an increase in incidents, which is, of course, statistically nonsensical. Where no records were kept before, everything appears to be an increase...

One must bear this in mind: the awareness team was not involved in developing the party concept. The work of the awareness team receives no (or minimal) support. To now claim that there are awareness-related concerns is difficult to interpret as anything other than an instrumentalization of that discourse. We students cannot comprehend that there have supposedly been so many complaints. The awareness team itself describes the last annual exhibition as well managed and the cooperation with security as surprisingly positive. The restrictions now being proposed stand in barely comprehensible contradiction to this. Yes, there were incidents and challenges. And every incident is one too many. But your account of the number of assaults at the last party does not correspond to the impressions and experiences of the awareness team. Every incident was documented and discussed by the group. And yes, it was too crowded. Let us find solutions together. Simply asserting that there were so many complaints, without making them concrete, is not an adequate justification for restricting student life and the cultural traditions of the Akademie. We would very much like to know what the complaints contain, so that we can learn from them concretely and change things meaningfully. We want to better understand what occurred, so that we can contribute to proposals for the format of the annual exhibition and its party.

Here again it must be emphasized: participation is not broadened or made more equitable by shrinking the cultural event itself. Of course, fewer incidents can occur within a more limited framework. But it becomes clear once again that the university leadership’s concern is not a serious protection and support concept for those potentially affected. Rather that if something bad should happen then please not on Akademie grounds. The experiences of the awareness team must be incorporated into the development of an exhibition and party concept. This requires a focused exchange, which should also be in your interest. Equal and safe participation is guaranteed by a strong awareness concept. The proposed regulations result in a net reduction of participation.

VI. And now?

We demand genuine collaboration. This means that all parties are involved on equal terms from the outset, that proposals are developed jointly, concerns are genuinely heard, and solutions are truly negotiated. It is also becoming increasingly tedious that every year we have to fight anew for the opening party. It is really time for a proper conversation, not for demands and regulations handed down from above, which we then oppose until we achieve some softening of them. The ball is in your court here.

We furthermore demand the actual disclosure of the complaints, and an end to this token rhetoric about equality, participation, and safety. Far more than this vague justification is needed for such drastic measures. What specifically occurred that we cannot learn from the awareness team? Only concrete information enables us to learn and to change things meaningfully.

We demand that you, as the representative of your student body, try to expand the room for action, not to preemptively restrict it in anticipatory obedience to politics and law. We need a combative representation of our interests before the Ministry, in the face of current political developments. The Hochschulinnovationsgesetz and the budgetary policies of federal and state governments must be criticized, and fought against by us together. Both the university leadership and we students must become more active here. But the answer to bad legislation cannot be to transform the Akademie into a liability-minimization machine.

And we want to invite you into a genuine conversation with us: at the special Konvent session on 26 May, or the next regular session on 15 June. This coming Thursday, 21 May, we are already seeking dialogue through the student representative body. As already indicated, however, we are prepared to protest against the new rules if student life continues to be curtailed. If we cannot work out a joint and satisfactory solution, we would indeed strike. And the doors of the classrooms would remain collectively closed during the 2026 Annual Exhibition.

xoxo, Konvent