





#### Virtual Workshop Inspireurope Kraków

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Researchers at Risk in Europe

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#### INTRODUCTION

Virtual Workshop Inspireurope Kraków was a two-day event that took place in October 2021 via the MS Teams. This virtual initiative created a unique platform for researchers, academics, journalists, and activists to discuss the most critical issues centred around the problem of academic freedom, as well as concerning a matter of support inside the academic community. We as organisers aimed not only to provide the multi-faced area for exchanging experience between seasoned activists which created support schemes at every – local, regional, national, international – level and communities which want to develop aid systems in their own context, but also to give a voice to originators of alternative initiatives, webs, and cooperatives.

The registration process was conducted using an online form. The invitations have been sent to numerous research institutions, academic centres, and scientific societies (mainly in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe), as well as individuals – researchers, authors, scholars at risk, and activists. Thousands of invitations have been distributed through internal communication channels of Jagiellonian University and more than a hundred invitations went to selected institutions and individuals. The workshop was also actively promoted on social media and websites. As a result, we registered 143 participants representing more than 70 different institutions from 27 countries including Aus-

tria, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, and Poland, as well as Afghanistan, Armenia, Egypt, India, Iran, Slovakia, Romania, and Turkey. Among attendees, there were specialists from universities and research centres, journalists, scholars at risk, artists, and refugees from many regions and communities. The list of our panellists was also varied: during the two-day event 35 speakers, experts, and guests were discussing and presenting research results, new initiatives, and current issues. They represented 24 institutions, such as universities, foundations, and independent projects.

The general programme of the workshop, together with more detailed descriptions of every panel and part of the event, can be found below.

PARTICIPANTS
REPRESENTING MORE
THAN 70 DIFFERENT
INSTITUTIONS FROM
27 COUNTRIES

#### **WELCOME REMARKS**

Chair: Prof. Beata Kowalska, Jagiellonian University

- Prof. Dorota Malec
   Vice-Rector of Jagiellonian University
- Robert Piaskowski, City of Kraków
- Sinead O'Gorman
   SAR Europe on behalf of InSPIREurope project

#### ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN EUROPE - CHALLENGES AND THREATS HUNGARY, POLAND, SERBIA

Chair: Dr Wojciech Burek, Jagiellonian University

- Dr Dániel Mikecz
   Hungarian Academy of Science
- Prof. Dušan Pavlović
   University of Belgrade, Network of Academic Solidarity and Engagement
- Anna Białek
   Office of the Commissioner for Human
   Rights

Break with Choir in Contact

# KEYNOTE BY DR OLGA HÜNLER ACADEMIC FREEDOM: CORE ACADEMIC VALUE AND PILLAR OF DEMOCRACY

## STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR RESEARCHERS AT RISK IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN EUROPE

Chair: Dr Joel Hanisek

Presentation of the new Inspireurope publication: "Researchers at Risk: National-level Actions in Europe".

- Dr Birgit Bujard
   Alexander von Humboldt Foundation
- Marion Gues
  PAUSE

Interactive discussion amongst regional representatives from Greece, Poland, Italy, and Sweden around building and sustaining national initiatives to support researchers at risk.

- Prof. Alexandros Triantafyllidis SAR Greece
- Prof. Dominika Kasprowicz
   Villa Decius Association
- Dr Francesca Helm
   SAR Italy
- Karolina Catoni
   SAR Sweden

Break with Choir in Contact

#### CAREER DEVELOPMENT & CROSS-NATIONAL CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS IN EUROPE: EURAXESS TOP IV RESULTS

Chair: Dr Sybilla Stanisławska-Kloc, Jagiellonian University

Achilleas Tsiligeridis,
 Centre for Research and Technology
 Hellas

### VIRTUAL NETWORKING SESSION USING SPATIAL CHAT

#### FROM KABUL TO KRAKOW

Chair: Filip Ryba and Patrycja Król

- Alisher Ahahir
- Masooma Sultani

#### RESEARCHERS AT RISK: CONTRIBUTIONS TO EUROPEAN ACADEMY

Chair: Prof. Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska, Jagiellonian University

- Prof. Sema Bayraktar
   Birarada Association
- Dr Gilbert Nchongboh Chofong
   Julius Kühn-Institut
- Prof. Candan Badem
   Uppsala University

# CURATORIAL VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION OF YOUNG BELARUSIAN ARTISTS VOLHA KOVALSKAYA

#### **BELARUSIAN VOICES**

Chair: Filip Ryba, Maria Świątkowska, Jagiellonian University

- Ekaterina Kavalionak-Hlukhouskaya
- Volha Kavalskaya
- Eduard Bukata

# SOLIDARITY WITH BELARUSIAN ACADEMICS European initiatives supporting Belarusian academics

Chair: Prof. Joanna Hańderek, Jagiellonian University

- Michael Gaebel,
   Association of European Universities
- Frank Albrecht,
   Philipp Schwartz-Initiative
- Agnieszka Stefaniak-Hrycko,
   National Agency of Academic Exchange

To read more about the programme and the speakers, <u>click here</u>.





#### **WELCOME REMARKS**

The workshop was opened by **Prof. Beata Kowalska** – a member of the Inspireurope Team at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, a representative of the Scholars at Risk Network, an Ombudsperson, and a researcher at Sociology Institute. During the opening speech, she stressed an urgent need for solidarity and support in modern reality, indicating the political situation in some of the European countries, the still volatile landscape in many regions, and above all, in Afghanistan.

The first special guest during the Welcome Remarks was **Prof. Dorota Malec** – a professor of Jurisprudence and Vice-Rector of Jagiellonian University for International Relations. She shortly discussed issues of cooperation inside the academic community, as well as beyond its borders. She brought out the role of academia in transformations of today's reality and called for solidarity in the world of academia.

The second guest was **Robert Piaskowski** – a representative of the Kraków authority. During the speech, he highlighted the involvement of the city in numerous supporting schemes. The aid of the Kraków authority enabled the invitation of scholars at risk to Poland for the first time in history.

Sinead O'Gorman was the last guest during this introductory panel. The director of the Scholars at Risk European office mentioned the importance of freedom in building causal and well-functioning academia. Therefore, she called for support in creating new initiatives in regions and countries where this sector of academic practices still is not well-develop. She also stressed the unique character of the passing year, when the number of requests sent to organisations providing direct assistance to researchers at risk has increased rapidly.



#### ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN EUROPE CHALLENGES AND THREATS HUNGARY, POLAND, SERBIA

This panel was chaired by **Dr Wojciech Burek** – a scholar at the Institute of European Studies at Jagiellonian University. His academic interests are related to international migration, refugee law, and human rights.

The first presentation during this panel was given by Dr Dániel Mikecz - a Research Fellow at the Institute for Political Science of the Centre for Social Sciences - Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence. At the beginning of the speech, he pointed out the renowned affairs related to the Hungarian academia, such as banning gender studies or conflict between the government and many academic institutions, above all Central European University. He showed how these incidents affected the social movements and how the practices of resistance were changed. Dr Mikecz talked through the impact of political radicalisation and populism on the academic community using Hungarian as well as Polish examples. He was wondered about possible solutions and mechanisms which could be implemented in similar situations.

During the second part of this panel, the following spoke **Dr Dušan Pavlović** – a political economist from the University of Belgrade. He started by mentioning political attacks on aca-

demic freedom during the 90s and the gradual change in that state of affairs. He pointed out the problem of numerous private universities in Serbia which abuse non-transparent procedures awarding of degrees. This issue is related to scandals that uncovered the political background of those institutions. Dr Pavlović drew attention to relations between financing and the independence of the research institutions. He proposed creating some funds which could provide a kind of protection for academics whose works are critical of a government politic.

The last presentation was conducted by **Anna Białek** – a member of the Constitutional, International, and European Law Department at the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights. She began from pointed the constitutional background of academic freedom and the autonomy of universities in Poland. Subsequently, she listed some examples of dangerous practices in modern Polish reality, such as blocking the process of granting titles. She also described the strong pressure on the academic community which is put by the Polish government.

During the Q&C session was raising the problem of possible strategies of defending academic freedom in a regional context. There was also showed up the issue of the NGO's involvement in these efforts.

#### **KEYNOTE**

### ACADEMIC FREEDOM: CORE ACADEMIC VALUE AND PILLAR OF DEMOCRACY

This speech was given by **Dr Olga Hünler** – a member of the Off-University initiative and a longtime scholar of the Philipp Schwartz Fellowship founded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. At the outset, she talked through different definitions of academic freedom and showed the connections between this concept and other important values of academia, such as institutional autonomy or accountability. She also pointed out the importance of engaging scholars, as well as students, in a public debate and participation in the social, non-academic reality.

Afterwards, Dr Hünler listed the most common examples of threats to academic freedom and the other fundamental values in the scientific community. She also stressed that many threats are not necessarily aimed at freedom of academia directly, but they still affect the academic world. Not only governments and political organisations can put pressure on academia, but also non-state groups or movements, as well as actors inside the academia.

Thereafter Dr Hünler showed that the problem of limiting academic freedom in the last decades concerns not only conflict-ridden regions but also many of the democratic countries. She illustrated it using examples from Poland,

France, and other states. Then she was focusing on Turkey as a case study and as the paradigm of the country with a very low level of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. After describing in detail, the development of the situation in Turkey she pointed out Off-University as the example of the solidarity in academia and the good response to the disruption of Turkish freedom.

During the discussion, the topic of The Academic for Peace came up and elaborated. The issue of private universities in Turkey has been addressed as well. The main theme of the conversation was the projects which could provide a safe space of solidarity and sensitivity. This part was closed by the thread of the assessment criteria which could be used during researching academic freedom.



Global Levels of Academic Freedom 2020
Source: Free Universities: Putting the Academic Freedom

Index Into Action

### STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR RESEARCHERS AT RISK IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN EUROPE

This panel was chaired by **Dr Joel Hanisek**– Policy and Programme Manager at Scholars at Risk Europe. It was designed to discuss some existing national initiatives for researchers at risk.

In the beginning, **Marion Gues** – a member of the PAUSE programme in Collège de France – presented the report about the involvement of the individual states in projects which aim to protect scholars at risk. She listed the initiatives which arose at different levels – regional, state, and transnational. She showed how the political and historical context influenced the current support strategies. She also stressed that any universal model doesn't exist in this case.

In the next part, the following spoke **Dr Alexandros Triantafyllidis** – a biologist associated with the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and a member of Scholars at Risk Network in Greece. He briefly described the recent history of supporting scholars at risk in the Greek context. He stressed the importance of seeking the endorsement at higher levels – in the rector's offices and in the ministries. Dr Trianrafyllidis also emphasised that the scientific community should disseminate the idea of solidarity inside the global academia constantly.

The next section of the panel was conducted by Prof. Dominika Kasprowicz - a researcher at the Institute of Journalism, Media, and Social Communication of Jagiellonian University, as well as the director of the Villa Decius Association. Firstly, she summarised the development of the supporting strategies in the Polish academia, and above all, she brought out the joining the first Polish university to the Scholars at Risk Network. She also noticed the importance of cooperation with local authorities and NGOs during the implementation of the new support schemes. She spotted the crucial role of experience with other programmes (e.g., ICORN Network) in the process of creating the new solidarity practices in academia.

Subsequently, Dr Francesca Helm - a researcher associated with the University of Padova and a co-coordinator of the Italian Scholars at Risk Network section - conducted the presentation. She noticed the rapid grown of this SAR branch which is quite new. She also stressed the importance of dialogue with nonacademic actors. The guide which informs how to host scholars at risk in Italy was presented and it is different from the general one provided by SAR Network. Dr Helm brought out the enormous significance of the collaboration between various, local sections of the organisation, primarily in the context of advocacy.

Finally, the following spoke **Karolina Catoni**– International Relations Officer and a Deputy
Head of the International Centre at the Univer-

sity of Gothenburg, as well as a coordinator of the Swedish Scholars at Risk section. She briefly described the local specific of the supporting schemes and universities involvement and presented the current funding strategies in Sweden. She also pointed out the prominence of the engagement from universities and other scientific institutions, as well as the importance of the mapping of proper stakeholders across a country.

During the Q&A session, the problem of changes enforced by the coronavirus pandemic was thoroughly discussed. The possible coping strategies during these specific times were also mentioned. In the end, all panellists gave some advice for institutions that would like to make a first step toward creating local supporting schemes.



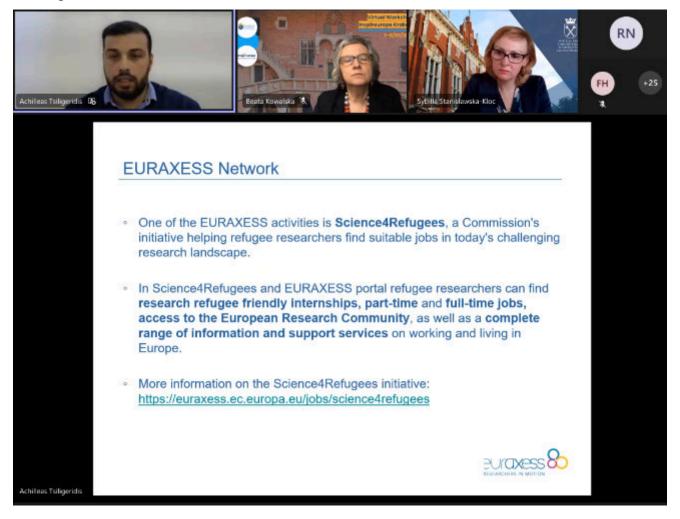
#### CAREER DEVELOPMENT & CROSS-NATIONAL CIRCULATION OF RESEARCHERS IN EUROPE: EURAXESS TOP IV RESULTS

This panel was chaired by **Dr Sybilla Stan-isławska-Kloc** – a scholar at the Chair of Intellectual Property Law of the Jagiellonian University as well as an advocate and a mediator.

During this part of the workshop **Achilleas Tsiligeridis** – a researcher at Centre for Research and Technology Hellas – presented the running of EUROAXESS Network in Greece.

Firstly, he described the specification and extend of this institution. The most important thread of this speech was the supporting program for scholars at risk which helps them in finding a suitable job. This initiative aims to assist during the process of adjustment to the conditions of the hosting country. The specific adaptation programmes, as well as dedicated tools and training, were also described in detail.

During the discussion, the cooperation with a business sector was overtalk, as well as the evaluation of the existing actions of the programme.



### VIRTUAL NETWORKING SESSION USING SPATIAL CHAT

After the main part of the first day of the workshop, the meeting on Spatial Chat took place. Using this platform, which is similar to virtual reality, enabled expanding the threads from panels in a more direct formula. It was also a good opportunity to generate new connections and exchange experiences. The session was assessed as helpful or very helpful by the majority during the evaluation.

#### Source: Dr Wassim Ibrahim

### SPECIAL GUEST: DR WASSIM IBRAHIM WITH CHOIR IN CONTACT

The first day of the workshop was graced with the music of Choir in Contact – the initiative which connects amateur singers in Kraków. Their repertoire includes pieces from all over the world that are performed in original languages. The initiator of this project is Dr Wassim Ibrahim – a composer and a Multicultural Ambassador of Kraków. During the event, he gave a speech about his story – the move from Syria to Poland, the studying at Music Academy in Kraków, and the engagement in creating a multicultural space of freedom using music.



#### FROM KABUL TO KRAKOW

This discussion was chaired by **Patrycja Król**– a PhD student at the Institute of Sociology of
Jagiellonian University – and **Filip Ryba**– a PhD student at the Institute of Archeology
and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, as well as a member of Inspireurope
Team at Jagiellonian University.

They talked with the Afghan couple which found refuge in Poland: Ali Ahahir – a journalist – and Massoma Sultani – a journalist and an activist. The conversation was related to the current landscape in Afghanistan and the situation of Afghan refugees all around the world. Essentially the discussion was aimed at noticing strategies of supporting the local community, on both individual and institutional levels. It was also a good opportunity to exchange personal experiences of refugeeism.

To listen to a recording of the FROM KABUL TO KRAKÓW conversation, click here.





#### RESEARCHERS AT RISK: CONTRIBUTIONS TO EUROPEAN ACADEMY

This panel was chaired by **Prof. Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska** – a professor of Psychology of Culture at Jagiellonian University, as well as an academic at Jesuit University Ignacjanum in Krakow. The aim of this part of the workshop was to share an experience of being a scholar at risk and coping with systematic problems.

In the beginning, the following spoke **Dr Sema** Bayraktar - a researcher at Istanbul Bilgi University and chairperson of BIRARADA Association. The main topic of her presentation was the characterising of the said organisation as the example of a search for new, local solutions in countries with a low academic freedom level. The Association was created as a space of multilevel solidarity. It was established to support the democratic and peaceful world in each scientific and critical knowledge is produced for the benefit of all society and nature. Dr Bayraktar described the methods of supporting members in the association, as well as pointed out the most important aims of the organisation. also stressed that the main goal She of BIRARADA is to create and develop independent, academic structures. She called for the support of international institutions and organisations which is crucial in achieving the goals of the association.

The next section of the panel was conducted by **Dr Gilbert Nchongboh Chofong** – molecular plant pathologist and member of Julius Kühn-Institute. His presentation was a kind of a story about the intricate paths of the career and life of a scholar at risk. He began by describing the contemporary history of Cameroon – the country of his origin – and his education there. Afterwards, he talked about the experience of being a part of Chinese academia, as well as he described the process of moving to Germany – starting a research career, awarding scholarships, benefiting programmes of support.

As the last one, the following spoke Dr Candan Badem - a historian and a guest researcher at Uppsala University. Firstly, he expressed his solidarity with the Afghans and described the current, global problem of aggressive and political Islamic organisations. Then he connected it with his own experience of persecutions by the Turkish government. He showed that this is a kind of a common and collective experience of many academics in Turkey. Secondly, he talked about the scholarship in Krakow and being the first scholar at risk hosted by a Polish institution. Dr Badem stressed the importance of making new academic connections during the duration of scholarships. Finally, he narrated about his current fellowship in Sweden. At the very end, he pointed out that European educational institutions should collaborate only with those universities and organisations which support democratic principles and values.

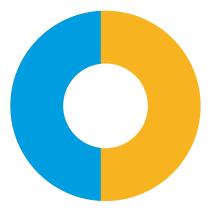
During the discussion, each panellist talked about the most detrimental factor at European and global academia which needs to be fought.

 BIRARADA (SCIENCE, ART, EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND SOLIDARITY ASSOCIATION) slideshow

#### **BELARUSIAN VOICES**

This discussion was chaired by **Maria Świątkowska** – a PhD student at literary studies at Jagiellonian University, as well as a translator – and **Filip Ryba**.

They talked with the Belarusian activists who work and study in Kraków: Eduard Bukata - a student of international relations and Eurasian Studies at Jagiellonian University, as well as a member of Belarusians initiatives in Krakow - Volha Kavalskaya, and Ekaterina Kavalionak-Hlukhouskaya - a student at the Jagiellonian University, poet, writer, and translator. The conversation was focused on the current status of Belarusians abroad, but most of all on the problems of the Belarusian community in Europe. Interlocutors suggested not only the necessity of the creation of dedicated programmes for Belarusians, but they also indicated benefits connected with the modern migration process.





### SOLIDARITY WITH BELARUSIAN ACADEMICS

The last panel was chaired by **Prof. Joanna Hańderek** – a philosopher of culture and a scholar at Jagiellonian University. The aim of this part of the workshop was to present the particular supporting schemes for Belarusian academics.

The first presentation was conducted by Mateo Vespa - a member of the Executive Committee of the European Students' Union. He talked about the last actions of the organisation which has been doing in connection with the difficult situation in Belarus, as well as he informed about ongoing programmes. He was apprised about the practices of the association, such as monitoring the situation of repressed students after the crisis in Belarus and cooperation with local organisations and institutions. He stressed that the situation of students is trickier than the situation of academic stuff. He also pointed out that some help from border countries is not enough and appealed for a more complex solution.

In the next part, the following spoke **Frank Albrecht** – Programme Director of the Philipp

Schwartz Initiative for at-risk researchers at the

Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The aim

of this presentation was to describe the current

programmes of the said institution, as well as
inform about the special, dedicated projects addressed to Belarusian researchers. He pointed

out the mediation role of his institution during political conflicts as an important part of the engagement of supporting schemes. He also stressed the need for actions on state and transnational levels in connection with the situation of academia in Belarus. He informed about the special panel which has been organised for finding the systematic solutions to the current situation. At the end of the speech, he apprised programmes for students at risk and artists at risk.

Stefaniak-Hrycko – Director of the Department of Programmes for Scientists at Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange. She introduced the agency and talked about providing programmes and setting goals. She also described the reasons for preparing special projects for the Belarusian community. An example of this kind of initiative is Solidarity with Belarus scholarship created by NAWA (Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange). This programme was described in detail – the financial strategy, provided courses, and all-important figures have been presented.

During the discussion, a lot of specific questions were answered, which shows that a necessity for this type of project is still urgent.

- Solidarity with Belarussian academics: The Philipp Schwartz Initiative and other support programmes - slideshow
- Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange:
   Solidarity with Belarus Agnieszka Stefaniak-Hrycko
   slideshow





#### **SPECIAL GUEST VOLHA KAVALSKAYA - CURATORIAL VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION OF YOUNG BELARUSIAN ARTISTS**

**Volha Kavalskaya** – an artist and a co-founder of the Emerick Hutten-Chapsky Foundation and Community of Belarusians in Krakow - proposed a tour through a virtual gallery where current works of young Belarusian artists were presented. She showed how the political resistance, the violence, and the experience of refugeeism were influenced modern Belarusian art. The most important aim of this event was to present the current mood in the young generation in the said region.



# BEFORE /AFTER/2020. BELARUS

The exhibition of the Betarusian art "Before/After/2020. Belarus" is an artistic chronicle of dramatic events of the August 2020 that took place in Belarus after the presidential elections: it is an authentic display, sincere emotional background, truthful description of the events.

PL BE

The paintings, graphics and sculptures presented in this exposition comes with the reflection of the citizenship of the 10 Belanusian artists. They are united by the common pain, rage, powerlessness, fear, despair that they expressed in their art. Life in their works has been divided to "before" and "after" the tragic events, just like the exhibition itself consists of two vectors, two planes.

The 'before' period is represented by three paintings that recemble another life, form of a dream. It reflects peace, beauty, relaxation, but it suddently ends when we see a dead bind as a clash between beauty and violence, beaten body of a woman, burned and charred corpses like in the gas chambers and faces crying out for freedom...

Each work portrays a person or his personification. Each piece expresses personal emotional experience of its creator. Artist, as a chronicler or a war correspondent, records what is happening by direct or indirect portrayal of the events. He presents feelings and reaction in a form of art. There is no presentation of onesetif; it is a collective grief, where the despair of the whole nation is put up front in the dramatic narrative. It is a polyphony of images, where every voice becomes a part of a resounding chord.

Kiyeniya Zhukowskayı original author and curator of the exhibit

Source: Before/After/2020. Belarus - online exhibition http://en-before-after.interkulturalni.pl

#### **EVALUATION**

After the workshop link to the short evaluative survey was distributed to all registered participants and panellists individually.

In the effect, the vast majority (almost 80%) rated the seminar as very good or excellent. Respondents appreciated the main idea of the workshop, as well as its diversity. We also received some organisational remarks, such as adding a long break in the middle of the conference or inviting representatives of some specific institutions.

More than 70% of respondents welcome a subsequent workshop focused again on the regions of Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe.

