



### [JD Vance's Remarks in Munich Put Freedom of Speech Hypocrisy on Display](#)

Last Friday, U.S. Vice President JD Vance delivered remarks at the 61st Munich Security Conference (MSC 2025) – an annual gathering on international security policy held in the German city. The address was decried by many, including the European Union (EU), Germany, various American elected officials, and political commentators. Vance was criticized for the blatant hypocrisy of his remarks. Observers were quick to point out that while Vance attempted to lecture European governments on the need to respect election results and not censor free speech, he himself has repeatedly refused to acknowledge that Donald Trump lost the 2020 U.S. presidential election and has taken part in efforts to muzzle freedom of speech within the United States. The U.S. vice president chastised entities in Europe for, in his eyes, “rejecting freedom and liberty” and failing to protect citizens’ rights to express views that others may not agree with, yet his own administration has not lived up to those same standards. Thus, as one critic highlighted, Vance was a “poor messenger” regarding the issues that he delved into.

In regards to freedom of speech protections in particular, Vance reprimanded European leaders on the subject despite the fact that the Trump administration has initiated efforts aimed at suppressing this. Back in late January, Trump signed an executive order targeting university students who participate in protests or other forms of freedom of speech expression that is critical of the Israeli government’s war crimes and human rights violations. While many of these individuals are simply seeking to draw attention to the issue, call for accountability, and urge that the United States and other global actors not be complicit in these abuses, the Trump administration’s move would instead demonize individuals who are conveying legitimate concerns with U.S. policy towards Israel and doing so in a manner that aligns with freedom of speech protections granted under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. As such, the Trump executive order – like other executive actions that the president has rushed to sign during the first days of his second term in office – is expected to face legal challenges and has been criticized by legal scholars and experts.

While he was largely expected to discuss security-related issues pertaining to the Ukraine War, U.S. Vice President Vance ended up giving a belligerent speech scolding European officials for their perceived failures and shortcomings. He stated that rather than concern themselves with “external threats” such as Russia or China, Europe should worry about “the threat from within,” a “retreat from some of its most fundamental values,” and its heavy “silencing of voices.” Vance accused EU commissars of shutting down social media during times of civil unrest and suppressing what they deem to be “hateful content,” when in actuality, there is [due process](#) required in order to do this under the [Digital Services Act \(DSA\)](#). In these cases, a judge has to determine that the evidence of criminal offenses provided cause a threat to people’s life or safety, and only under those circumstances can any moderation be enforced in the online presence of an individual on a platform or search engine. Vance also remarked on German police raids against citizens suspected of posting hateful misogynistic comments online, including ones advocating for rape and sexual assault, but the fact of the matter is that these resulted in interrogations but no arrests.

One of the most hypocritical elements of Vance’s speech was his criticism of the Romanian government’s annulment of an election, something he referred to as undemocratic and shocking, despite his own refusal to unequivocally acknowledge the outcome of the 2020 U.S. presidential election and the unquestioned fairness of

the American electoral system and process. The failure of Trump and many of his surrogates to assuredly accept Former President Biden's fair triumph in the 2020 election ultimately sparked the January 6th insurrection in 2021, and therefore, Vance should be mindful and introspective of his own administration's actions first before speaking on the perceived undemocratic actions of other countries. In fact, Trump drew criticism the day after Vance's speech for stating on X that "He who saves his Country does not violate any Law." The insinuation that anyone is above the law is dangerous and wrong, and is the kind of thing that should really warrant rebuke for being incompatible with a free and fair society.