



**Politecnico
di Torino**

STEFANO PAOLO CORGNATI
Rettore

Announcement to the Politecnico di Torino Community – May 19th 2024

Since the beginning of the protests that are involving many universities in western democracies, Politecnico di Torino has guaranteed, with full willingness, free and peaceful expression within the university spaces.

However, shortly before 10:00 pm yesterday, Saturday, May 18th, a major infraction occurred, with one of the entrances being forced open and around forty protesters unrelated to Politecnico di Torino breaking into our University.

As notified to the entire University community, on Friday 17th and Saturday 18th, access to the main campus was only allowed through the gates of Corso Duca degli Abruzzi and Corso Castelfidardo upon verification of the personal University badge.

Even though yesterday, Saturday, May 18th, the University closed its entrances as usual at 4:00 pm, access was still granted from the Corso Duca gate between 6:00 pm and 7:30 pm to give to the Politecnico di Torino students taking part in yesterday's protest the chance to join the city demonstration and then to get back into the University spaces.

At 6:30 pm, a group of about forty demonstrators from outside the Politecnico di Torino gathered outside the gates of Corso Duca degli Abruzzi, asking to enter the campus. In the meantime, about twenty-five demonstrators were already inside the building. A minority of them returned from the demonstration and entered upon verification of their badges, while the others remained inside the university during the afternoon to occupy the spaces.

Shortly before 10:00 pm, the group of forty moved to the side entrance of Corso Einaudi, forced and breached the entrance door, which was closed, and broke into the University.

This act of violence against the University has nothing to do neither with the freedom to demonstrate, nor with the student community of Politecnico di Torino.

The University has always guaranteed to its community the right to demonstrate in a civil and peaceful manner, with full willingness to listen to all voices and sentiments. It has not hindered the presence of the Politecnico di Torino protesters and students, even when the university was closed at night and on weekends, despite the occupation of the Aula Magna and Sala Emma Strada spaces. During the protest, the university constantly dialogued, in line with its institutional approach, with the student representatives of the Academic Senate and the Board of Governors, who highlighted positions that were sometimes very different from those expressed by the protesters.

We are fully aware that the richness of our Politecnico lies in its diversity: the University's sentiments are many, all to be listened to in order to bring out the voices of the majority. However, these do not coincide with the loud ones that tend to emerge when the majority remains silent. Instead, we would like those voices that express the main orientations of our Politecnico di Torino community to emerge. This was highlighted during the last Academic Senate, in which, after an open process lasting three weeks, eight motions on peace issues were illustrated and discussed, leading to a Senate resolution approved with twenty-six votes in favour and one against. Similarly, in the first Politecnico di Torino Student Conference, all positions and sentiments on the theme of peace will be expressed in a context of democratic debate.

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The university is committed and will continue to guarantee the right of students to study and attend lectures and other educational activities, as well as of our staff to perform their activities. The freedom to demonstrate peacefully must take place with respect for the students, professors, researchers and staff of our University.

In this context, last night's episode has been a violent action by unknown persons against our whole Politecnico community. This action has neither connection with peaceful and civil dialogue, nor with fostering confrontation between the different souls of our community. It was, without any doubt, an action aimed at occupying our University. An occupation that now, by making the Aula Magna and the Emma Strada halls unavailable, also deprives our community of the possibility of taking part in meaningful and important events, such as the Music Festival with the Politecnico di Torino's student musicians scheduled for Monday 20th, and the Just the Woman I Am event *Guarigioni (Healings)* on Tuesday 21st, to mention the first ones.

Until last night, the occupation of our Campus has been a protest held by members of the student community of Politecnico di Torino. Following these latest major events, it is now considered an occupation by individuals mostly from outside Politecnico di Torino.

In this difficult time, I ask the entire university community to rediscover, preserve and reinforce our identity and our role as a public institution capable of guiding the technological development of society, strong in our tradition and firm in our principles and values. Democratic principles and values, inspired by dialogue and peace, which do not and will never tolerate abuses, oppressions or violence.

The Rector
Prof. Stefano Paolo Corgnati

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