

Universities that ban pro-life groups 'are going against freedom of speech'

◆ Universities must not allow students to block pro-life or Christian societies due to "hypersensitivity", the equalities chief has said.

David Isaac, the chairman of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, said universities should be "bastions of debate and defenders of expression".

Speaking at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London last night, he criticised student unions that had tried to prevent Christian and pro-life societies setting up stalls at freshers' fairs or hiring event rooms.

Speaking at the launch of a report by the think tank Theos about faith on campus, he said: "This is not consistent with ensuring freedom of speech on campus, and the EHRC guidance makes clear that it should not happen.

"We are living in an age of hypersensitivity where it is increasingly easier for people to feel offended - or others to be worried about protecting minority groups."

Last year, Life, a pro-life student group, was barred from having stalls at three different university freshers' fairs, and in 2017, an Oxford college banned the Christian Union from its fair, saying it would be "alienating" for students of other religions.

D. 7. 2019
1902.1.5