

Researchers at Risk: National-level actions in Europe



Researchers at Risk: National-Level actions

Report of the Inspireurope Project

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List of abbreviations

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
AvH	Alexander von Humboldt Foundation
Cara	The Council for At-Risk Academics
EC	European Commission
EDUFI	Finnish National Agency for Education
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
Inspireurope	Initiative to Support, Promote and Integrate Researchers at Risk in Europe
MSCA	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
PAUSE	French Hosting Programme for Scientists and Artists in Exile
IIE-SRF	Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund
S.U.C.RE	Project Supporting University Community Pathway for REFugees-Migrants
UAF	Stichting voor Vluchteling-Studenten (Foundation for Refugee Students)



Introduction

Academic freedom and research autonomy are under pressure in many parts of the world. When academic freedom is at risk, individual researchers often face severe threats to their lives and their careers. Solidarity with researchers, scholars, and scientists who are in situations of crisis, or facing longer-term repression, is an essential component in maintaining scientific research communities. As the Inspireurope mapping report shows, there is excellent work already underway across Europe to support researchers at risk, particularly at the higher education institutional level, and also in partnership with NGOs. However, more investment is needed at the national and European levels in efforts to support researchers at risk if that solidarity is to be translated into concrete action on a larger scale.

Both in Europe and around the world a number of NGOs and support organisations (four of which are represented in the Inspireurope consortium) arrange temporary positions for researchers at risk at higher education institutions in order to enable researchers to continue their work safely. However, as documented in the Inspireurope mapping report, the applications for assistance from at-risk scholars and researchers far exceed the available funding for positions. Every year there are many more qualified candidates seeking positions through these organisations than there is funding to provide such opportunities.

The findings of Inspireurope's consultation processes align closely with the experiences of organisations inside and outside the consortium which have been involved in the direct support of researchers at risk over several decades. These findings identify the top two obstacles currently faced by researchers at risk who are seeking positions in Europe as being: (1) shortage of dedicated funding for positions/fellowships for researchers at risk; and (2) competitiveness of the academic labour market in Europe. To address the serious shortfall in support, the Inspireurope project has already recommended elsewhere the establishment of a dedicated EU fellowship scheme for researchers at risk and proposed a preliminary outline of a future scheme. A dedicated European-level fellowship mechanism for researchers at risk would be transformational in addressing the challenges faced by researchers at risk.

While Inspireurope continues to press for such a scheme at EU level, this report focuses instead on actions underway at the national level in Europe to provide direct support to researchers at risk, with an emphasis on efforts to provide positions of safe haven at higher education institutions and research organisations in different countries in Europe. While the emphasis in this report is primarily on support in the form of fellowships or positions of safe haven for researchers at risk, it is important to note that many of the organisations and national-level initiatives mentioned in this report also engage in advocacy activities on behalf of scholars in prison in their home countries, or campaigns, events and other activities to promote academic freedom. The report gathers the experiences and advice of representatives from 14 national-level initiatives in Europe supporting researchers at risk. The aim of the report is to share knowledge and insights between those already involved in these efforts, and to encourage the development of new national-level initiatives where these do not yet exist. The Inspireurope project partners stand ready to advise and assist those interested in learning more about existing national-level initiatives in Europe and those interested in establishing new initiatives in their countries.

About Inspireurope

Inspireurope is a 10-partner project funded under the European Commission's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and coordinated by Scholars at Risk Europe at Maynooth University, Ireland. Inspireurope facilitates transnational cooperation across Europe to support researchers at risk. The project partners include global leaders in the provision of support for researchers at risk. By joining forces in this way, Inspireurope is coordinating and strengthening support across Europe for researchers at risk.

Inspireurope partners share a common commitment to defending academic freedom and to the support, promotion and integration of researchers at risk in their respective research and innovation ecosystems.

Researchers at risk

Researchers at risk include researchers, scholars, and scientists at all stages of their research careers, including doctoral candidates through to experienced researchers and professors, who are experiencing threats to their life, liberty, or research career, and those who are forced or have been forced to flee because of such threats.

While some researchers at risk have recognised refugee status, asylum status, or similar protection status, a more significant proportion of those seeking the assistance of NGOs specialising in the field of scholar protection are outside the refugee process, seeking or holding temporary visas/work permits through visiting research/scholar positions at host universities in Europe or elsewhere, outside their home countries.

The global Scholars at Risk Network (SAR) reports that although each individual researcher's situation is unique, clear patterns have emerged within the 5,000+ applications for assistance the Network has received since its founding in 2000. Based on over 20 years' experience receiving requests for assistance from at-risk scholars, professors, researchers, doctoral students, institutional leaders and other members of higher education communities, SAR identifies three broad categories of risk reported:

a) Risk due to the content of a scholar's work, research, or teaching being perceived as threatening by authorities or other groups. When the development of ideas, exchange of information, and expression of new opinions are considered threatening, individual scholars/researchers are particularly vulnerable.

b) Risk because of the individual's status as academics/researchers. Because of their education, frequent travel, and professional standing, scholars are often prominent members of their community. Where a scholar is a member of a political, ethnic, or religious minority, female, or a member of LGBTQ+ communities, an attack on an individual scholar may be a highly visible and efficient means for intimidating and silencing others. For additional information please consult **How to Host: A Handbook for Higher Education Partners, Scholars at Risk Network**.

c) Risk as a result of their peaceful exercise of basic human rights, in particular, the right to freedom of expression or freedom of association. This includes the many scholars who have sought refuge abroad because conflict in their home country has made normal academic work impossible. The effects of conflict may include the physical destruction of university buildings, unreliable supplies of electricity and water, the breakdown of local internet provision, the risk of imminent conscription for male scholars, and a rise in general criminality, including kidnapping for ransom, with academics being seen as relatively well-paid and therefore as attractive targets.

For a wider background and context on support for researchers at risk in Europe, we invite readers to review the Inspireurope Mapping Report: **Researchers at Risk: Mapping Europe's Response**.

Overview of national-level initiatives in Europe

National-level initiatives in Europe supporting researchers at risk come in different shapes and sizes. The existing initiatives detailed here at the national levels are variously supported financially and operationally by ministries, public agencies, and civil society. These programmes are good examples of how capacity may be multiplied within countries to support researchers at risk.

In a small number of countries, government-backed programmes provide fellowships and other direct support for researchers at risk. Especially notable in this regard is the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's Philip Schwartz Initiative, which is mainly supported by the German Federal Foreign Office, and PAUSE, initiated and funded by the French Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation. These two programmes make Germany and France the main host countries for researchers and scholars in exile within the European Union. In the UK and the Netherlands, activities to support researchers at risk have been led by NGOs with a long history in the provision of support to refugee and at-risk students and scholars. In Finland, fellowship activities are supported through a partnership between a national agency and the Scholar Rescue Fund, another leading organisation in the provision of support to researchers at risk. In twelve European countries, groups of higher education institutions, associations and other stakeholders have partnered with the Scholars at Risk Network to form national SAR sections. SAR sections can provide a useful framework for organising institutions within a given country around activities to promote academic freedom and to support scholars.

Whether founded at the instigation of a public authority, or the result of the mobilisation of universities and civil society, the existing programmes and initiatives all stress the importance of networking at the national scale, exchanging good practices, and improving the support provided to researchers at risk.

The variety of national-level models and programmes to support researchers at risk

across Europe shows the ability of institutions to adapt to different country contexts. It is clear that supporting and hosting researchers at risk is helped by central structural coordination amongst the research and higher education institutions. However, there is no magic formula or single model for implementing a successful support programme. Flexibility is required. This guide is meant to help stakeholders exploring the possibility of establishing a programme to support researchers at risk. While funding challenges and shortage of long-term career opportunities for scholars remain two of the biggest challenges facing researchers at risk in Europe, the existing initiatives described below are all successful in various ways and provide learning opportunities for both new and established initiatives.

It is important to recognize that the work detailed in each of the examples below emerges from different historical and political contexts. Some work represents substantial commitments over significant periods of time, and some initiatives are developing and dynamic. Across multiple national and sub-national scales this work demonstrates the many opportunities and models that currently exist to support researchers at risk and instil greater social understandings of the importance of research freedoms. Together these illustrate many good practices that can be useful in building future support across Europe for researchers at risk.

Note on Methodology

The information in this guide was collected primarily through a series of semi-structured interviews conducted by staff from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and PAUSE with fourteen national-level initiatives in Europe involved in activities to support researchers at risk, combined with short articles contributed directly by country representatives. Our aim was to allow readers to hear directly from some of the key actors across Europe in this field of work. While questions and responses in this report emphasise efforts to provide direct support to individual researchers who have relocated to Europe, it is important to note that most national-level initiatives surveyed here are also involved in wider efforts to promote academic freedom around the world.



Country focus: Denmark

“Being able to assist and help each other is key and the coordination between institutions here promotes the initiatives tenfold.

-Vivian Tos Lindgaard, Head of International Staff Mobility, University of Copenhagen

National-level activities in Denmark to support researchers at risk have been primarily within the framework of the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR). SAR Denmark was launched in 2019 at the University of Copenhagen (UCPH), with the aim of coordinating activities in Denmark to support at-risk scholars and promote academic freedom. The network brings together all eight public Danish universities, as well as the National Union of Students in Denmark, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, an active member of the initiative.

SAR Denmark is coordinated by the UCPH, which has approved finances to host 1 scholar a year for 5 years. The support includes networking, career development for researchers, a dual career spouse network for the partner, and reimbursements of fees connected to relocating, e.g., residence permits and plane tickets.

Interview with Vivian Tos Lindgaard, Head of International Staff Mobility, University of Copenhagen, and Daniel Ladani, Global Mobility Consultant, University of Copenhagen

What key lessons have you learned in your work in Denmark to support researchers at risk?

Our experience since the establishment of the SAR Denmark section has been very good so far and we have learned some key lessons as well. The biggest key lessons for us have been learned through hosting researchers at risk – in particular the fact that it is harder, and a bit more challenging when a researcher has a large family. These situations require much more resources and the transition can be somewhat difficult. It would be easier if we had the opportunity to offer an employment for more than a year, this way accompanying family can settle more easily since it usually takes time to settle in a new country. Especially if the family has never travelled outside of their home country or continent. There are many things such as culture, integration, language etc. and it takes time to adapt when you make a life changing decision that sometimes can be stressful for the researcher, but also for the accompanying family members – especially if they don't thrive during their stay.

What advice would you give new initiatives for researchers at risk or those interested in establishing such initiatives in other countries/ regions?

In our case, cooperating with the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR) has been key. SAR is very helpful in all aspects; the network can help clarifying complicated questions. Our advice would therefore be to make use of SAR and everything they offer – it will be very helpful if you plan to begin organising the launch of a national section or similar initiatives. There is so much knowledge and information that can be shared, and it is a great way to get started.

What is the value and importance of coordinating with other institutions within your country to support researchers at risk?

All the Danish universities have become members of the Danish section of SAR; as a result the Danish universities are involved with the network and are hosting researchers at risk in temporary positions. Furthermore, the Danish Institute of Human Rights is also a member, which is huge for collaboration and the SAR Denmark initiative. We share insights and experiences, and all the members are advocates for this initiative and its importance in terms of academic freedom in the sphere of university life.

Being able to assist and help each other is key and the coordination between institutions here promotes the initiatives tenfold.

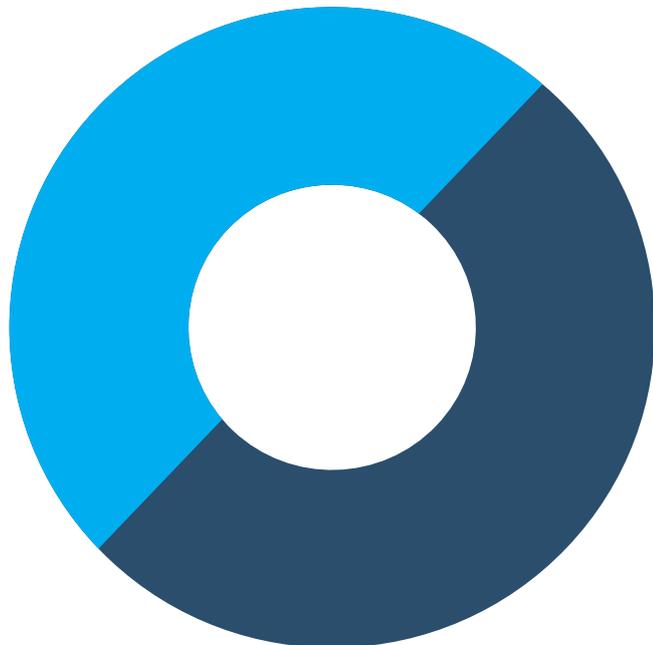
We are also working on expanding the section to a Nordic section, and hopefully this will become a reality in the near future.

Is there any private sector involvement in your country in supporting researchers at risk?

The funding of the SAR Denmark section is the main obstacle in Denmark. SAR Denmark's activities are funded by the host universities and institutions themselves. It would be difficult to involve the private sector in supporting researchers at risk without any possibilities of national funding. Another obstacle could be business relations with countries who are responsible for the prosecution of the researchers.

SCHOLARS AT RISK
NETWORK  DENMARK SECTION

More information on the SAR Denmark section can be found [here](#).





Country focus: **Finland**

“The establishment of the initiative was a way to react to the humanitarian tragedy and higher education emergency, especially in Syria.”

*-Sini Piippo, Senior Programme Adviser
at EDUFI*

In 2016 the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) established a Higher Education in Emergencies partnership with the Institute for International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF). The programme, a model of pooling expertise and resources to enable sustainable support, currently co-funds five scholars per year. In addition, eleven higher education institutions in Finland are members of the SAR Network, and Universities Finland (UNIFI) provides leadership for the SAR Finland section and related national-level organising.

Interview with Emily Borzcik, Assistant Director, IIE Scholar Rescue Fund

How does the EDUFI/IIE-SRF partnership work?

The Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF) is the only global program that arranges and funds fellowships for threatened and displaced scholars at partnering higher education institutions worldwide. While our reach is truly global, partners across Europe have been integral to our success since the programme's founding in 2002. Under the IIE-SRF model, we provide a fellowship grant of up to US\$25,000, which is matched by the host institution to create a comprehensive financial support package for the scholar. As of August 2021, more than 130 higher education institutions in 22 European countries have partnered with IIE-SRF to host more than 150 fellows from 30 countries. In 2020, nearly one-third of all IIE-SRF fellowship placements were arranged in partnership with European institutions.

In Finland, our partnership with EDUFI is an excellent model for sustainable national programming to support threatened and displaced scholars. In the framework of the partnership, IIE-SRF and EDUFI jointly support and fund fellowship appointments at Finnish higher education institutions, with EDUFI providing the financial match through a national funding scheme and coordinating the participation of universities. With this joint support, an individual scholar receives approximately US\$50,000 for a one-year appointment, which is typically renewable for a

second year under the same terms. IIE-SRF also provides supplemental funding for relocation expenses and health insurance and access to resources for professional development, while EDUFI may provide immigration assistance, if necessary, and facilitates networking among the scholars, their families, and host universities. Host institutions arrange visiting positions on campus, contributing critical academic, administrative, and personal support for IIE-SRF fellows and their families. To date, four Finnish universities have hosted IIE-SRF fellows under this partnership.

In bringing together dedicated individuals from IIE-SRF, higher education institutions, and the government sector, we pool our expertise and resources to help ensure comprehensive, consistent, and sustainable support for scholars restarting their careers in Finland. We are grateful for our colleagues at EDUFI and at universities across Finland, who are integral to IIE-SRF's ability to provide safe haven to the increasing number of scholars in need of assistance. IIE-SRF encourages current and future partners from the governmental, not-for-profit, higher education, and private sectors across Europe to consider similar models and welcomes new and innovative ideas for partnerships.

More information on the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund can be found [here](#).



Interview with Sini Piippo, Senior Programme Adviser at EDUFI

What was the impetus to establish the programme?

Global responsibility is one of our strategic priorities and we want to identify means to encourage global responsibility as a part of international mobility and cooperation in education. The establishment of the initiative was a way to react to the humanitarian tragedy and higher education emergency, especially in Syria. EDUFI had worked together with the higher education community in Finland to identify possible ways of providing support and had identified the cooperation and the partnership with the IIE-SRF as a way to respond to this need.

How important has national-level support been for supporting researchers at risk in Finland?

Providing national-level support has been crucial to launch the activities in Finland, to develop national procedures and cooperation structures, as well as to provide support in implementation. Having the partnership with the IIE-SRF is also crucial. First of all, in addition to providing funding, the IIE-SRF as one of the key global actors in this field and provides extremely important expertise in the selection of the scholars, the support measures and guidance of both the host institutions and the scholars, as well as the higher education contexts of the scholars' countries of origin. Concerning the national context in Finland, having national-level coordination for the activities helps in identifying and solving any challenges in the implementation as well as provides a platform and network to share and develop good practices. Host institutions are crucial in their expertise of institutional level implementation, HR services, and scientific field expertise. Joint collaboration also sparks other initiatives and discussions. Also, the expertise and perspective of individual scholars can be fed into the development of the programme.

What were key lessons learned and main challenges since the establishment of the support programme in 2016?

It is important to take into consideration the need for targeted and tailored support and the specific expertise in the field of supporting at-risk scholars. Implementation can differ from other programmes of international higher education cooperation, so it is important to keep an open mind and be flexible when creating the programme structure, the networks, and working methods. This can mean, for example, ensuring additional resources on the institutional level for comprehensive support to scholars, and also for their families, or working closely with immigration authorities.

It has been crucial to facilitate cooperation between distinct levels of actors (international, national, institutional and individual) to develop a network that ensures different perspectives are covered. Combining various levels of expertise helps support the quality of the implementation. Peer support – be it the HR personnel responsible for the guidance at the universities or the scholars and their families – is especially important. The main challenges so far have been the sustainability of support, the possibility to provide more long-term funding opportunities, as well as sustainable career options.

More information on the Finnish National Agency for Education's partnership with IIE-SRF can be found [here](#).



FINNISH NATIONAL
 AGENCY FOR EDUCATION



Country focus: **France**

“Despite the diversity of national contexts, the protection of researchers at risk and academic freedom raises issues that are the same for all our programmes and requires a pooling and sharing of experiences as well as a cooperation at the European and international levels, which has been a priority of PAUSE from the start.”

- Laura Lohéac, PAUSE Executive Director

By Marion Gues, Programme Officer in charge of European and International Projects, PAUSE Programme, Collège de France

In France, the hosting programme for scientists and artists in exile (PAUSE – Collège de France) was launched in 2017. It provides co-funding to host institutions for 100 researchers and artists per year.

Officially launched on January 16, 2017, by the Ministry for Education and Research (now Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation), PAUSE Programme is an ambitious national project initiated by the French State with support from research communities, civil society and economic stakeholders. The Programme is hosted by the Collège de France, a French leading research and knowledge institution.

Before the creation of PAUSE there were no coordinated initiatives in France for the support of researchers at risk or in danger. The Programme therefore responds to a need: that of hundreds of scientists forced into exile who need support and a safe environment to pursue their research. Implementing a programme at the national level to assist scientists in exile safeguards knowledge and research, which benefits the host country, and also ultimately the country of origin and society as a whole.

PAUSE's main mandate is to protect and host researchers and artists who are prevented from pursuing their activities in their country of origin because of the content of their research, a political commitment, their belonging to a minority, or a situation of armed conflict. The Programme co-funds institutions seeking to host a scientist or an artist forced into exile through three calls for applications per year. PhD candidates, researchers or artists can be supported for one year, which is renewable once, or twice for PhD students.

PAUSE assists researchers with identifying a host institution and helps its laureates and their families to access legal assistance and the services to which they are legally entitled in France. In order to help its laureates to achieve a sustainable professional integration, PAUSE offers them group workshops to prepare a career development outside academia

in France, as well as additional funding dedicated to individual training enabling them to improve their skills, follow individualised coaching, and learn French or another language useful for their professional career.

Beyond direct support to its laureates and their host institutions, PAUSE carries out advocacy work to uphold academic freedom and intends to give a voice to researchers and artists at risk through research and artistic projects aiming at documenting and telling their personal and professional narratives.

Since its creation, PAUSE has supported more than 270 researchers and artists thanks to the commitment of nearly 90 French host institutions. Almost half of the laureates are women, a balance the Programme intends to keep.

Nearly 60% of the supported researchers work in the humanities and social sciences, but the Programme is open to all scientific and artistic disciplines. PAUSE also enables PhD candidates to resume their studies: currently, one third of the laureates are doctoral students.

Although Syrian and Turkish researchers still account for two thirds of all PAUSE laureates, the country of origin of the researchers and artists in exile supported by the Programme has tended to be more diverse over the last two years. PAUSE laureates come from sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and South America, representing 33 countries in total.

An inclusive governance, allowing for the representation of key stakeholders

The PAUSE Programme is structured around three committees with each of them having dedicated missions to ensure good representation of the stakeholders. The Executive Committee is composed of representatives of four ministries (Higher Education, Research and Innovation; Interior; Europe and Foreign Affairs; Culture) and of major French research and higher education actors (i.e., research organisations, the rectors conference, the Francophone university agency).

The Committee defines the Programme's orientations and also plays a key role in the selection of PAUSE laureates as it validates all the applications selected by the Scientific Committee. Involving public authorities in the decision-making also facilitates the day-to-day management of the Programme and, therefore, the stay of researchers and artists in exile. For instance, it enabled the implementation of an accelerated procedure for PAUSE laureates' visas and resident permits in partnership with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior.

The Scientific Committee, composed of high-level researchers taking part on a voluntary basis, is responsible for evaluating the applications received. It also advises the Programme on the orientation of the laureates and on the Programme itself.

The Support Committee brings together public figures from the research communities and civil society engaged in the defence of academic and artistic freedom. They are advocates of the cause and can be important channels for fundraising.

Whenever possible, including public authorities in the programme's ideation phase is a significant asset; it can help them to take full ownership of the initiative, which can contribute to making a programme more impactful. In France, support for researchers and artists at risk has a strong political backing. PAUSE Programme has also worked to ensure that administrations are fully involved in the implementation of the Programme, thus ensuring its sustainability even in the face of political change. In countries where the political environment does not allow for State support it is important to gain adherence from leading universities and research institutions or organisations, such as Euraxess, which helps to facilitate the researchers' mobility.

Diversifying sources of funding to expand researchers at risk opportunities

PAUSE carries out its activities with the financial support of public actors, such as the Ministry of Culture or the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. Its main contributor is the Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

In addition to an annual budget to implement the Programme, most of which is dedicated to direct support to host institutions and researchers at risk, the ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation also allocates funding for the Programme's human resources. Research institutions, such as the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), also contribute to the Programme's budget.

Support from public authorities has been key in obtaining two substantial funding streams from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), a European programme implemented in France by the Ministry of Interior. The AMIF contributes to the achievement of EU specific objectives linked to migration, including the legal migration and integration of non-EU nationals; it was under this objective that PAUSE Programme applied for the two funding streams. Projects presented under this application process must be innovative, respond to clearly identified needs, and be supported by a network of actors enabling the implementation of the project. The project coordinators must also have secured funding from other entities, with the AMIF financing up to 75% of the total budget.

These two funds, one granted in 2018 for a year and a half, the second in 2019 for a period of two years, enabled the Programme's budget to be tripled and the team to be doubled. Thanks to the AMIF funding nearly 200 scientists have been hosted and the Programme's activities have expanded, in particular, those favouring the longer-term integration of its laureates, which includes professional integration and communication activities to raise awareness on the issue of scientists and artists in exile.

However, given the target group, support programmes for researchers at risk require a high degree of flexibility and adaptability, and that is sometimes difficult to reconcile with the AMIF timeframe. To limit the financial risk it is necessary to apply to AMIF funding once the selection, hosting, and support procedures have been clearly defined and tested. AMIF funding can contribute to scaling-up a programme, but the management of the fund can be difficult without a sound administrative, operational, and financial structure.

In addition to public funding, the Programme is also supported by private foundations, including the Michelin Corporate Foundation and the Open Society Foundations. Other potential donors may need to be made aware of the issue of academic and artistic freedom – presenting them with clear objectives and specific projects to fund can help, as can the backing of public figures.

The end of the second AMIF funding makes it necessary to diversify funding so that PAUSE Programme can maintain its goal of 100 researchers and artists in exile supported per year. This is why PAUSE now intends to develop its advocacy activities and strengthens the role of the Support Committee in order to secure the necessary funding, especially from the private sector.

Challenges remain

Support to researchers and artists in exile relies on the solidarity of the host institutions. These institutions give funding, time, and resources to welcome new colleagues in their unique circumstances. They help them to adapt to a new country, a new work environment and to rebuild their careers and professional networks after having been forced to flee their country. The hosting, which is mostly based on volunteering, can sometimes be challenging for the institution. Improving hosting by sharing good practices is therefore particularly important at the national level. PAUSE organizes events and training dedicated to host institutions – or at the European level – through the activities of the Inspireurope consortium.

Laureates have recently launched a PAUSE Alumni Network with the support of the Programme. Its aim is to build a community of mutual aid between the former and the new PAUSE laureates and to offer advice on such topics as first steps on arrival, administrative procedures, and exchange of employment opportunities.

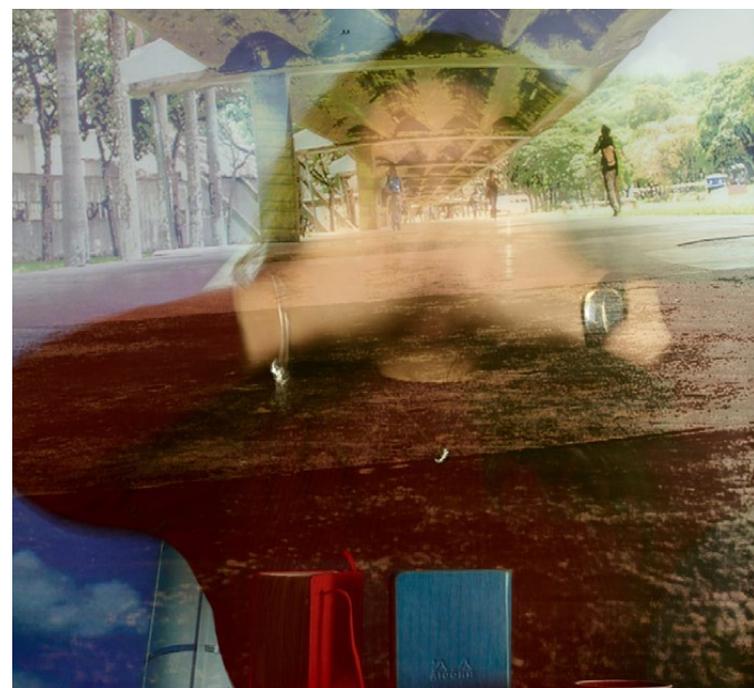
Another shared concern among Inspireurope’s partners is the future of the researchers supported. The highly competitive and limited opportunities within the research and higher education ecosystem in France makes it difficult for PAUSE laureates to find tenured positions in academia. Providing a safe haven

for two years allows scientists in exile to resume their careers, but there is a need to afford them the means to access a sustainable situation when they are no longer supported. Two-thirds of the former PAUSE laureates have benefited from a positive transition and have found another working or training contract; however, long-term professional integration still remains one of the priorities of the Programme.

“Laureates have recently launched a PAUSE Alumni Network with the support of the Programme. Its aim is to build a community of mutual aid between the former and the new PAUSE laureates and to offer advice on such topics as first steps on arrival, administrative procedures, and exchange of employment opportunities.”

-Marion Gues

[RESTRICA project](#) © Pierre-Jérôme Adjedj



Interview conducted in February 2021 with Denis Despréaux, former Head of the European and international Affairs Department at the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation

What was the impetus behind the decision of the Government to implement the PAUSE programme?

The event at the origin of the PAUSE Programme was the Syrian crisis. The situation created a deep emotion within the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. Alerted by his cabinet, the minister himself asked the services of the ministry to develop an action. This is how the PAUSE Programme was created and political support has never wavered since, even after the change of government.

Would you encourage other governments to support similar programmes in other European countries?

Once created, the PAUSE Programme was requested by a large number of researchers in danger whose origins went well beyond the Syrian crisis. It is clear that the fundamental values of freedom of expression and research autonomy are threatened in many places around the world. It is important that European countries offer safe haven for researchers in great difficulties in their own countries. There can be no competition for such initiatives, but rather synergies to jointly defend European values.

What advice would you give your counterparts in other countries interested in supporting similar initiatives in their own countries?

To function well, such a programme must benefit from political support at all levels which makes it possible to mobilize all the ministries concerned, but also the host institutions. This happened naturally in France when the information circulated well. The important point is to warn of the need to create reception arrangements to alleviate

emergency situations. It is also necessary to manage expectations, and ensure it is clear the programme provides urgent, temporary help in order to avoid creating expectations of long-term assistance when the emphasis is on emergency needs. Researchers in danger don't ask for privileges. They only aspire to one thing: be able to carry out their research like any researcher.

Opportunities for researchers at risk in the academic field are limited, which raises the question of long-term professional integration for PAUSE laureates. What can be done to involve companies and the private sector more?

The public service will not be able to absorb all the flows of researchers in danger. It is essential to open the fields of integration in the private sector. Diaspora must play a decisive role in the integration process. The PAUSE Programme must animate these mutual aid networks which should quickly grow.



More information on the PAUSE Programme can be found [here](#).



Country focus: Germany

“It is important to keep in mind that a prospective job for a scholar at risk after the fellowship doesn’t necessarily have to be at a university. We also encourage fellows and their mentors to look for positions in industry and try to support this by facilitating a dialogue with the private sector e.g., at the annual Philipp Schwartz Forum.”

*- Frank Albrecht, Programme Director,
Philipp Schwartz Initiative*

In Germany, the Philipp Schwartz Initiative of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation currently provides up to 50 new fellowships per year. Since its launch in 2015, the Philipp Schwartz Initiative has helped over 300 at-risk academics from 22 countries to find a safe haven at approximately 100 host institutions all over Germany. Funded by the Federal Foreign Office, with additional support from private foundations in its pilot phase, it has become the most significant state-funded support programme for at-risk researchers, together with the PAUSE programme at the Collège de France.

Twice a year, universities and research institutions in Germany can nominate at-risk researchers for one of 25 grants. If successful, the host institution receives a grant that fully covers a 2-year research fellowship or employment contract on the PostDoc level. Sponsorship can be extended by a third year under a co-financing model. In addition, the host institution is granted an allowance of €20,000 per hosted scholar.

Additionally, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation has created a platform that connects Philipp Schwartz Fellows, other researchers at risk, academic mentors, host institution representatives, and partner organisations active on a national as well as an international level, for example at the annual Philipp Schwartz Forum.

Together with a Steering Group, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation also coordinates and develops SAR Germany, the German section of the Scholars at Risk Network, which has grown from 3 to almost 50 member institutions since the launch of the Philipp Schwartz Initiative.

Interview with Frank Albrecht, Programme Director of the Philipp Schwartz Initiative

What was the impetus for establishing the Initiative?

As a promoter of internationally mobile researchers and international academic collaboration, and as a stakeholder of German foreign cultural and education policy, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation had already in the past addressed the issue of support for persecuted researchers. It had established links to the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF), the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR) and the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA) – some of which had originated as a reaction to the National-Socialist regime in Germany in the 1930s and 40s. Despite the historical responsibility, no such programme existed in Germany. The Humboldt Foundation has a long tradition of supporting Humboldtians from oppressive states, creating paths to at least temporary freedom. But it was only in 2015, when the waves of forced migration from South to North reached Europe that the Federal Foreign Office and the Foundation jointly developed and launched a programme specifically geared towards researchers at risk: The Philipp Schwartz Initiative. In its early stages, the programme was supported to a significant degree by funds from private foundations, but the German Bundestag ensured that the programme was robustly underwritten, guaranteeing short term support in 2016 and 2017, and securing permanent funding from 2018 onwards.

What were lessons learnt from establishing the Philipp Schwartz Initiative? What advice would you give new initiatives for researchers at risk or those interested in establishing such initiatives in other countries or regions?

Looking back, three aspects were particularly helpful when we established the Philipp Schwartz Initiative:

Firstly, bringing as many perspectives as sensible on board: In the concept phase, it was important for us to have frank discussions with three experienced partner organisations – SAR, CARA

and IIE-SRF – which share the same goals but may have complementary perspectives on how to attain them.

Secondly, getting host institutions on board: The potential host institutions are among the most important stakeholders and should be involved at an early stage. We discussed our ideas with a few trusted representatives in what we call “reality checks” and understood early on that, while at-risk scholars are of course at the heart of the programme, we would need to consider institutions just as much; that we would achieve much more together, if there was a sense of ownership by the host institutions. As a collective, the host institution’s input is among the most important for us, especially that of the project managers and the academic mentors. This is why SAR Germany has been essential from the beginning: as a forum for discussion, as a sounding board, as advisors, and of course as important host institutions.

Thirdly, building coalitions: International partners are essential for mutual learning and support. We were particularly lucky to have the Federal Foreign Office’s support, because, in addition to institutional funding, they are a key source of advice and sometimes even practical help on behalf of individual scholars. We are grateful that we can rely on a robust network of partner organizations committed to similar goals and values, many of which are part of the Inspireurope consortium today.

Do you work with the private sector when it comes to supporting researchers at risk?

Many Philipp Schwartz Fellows have in the past been forced to conduct research under sub-optimum conditions, and all of them had their lives disrupted dramatically. Obviously, this is a big disadvantage in the fiercely competitive academic employment market. That is why Fellows need to keep an open mind and develop prospects both within and outside academia. This frequently means a difficult reassessment of expectations, and often saying goodbye to long-cherished dreams. But it is important to start planning for the time after the Philipp Schwartz Fellowship from the very first day.

At the Foundation, we provide funding for career development measures. But it is actually the academic mentors who play the key role – they open doors to academic and professional networks, act as coaches, convey realistic expectations, identify appropriate advanced training, and provide advice from a position of broad experience. It is important to keep in mind that a prospective job for a scholar at risk after the fellowship doesn’t necessarily have to be at a university. We also encourage Fellows and their mentors to look for positions in industry and try to support this by facilitating a dialogue with the private sector e.g., at the annual Philipp Schwartz Forum.



Alexander von Humboldt
 Stiftung / Foundation

More information on the Philipp Schwartz Initiative can be found [here](#).

Further Initiatives, Networks and Programmes in Germany:

Following the establishment of the Philipp Schwartz Initiative in 2016, numerous other programmes and activities have been launched on a national or a regional level. Some are introduced below.

Programme for Students at Risk:

Hilde Domin Programme

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) administers the scholarship programme “**Hilde Domin Programme**” with funds from the Federal Foreign Office (AA). The programme serves to support students and doctoral candidates from across the globe, who are at risk of being formally or de facto denied educational or other rights in their country of origin, and to provide these students and doctoral candidates with an opportunity to begin or complete a study or research degree at a higher education institution in Germany.

Initiatives, Networks and Programmes for Scholars at Risk:

SAR Germany

SAR Germany, the German Section of the global Scholars at Risk Network, is coordinated by a steering group chaired by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation who also hosts the secretariat for the section. At present, it comprises almost 50 member institutions. **The section also includes five regional networks.**

Baden-Württemberg Fund for Persecuted Scholars

In cooperation with the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund, **the Baden-Württemberg Fund** provides fellowships for researchers under threat, allowing them to continue their academic activities at universities and research institutions in Baden-Württemberg.

Scholarship Programmes of the States/Länder for At-Risk Scholars

The States of Bremen, Hamburg and Hessen have the following scholarship programmes which support scholars at risk:

<https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/research/support-for-researchers/calls/fellowship-programme-for-at-risk-scholars/>

<https://www.uni-hamburg.de/en/internationales/wissenschaft/gefahrdete-forschende.html>

http://www.fluechtlinge-an-hochschulen.hessen.de/front_content.php?idart=791&changelang=19

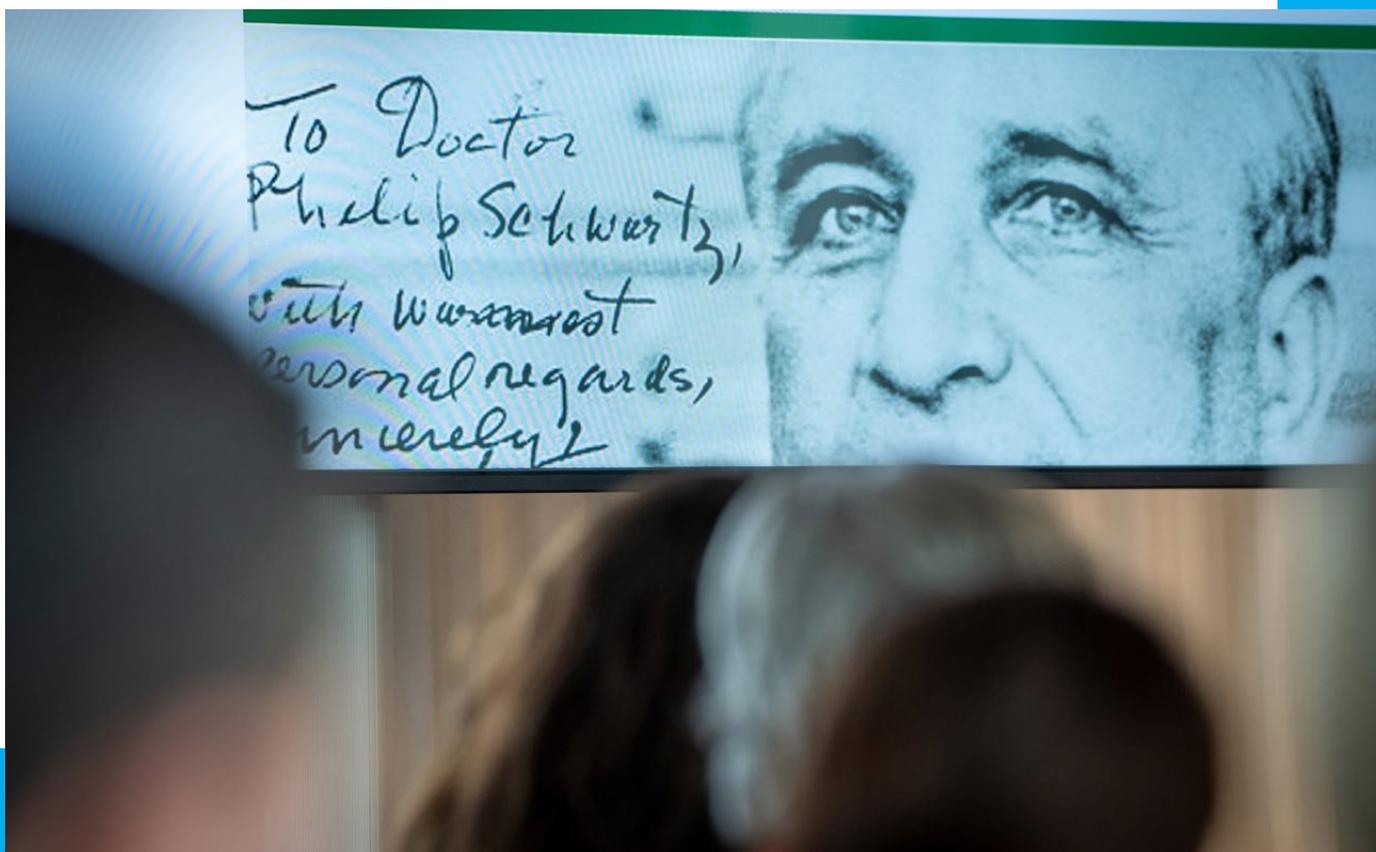
Scientific Integration Initiative

To make it easier for refugees to enter the labour market, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, the Leibniz Association, the Max Planck Society and the Helmholtz Association have launched a joint initiative. The various institutes and centres offer different sponsorship opportunities, including work experience, trainee positions and jobs as student research assistants. For more information, please contact the individual regional institutes and centres.

Academy in Exile

Academy in Exile offers scholars who are threatened in their home countries because of their academic or civic engagement for human rights, peace and democracy the opportunity to resume their research abroad. It is a joint initiative of the Institute for Turkish Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen, the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) Essen and the Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin.

[Philipp Schwartz Forum 2020 ©Humboldt Foundation/David Ausserhofer](#)



Einstein Foundation Berlin

The **Einstein Foundation** offers two temporary programmes (Einstein Guest Professorships and Einstein Junior Scholarships) in order to enable researchers who are experiencing constraints in their work to come to Berlin for up to two years to pursue their research without undue restrictions or threats. The following institutions are eligible to apply: Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin, Universität der Künste Berlin and Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin.

Academics in Solidarity (AiS)

Academics in Solidarity is a peer-mentoring program that connects exiled researchers and established scholars in Germany, Lebanon and Jordan. It seeks to create a network of solidarity, strengthen the value of cross-cultural research cooperation and open up new perspectives within the academic environment of the host country. The project is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

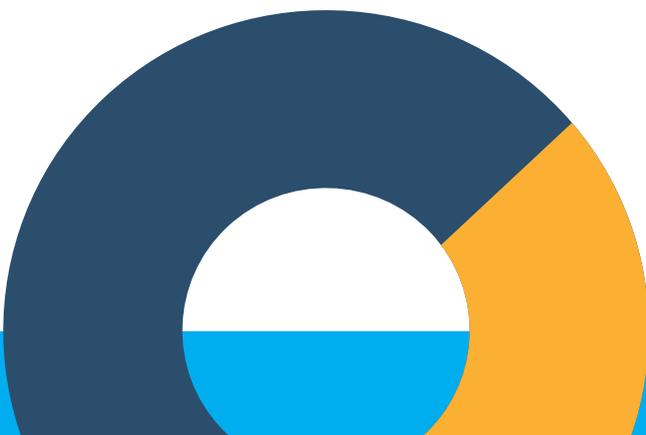
“Chance for Science”, Leipzig University

The “**Chance for Science**” online platform helps to mediate contacts between researchers and students under threat, who are seeking sanctuary in Germany, and specialist colleagues and scientific institutions

Off-University

Off-University aims to bring together people and institutions that share a commitment to global peace as a defining ideal and the vision of a less hierarchical, more democratic and free academia.

The above links are also provided in the **Inspireurope’s compendium of resources**.





Country focus: Greece

“The workshop succeeded in raising awareness on specific actions and measures (e.g., adjusting employment requirements, creating funding opportunities) necessary for promoting employment of at-risk researchers in Greek HEIs. As an immediate result AUTH announced that it would provide a one-year scholarship for a researcher at risk to commence in 2021.”

- Alexandros Triantafyllidis, Associate Professor at the School of Biology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

As an organised academic response to the refugee crisis of recent years, in 2016 Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) became coordinator of the **S.U.C.RE. project** (Supporting University Community pathways for REfugees-migrants). S.U.C.R.E. was a two-year KA2 Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership in the field of Higher Education granted by the Hellenic National Agency via the European Commission. The consortium also included the University of Cologne, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) and the Greek Council for Refugees. One of its main aims was to build the necessary guidelines and training material to facilitate the smooth integration of refugee students and scholars in Higher Education and society. In part as a result of that project, the governing rector committee of AUTH decided in 2018 to become a member of the Scholars at Risk Network, the first such Greek university partner of SAR. In 2019, AUTH joined forces with 9 other partners in Europe in the Inspireurope project. In June 2021, Greek higher education institutions established a Scholars at Risk Greece section to coordinate activities across Greece in support of scholars and to promote academic freedom, with a public launch planned for October 2021.

Interview with Alexandros Triantafyllidis, Associate Professor at the School of Biology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

What are your hopes for the future of support for researchers at risk in Greece?

In the framework of the Inspireurope project, AUTH organised its first outreach workshop on September 30, 2020. This hybrid workshop brought together over 100 academics, higher education institution representatives, NGOs, high-ranking EU and national officials, representatives of professional/industry associations and refugees with high academic qualifications from Greece and other European countries to share experience and discuss existing challenges as well as good practices in supporting researchers at risk with an emphasis on the current situation in Greek universities. The workshop succeeded in raising awareness on specific actions and measures (e.g.,

adjusting employment requirements, creating funding opportunities) necessary for promoting employment of at-risk researchers in Greek HEIs. As an immediate result AUTH announced that it would provide a one-year scholarship for a researcher at risk to commence in 2021. This is the first such scholarship in a Greek university.

Additionally, during October 2020, SAR Europe and AUTH co-hosted an online meeting with Greek universities (continuing the work that had started in 2018 under the SUCRE Erasmus KA2 Project), to explore forming a SAR Greece Section. The meeting included 29 participants from 12 Greek higher education institutions as well as NGOs. There was considerable interest amongst participants in forming a SAR Greece section, and a good understanding of the benefits of organising at the national level in terms of pooling resources and expertise and obtaining a stronger voice. Following the meeting, the University of the Aegean, the Ionian University and the University of Thessaly have now joined Aristotle University in the SAR network and a SAR Greece section has been formed since 1st June 2021. At least six additional Greek universities have expressed their keen interest in joining as well. At the 96th Synod of Greek Universities' Rectors (April 22, 2021) SAR and its aims were presented and the effort was very positively received, as confirmed by the Synod's related press release. Under this framework, AUTH will organise an event on October 1, 2021 to mark the official launch of the SAR Greece section. Therefore, Greek higher education institutions have been slowly but surely motivated to support at-risk scholars; we are hopeful that more specific actions will soon follow.

Have you had interactions with other national programmes or initiatives for supporting researchers at risk? Has this transnational/bilateral cooperation been useful in advancing your efforts at home?

Yes of course! During the October 2020 online meeting with Greek universities, Francesca Helm, Assistant Professor of English and Translation at the University of Padova, Italy, Co-coordinator of SAR Italy, and member of the steering committee, gave an illuminating account of SAR Italy's

experience. And, of course we have been lucky to have continuous contact with our partners from the Inspireurope project, such as the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, PAUSE Programme at the Collège de France, University of Oslo and the University of Gothenburg – all with strong experience in such efforts. **For example, we have now prepared an extended site guide to welcome the first at-risk scholar to AUTH** and their guidance and ideas have been extremely valuable.

It should also be stressed that we are in close contact with our Inspireurope partners from Jagiellonian University who are also slowly building resources for Scholars at Risk in Poland and therefore we share our challenges as well as ideas.

Do you intend to encourage private sector involvement in your country in supporting researchers at risk?

Our September outreach workshop had a specific session on “Preparing the work environment in the non-academic sector” which we believe succeeded in launching discussions with high-level government officials and representatives from the private sector on the value and possible modes of the private sector’s active involvement in facilitating researchers’ employment outside academia. Mr Gr. Dimitriadis, (then) Secretary General for International Economic Affairs in the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Chairman of the Board Enterprise Greece, stressed the Government’s position for the benefits of diversity within a working environment, and that inclusion of researchers at risk can play a vital role in economic development by producing innovation and generating talent to business. Mr. S. Ignatiadis, General Director of Greek Exporters Association (SEVE), spoke about how international businesses could be enhanced via innovation and more specifically, how export companies can benefit from researchers at risk. These are two specific examples for points of contact that we soon plan to pursue.

What are some of the obstacles you are encountering in advancing these efforts at the national level in Greece? In what ways can other national or international networks

or programmes be helpful in tackling these obstacles together?

It is clear that more national fellowship programmes are needed in Europe as well as jobs in the private sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has hindered our efforts to meet high-level officials within Greek Ministries (Foreign affairs, Internal affairs, Migration), the National Agency for Scholarships, DAAD Greece, as well as the private sector. We are however hopeful that at least within our Greek academic environment there has been some progress. As physical movement hopefully becomes easier in the coming months more in-person meetings will be implemented. We are also planning the second outreach workshop in Greece in 2022 with the aim to mobilise forces in the larger Balkan area and beyond to the East. AUTH is a leading academic institution of the South-Eastern Europe, the Black Sea, and the Eastern Mediterranean. We will therefore strengthen our role and impact through extended networking with such partners as i) the **Balkan Universities Association (BUA)**, ii) the **Association of Economic Universities of South and Eastern Europe and the Black Sea Region (ASECU)**, where the Dean of the AUTH Faculty of Economic and Political Sciences, Assoc. Professor Grigoris Zarotiadis, is the Vice-President, iii) the **Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN)**, iv) and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Black Sea. Part of the activities of the SDSN Black Sea is the establishment of an Observatory for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) where issues such as support for activities to support at-risk scholars and academic freedom are also included. These activities of AUTH will definitely raise awareness with key stakeholders in Southern Europe of opportunities to support researchers at risk.

More information about the initiative can be found in the **Researchers at Risk Welcome Guide to Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**.



ARISTOTLE
 UNIVERSITY OF
 THESSALONIKI



Country focus: **Ireland**

“Ireland is a small country and at-risk scholars often need both a university community and a personal community. Being able to link people across all universities is essential.”

- Rowena Pecchenino, Professor of Economics, Maynooth University and Chair of SAR Ireland

Activities in Ireland to support researchers at risk have been primarily undertaken within the framework of the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR). The SAR Ireland section was formed as a partnership between Universities Ireland and the Scholars at Risk Network in 2009. Since that time the following seven universities have hosted at least 16 at-risk scholars: National University of Ireland Galway, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Queen's University Belfast, Trinity College Dublin, University College Cork, University College Dublin, and University of Limerick. The at-risk scholars have come from Iran and Iraq, among other countries. As secretariat of the SAR Ireland section, Universities Ireland contributes to the costs of hosting at-risk scholars and organising events to promote academic freedom.

Interview with Rowena Pecchenino, Professor of Economics, Maynooth University and Chair of SAR Ireland

What key lessons have been learned by SAR Ireland since its establishment in 2009? What has worked well and what have been some of the challenges?

The major challenge has been translating statements of support from university leaders into concrete initiatives to support researchers at risk, in part due to the lack of ongoing funding to support meaningful participation by Irish universities in this work. Thus far, there has been limited joint action taken, but this is in the process of being rectified. It is very difficult to organise a steering committee across all the universities in Ireland where there is limited dedicated administrative support for SAR Ireland's work and generally no recognised departmental home for the SAR programme within the individual universities.

What has worked very well is the support we have received from SAR's offices and liaising with other SAR sections in Europe. Since these are established bodies with resources and experience, they are most helpful as we pursue various initiatives. We have also been extremely fortunate in receiving high-level moral support for our work as demonstrated in the acceptance by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins of our invitations to provide two keynote addresses at SAR Ireland events, in 2016, and 2021.

What advice would you give new initiatives for researchers at risk or those interested in establishing such initiatives in other countries and regions?

I would strongly recommend joining SAR since the central infrastructure already exists. However, active support from local sources, especially from university presidents and rectors is needed as funding is a critical component of any initiative.

Could you provide some concrete examples of how institutions in Ireland are working together to support at-risk scholars and researchers?



Our focus has been on informing the local community of the challenges faced by at-risk scholars and researchers. This approach became the only one when the pandemic made it impossible to invite scholars to campus as post-docs, students or even speakers. We hope to invite one or more scholars to Ireland next year as post-docs or in temporary academic positions, but this will depend on the availability of adequate funding and other supports, such as mental health services.

Can you describe the value and importance of coordinating with other institutions within Ireland to support researchers at risk?

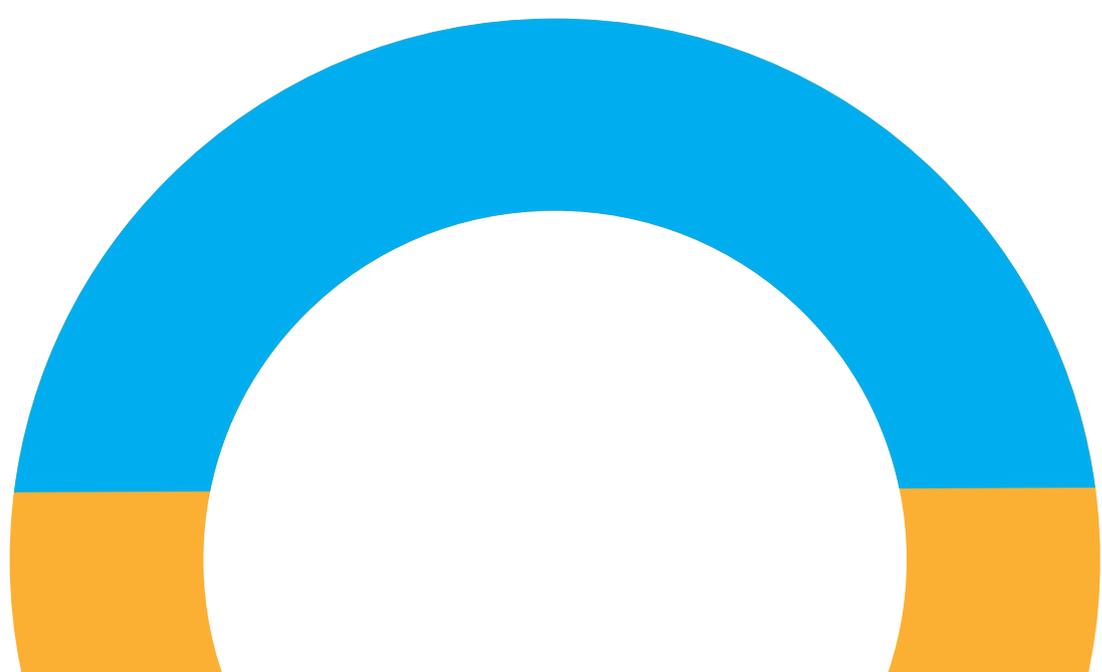
Ireland is a small country and at-risk scholars often need both a university community and a personal community. Being able to link people across all universities is essential. Our intention is to request joint funding of scholars from all SAR university members, so while a scholar will have an appointment at an individual university that scholar will be a SAR Ireland funded scholar. Also, by coordinating across all universities a match that is best for the scholar can be achieved.

Do you have advice for other national initiatives for at-risk scholars and researchers?

If there are existing initiatives, work collaboratively with them to provide complementary services. Do not recreate the wheel. Most importantly, make sure that there is a source of certain and recurrent funding across the nation that is available to all participants in the national section. It is essential to know this before scholars can be invited.

SCHOLARS AT RISK
NETWORK   IRELAND SECTION

More information on SAR Ireland activities can be found [here](#).





Country focus: **Italy**

“Support also implies giving visibility to the scientific work of the researchers in ways that are agreed with the researchers. To this end, the organisation of Speakers Series and the involvement of at-risk scholars in the European Researchers’ Night have proved to be valuable venues of scientific encounter and debate within and beyond higher education communities.”

- Ester Gallo, Associate Professor in Social Anthropology, University of Trento; SAR Referent and Co- coordinator of SAR Italy

Activities at the national level in Italy to support researchers at risk are primarily within the framework of the Scholars at Risk Network. SAR Italy was created in 2019 under the initiative of the University of Padova and the University of Trento, and is a partnership between Italian higher education institutions and research centres and SAR. It currently has 28 members (universities, research institutes and scientific associations), and 4 universities are in the process of joining the network. SAR Italy works with six host institutions; a total of 7 at-risk scholars were supported in 2020 coming from Turkey, Iran, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Central Africa.

SAR Italy plans to initiate a dialogue with the Italian Rectors Conference, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of University towards the establishment of a national fellowship programme.

Interview with Ester Gallo, Associate Professor in Social Anthropology, University of Trento; SAR Referent and Co-coordinator of SAR Italy

What was the impetus for the establishment of SAR Italy?

The impetus came in late 2016 or early 2017 when many academics from Turkey were seeking assistance following the government crackdown on civil society after a failed coup attempt in July 2016. Some colleagues from the Universities of Padova and Trento met for a seminar in Padova in April 2017 to discuss the situation and started to promote the membership within SAR Network and to plan the creation of a national section. Meanwhile different requests of information about SAR were coming from other interested universities in Italy.

What is the nature of the support provided for researchers at risk in Italy?

Since 2018, SAR Italy members (Padova, Trento, Scuola Normale Superiore, Scuola Sant'Anna di Pisa, Milano Statale, Roma 'La Sapienza) have started to host at-risk scholars from different countries. The types of contract ranges from research fellowship (Assegno di Ricerca), to research contract, and to visiting fellowship – and the duration is between 3 to 24 months (most often 12 months). As for yearly fellowships, the average (gross) amount is between 24,000 Euros to 38,000 Euros. The university also provides for health insurance, relocation costs and research funding. In some cases, the hosting institution provides the scholar and her/his family with free accommodation.

The university supports scholars through an administrative mentor, who guides the scholars in the bureaucratic work, and an academic mentor, who is responsible to enhance the inclusion in the scientific community at different levels (local, national, international). SAR Italy is currently working on a National Vademecum (Handbook) which provides key information about national immigration laws, paperwork, travelling, and



mentoring both to hosting institutions as well as scholars. The network has not yet developed shared support strategies to support scholars with career development: this issue remains in the hands of individual host institutions through their research and career offices. Nonetheless, SAR Italy is planning for the autumn of 2021 to implement national support services through a training programme about career development. This initiative will be carried out in the context of a collaboration between rectors' conferences in Italy and Sweden in partnership with SAR Italy and SAR Sweden. Aspects that will be addressed in this series of seminars include networking and professional engagement, curriculum enhancing, foster international teaching partnerships and collaborations.

How do institutions in your country work together to support at-risk scholars and researchers?

They do so, for example through circulation of the scholar's CV and research statement within the network to make their research more visible, encouraging involvement in academic activities, setting the ground for future employment possibilities and by providing the scholar with the practical information to help their integration into society and culture.

Support also implies giving visibility to the scientific work of the researchers in ways that are agreed with the researchers. To this end, the organisation of Speakers Series and the involvement of at-risk scholars in the European Researchers' Night have proved to be valuable venues of scientific encounter and debate within and beyond higher education communities.

It should also be noted that at-risk scholars and researchers outside of the country who retain strong ties to Italy through citizenship, residence, or university affiliation also receive support from Italian institutions and associations. A good example in this regard is the case of Patrick George Zaki, an Egyptian postgraduate student who attended the University of Bologna and was arrested in Egypt in 2020, where he is still detained. There have been various campaigns for Zaki's release through SAR Italy and our Student

Advocacy Seminars, as well as an appeal launched with the Conference of Italian University Rectors (Cruì).

What were the key lessons learned by SAR Italy since its establishment, what has worked well and what have been some of the challenges?

The network is of key importance in a context where none of its members had prior experience in the above-mentioned fields. Regular meetings among the steering committee and the assembly constitute important occasions to discuss and decide how to better support scholars, how to organise advocacy campaign, and how to disseminate knowledge about academic freedom. Fundamental to all activities has been the Coordinating group of SAR Italy that has guaranteed sustained communication, information flows, activities ideation, design and implementation.

For each member of the steering committee, and the network in general, SAR-related work adds to a heavy academic and administrative workload. In many universities our SAR commitment is still conceived as voluntarily work, and it is difficult to find adequate administrative and organisational support. One way to address this problem is to establish in each member institution a working group composed of researchers, administrative staff and students and to distribute tasks among them. It is advisable that the group establish a dialogue with the international office and that it creates internship opportunities for students.

It is also important to consider that not all member institutions and their representatives are aware of the necessary measures that need to be adopted to respect the security concerns and privacy of at-risk scholars. The latter may continue to be at risk in relocation countries, and the violations of their privacy and security can have consequences for their family members, colleagues, or students who stayed back. It is advisable that before inviting a scholar to seminars or other public events the involved institutions consult with each other and the scholars in question to arrange the necessary measures. It helps also considering a 'training' webinar for the national networks about security concerns and privacy protection.

What advice would you give new initiatives for researchers at risk or those interested in establishing such initiatives in other countries/regions?

1. Create a protection working group at the national level that is constituted by representatives of different members of the network.
2. Create a support working group at the university level that is constituted of academics, administrative staff, and at-risk researchers.
3. Develop communication and training activities with and for the academic community, including administrators and students, around the fact that hosting an at-risk scholar is not a matter of charity or humanitarian work, but of scientific solidarity and inclusion. To this end, the existence of a working group within hosting institutions enhances the possibility of spreading information about the project and of creating an academic environment that is more receptive to the opportunities involved in protection and hosting in terms of mutual exchange.
4. Work with civil society organizations or non-governmental organizations and exchange good practices and information about academic freedom-related issues.

Is there good political support in Italy for efforts to support researchers at risk?

There is certainly the need for national-level policy or political support. So far, the National Conference of Italian Rectors (CRUI) has been supportive, and we do expect that CRUI will also work in the near future as an intermediary between SAR Italy and the Ministry of Higher Education (MIUR) and the Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation (MAECI) on the institutionalisation of a national protection fellowship program. Our relations with the National Networks of Italian Universities for Peace (Runipace) and with UNHCR are relevant at political and policy levels.

Is there any private sector involvement in your country in supporting researchers at risk?

The private sector is so far involved at local and regional levels and in dialogue with specific members of the network.

There is, for example, the Associazione Amici della Scuola Normale Superiore, which is a free association founded in 1990 between organizations and companies to encourage the introduction of innovative elements into the Scuola Normale Superiore. In particular, through its structure and initiatives promoted over the years in various sectors, the Association aims to develop a permanent connection between the economic and business world and the Scuola Normale, and between applied and pure research.

Secondly, in 2021, the Coordination of Bank Foundations in Northeastern Italy has supported universities in the Regions of Veneto, Trentino-Adige and Friuli-Venezia Giulia to co-fund one fellowship for at-risk scholar.

SCHOLARS AT RISK

NETWORK  ITALY SECTION

More information on SAR Italy activities can be found [here](#).



Country focus: Netherlands

“At the UAF we strongly believe that researchers at risk, like other researchers in Europe, have talent, do good research, and can offer their knowledge. If a university trusts them and gives them a chance to show what they can do, they produce good work. We are convinced that anyone who can use their knowledge can make a meaningful contribution to the Dutch society.”

- Ewing Amadi Salumu, Programme Counsellor, UAF

The Foundation for Refugee Students (UAF) has been providing support to refugee students and professionals in their studies and in finding suitable employment on the Dutch labour market since 1948. It is the oldest refugee organisation of the Netherlands. In 2009, the UAF partnered with SAR to launch SAR Netherlands and eighteen higher education institutions are members of the SAR network. Since 2009, UAF has supervised and advised researchers at risk. The Foundation has supported refugee and at-risk researchers with information and advice, guidance modules (such as preparation for research application, intercultural communication, job application), and financial support. The UAF also encourages placement inside universities. The duration depends on the contract signed between the university and the scholar, which is usually between one and three years. Every year 25 to 35 researchers are supported by the UAF. Since 2009 the organisation has supported more than 220 researchers at risk. From 2015 the number of researchers at risk from Syria and Turkey has increased. The UAF also supports researchers from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan and African countries such as Burundi, Rwanda, and Congo.

Interview with Ewing Amadi Salumu, Programme Counsellor, UAF, and Saskia Furrer, Regional Manager, UAF:

What was the impetus for the establishment of UAF's efforts for at-risk researchers?

At the UAF we strongly believe that researchers at risk, like other researchers in Europe, have talent, do good research, and can offer their knowledge. If a university trusts them and gives them a chance to show what they can do, they produce good work. We are convinced that anyone who can use their knowledge can make a meaningful contribution to the Dutch society. That is why we make such an effort to assist them. We advise refugees based on our knowledge and experience, and build bridges between refugees, educational institutions, (local) governments and employers.

How are institutions in the Netherlands working together to support at-risk scholars and researchers?

Universities provide financial assistance for living and guidance on work and career development. In addition, the VU in Amsterdam was in the EU-funded SUCRE project to support researchers at risk. The University of Utrecht has an Inclusion programme for refugee students and researchers at risk. The universities, together with UAF, do some training in intercultural communication in order to help researchers to integrate. And UAF offers referrals for legal assistance and psychosocial advice.

What advice would you give new initiatives for researchers at risk or those interested in establishing such initiatives in other countries or regions?

There are a number of things to do and these include: fundraising for hosting; lobbying for researchers at risk; outreach and awareness raising around researchers at risk; managing the expectations of researchers at risk; providing intercultural communication training; and, as applicable, providing academic English training, including with regards to publishing.



Is there good political support for work to provide assistance to researchers at risk in The Netherlands?

The Dutch Research Council (NWO) is working together with UAF and De Jonge Akademie on the programme **Hestia: Impulse for Refugees in Science**. Through this programme the Dutch government supports candidates with refugee status who are already lawfully resident in the Netherlands and also naturalised Dutch citizens who previously possessed a temporary asylum residence permit:

Another form of support is the **NWO Talent Programme**, which offers personal grants to talented, creative researchers:

There is also the programme **Mozaïek 2.0**, which is a Ph.D scholarship programme aimed at the underrepresented group of graduates with a migration background from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Turkey in the Netherlands:

Is there any private sector involvement in your country in supporting researchers at risk?

Companies are not yet supporting researchers at risk officially but there are companies supporting refugee students and professionals. Some researchers are working within companies, and we try to engage with them in order to formalise these types of agreements.



More information on UAF may be found [here](#).

The background features abstract geometric shapes in blue and orange. At the top, there is a blue circle with a white segment. Below it, a large orange shape with a blue border curves around the left side of the page. The main text is positioned to the right of these shapes.

Country focus: Norway

“We circulate information on researchers at risk in need of a new placement; this can enable scholars to find a new institution in Norway rather than being required to move to yet another country to find opportunities.”

- Marit Egner, Senior Adviser in the Office for International Relations and Research Support, University of Oslo (UiO)

SAR Norway, the Norwegian section of Scholars at Risk (SAR), was launched in 2011 following the mobilisation of Norwegian academics and students, particularly the organisation called Students and Academics International Assistance Fund. The network brings together all Norwegian universities, as well as several public and private higher education institutions. In addition, the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions, the Researchers Union and SAIH are associated members.

SAR Norway provides information, advice and referrals as well as networking opportunities for researchers at risk. The hosting institutions have to provide for all costs. Despite limited financial capacity, the members of SAR Norway support 10 to 15 researchers at risk each year. Among the 19 members of the network, 11 have already hosted researchers, including from Turkey, Syria, Yemen, Iran and Eritrea.

Interview with Marit Egner, Senior Adviser in the Office for International Relations and Research Support, University of Oslo (UiO)

What key lessons have been learned by Norwegian institutions involved in support efforts, what has worked well and what have been some of the challenges?

We have had a very good cooperation between the member institutions including thematic meetings twice a year, advice to each other on hosting as well as mobility of researchers at risk between the member institutions. One of the biggest challenges is to secure enough time to do the support work. Another one is to manage to attract external funding from ministries or other entities to support fellowships for the researchers at risk. So far, we have received two externally funded fellowships from the ministries, while the institutions covered 43 fellowships from their own budgets during a period of 10 years.

What advice would you give new initiatives for researchers at risk or those interested in establishing such initiatives in other countries/regions?

I think firstly, you have to identify and bring together the institutions interested. Then, you have to speak with existing networks in other countries to learn from them. Thirdly, try to get the national government interested.

How are institutions in Norway working together to support at-risk scholars and researchers?

We organise events twice a year to share experience and discuss relevant topics within the network.

We circulate information on researchers at risk in need of a new placement; this can enable scholars to find a new institution in Norway rather than being required to move to yet another country to find opportunities. We also have teamed up to work on advocacy and to try to attract further funding for fellowships.



What are the value and importance of coordinating with other institutions within your country to support researchers at risk?

The most important aspect is being able to offer researchers at risk the opportunity to stay in Norway for more than two years. Good communication within the network is key in this regard. The SAR Norway Steering Group can discuss issues and be a contact point for all the members. Since each institution normally has one dedicated staff part time, and the rest of the work is distributed on many different academic environments, it is important to have the institutional contacts to discuss challenges and solutions with.

Do you have any comments on the policy environment in Norway as it relates to efforts to support researchers at risk?

We do experience a general political support, and there is a growing interest in issues related to academic freedom. To some extent, there is support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Education and Research, but not much when it comes to actual economic support to researchers at risk. The Norwegian MFA is however offering scholarships to Students at Risk (50 scholarships granted since 2012).

Is there any private sector involvement in your country in supporting researchers at risk?

Up to now, we have no private sector involvement, except funding from Fritt Ord, a private foundation whose aim is to support freedom of expression and a free press. We hope to engage more with the private sector in the coming years.

SCHOLARS AT RISK
NETWORK  NORWAY SECTION

More information on SAR Norway can be found **here**.



Country focus: Poland

“Authoritarian regimes often consider academics as the main challenge for their power. This is dangerous not only for individual careers, but for the future of the university as a global community searching for truth.”

-Beata Kowalska, Associate Professor of Sociology, Jagiellonian University

The Inspireurope project includes a strong focus on outreach to Central and Eastern Europe, beginning with a focus on Poland and expanding this year to a broader regional focus. An outreach workshop held in January 2020 at Jagiellonian University brought together 50 attendees from 13 universities from the main Polish academic centres: Gdansk, Poznań, Bydgoszcz, Warsaw, Lublin, Wrocław, Olsztyn, Białystok as well as from universities in the city: Pedagogical University, University of Economics and University of Science and Technology. There were also representatives of NGOs and local authorities. Participants explored ways to build a culture of welcome at Polish universities, noting that the idea of solidarity was at the core of Polish freedom and that municipal programmes such as the International Cities of Refuge Network in Krakow provide potential entry points to build on. Several of the contact points present were previous participants in meetings/ events hosted by the Villa Decius Association in Krakow to discuss forming a SAR Poland section. Progress towards a more formal national-level network is meeting some obstacles, but it is hoped that the October event mentioned below will help to reinvestigate efforts.

In 2018 and 2019 the Jagiellonian University Kraków, with the support of other institutions, organised short seminars conducted by researchers at risk. In the 2020 academic year, the first researcher at risk was hosted at Jagiellonian University. In October 2021, Jagiellonian University will host an online regional workshop to share knowledge and experiences of supporting researchers at risk. The workshop will include a session on national-level initiatives and will be a means for people already experienced in national-level organising to share experiences with those across Eastern Europe and beyond interested in setting up new initiatives to support researchers at risk.

Interview with Beata Kowalska, Associate Professor of Sociology, Jagiellonian University

What are your activities in advancing your efforts to support researchers at risk?

We spend a lot of time informing about the goals and activities of organisations such as Scholars and Risk and the Inspireurope project to support researchers at risk, for instance by speaking to representatives from other Polish universities. We receive very good media coverage and I hope that it will bring more institutions to become involved. With regard to other initiatives, we are in contact with Academics for Peace and Birarada, and we are working on common initiatives. We have also tried to encourage the private sector and contacted companies of different types to work with us here in Kraków, unfortunately without much success; it is challenging to do more without greater administrative support and with academic obligations.



What are some of the obstacles you are encountering in advancing these efforts at the national level in your country?

There are several obstacles, the first of which is limited financial resources. There is an unfavourable political atmosphere with regard to migration, and also added turbulence due to reform of the higher education system. Most importantly, we need the support of international institutions in defending academic freedom in Poland now.

Why are you personally involved in efforts to protect researchers and promote academic freedom?

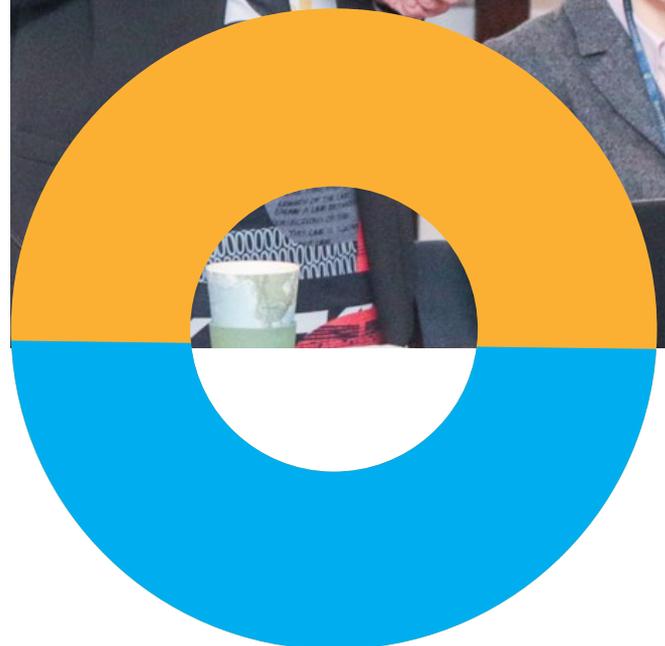
I strongly believe that academic freedom is not only the core of the idea of university, but also the core of democratic societies. Authoritarian regimes often consider academics as the main challenge for their power. This is dangerous not only for individual careers, but for the future of the university as a global community searching for truth. My engagement also has a personal dimension. For political reasons, in the 1980s I was banned from leaving the country, and my academic career was under constant threat.



JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY
IN KRAKÓW

More information on Jagiellonian University can be found **here**.

[Inspireurope workshop, 9 January 2020](#)





Country focus: Slovakia

“You have to collaborate with NGOs and the civic sector, because they have impact, they are more flexible, and have broader experience with finding donors. The most crucial aim of the SAR Slovakia section is to make a greater impact on those who will be helping scholars at risk in the future: public figures and individuals have the voice of change”

-Dr. Viera Žúborová, Executive Director of the Bratislava Policy Institute



The establishment of SAR Slovakia came at a time of growing concern around academic freedom in Eastern Europe. Launched in 2019, SAR Slovakia brings together seven universities and associations across the country. The section is coordinated by the Bratislava Policy Institute (BPI), which acts as the secretariat of SAR Slovakia during a three-year pilot phase.

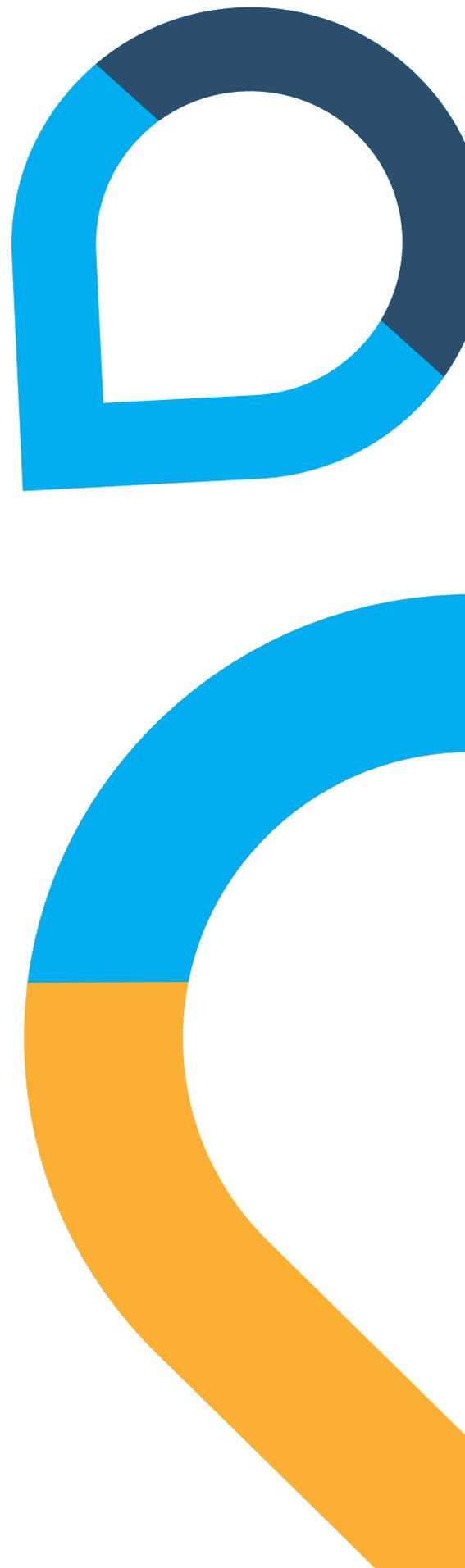
SAR Slovakia currently has no capacity to provide fellowships or any other type of material support. The SAR Section therefore focuses its efforts on developing awareness campaigns and advocacy activities. It gives voices to scholars at risk in the region by providing them with an arena to talk about the situation in their home countries. The advocacy campaigns, implemented with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European relations, are targeting Slovak scholars, media and the civil society as a whole. Cooperating with NGOs and civil society increases the reach of the messages, especially when universities do not always have the skills or resources to launch fundraising and advocacy campaigns.

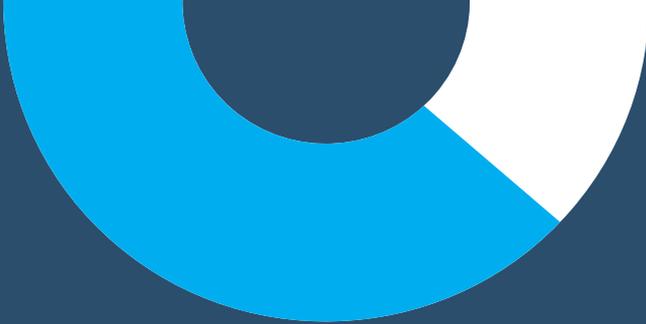
By raising awareness of academic freedom, SAR Slovakia highlights the benefits that researchers at risk who have had to flee their country of origin can bring to a host country. SAR Slovakia also hopes to offer more opportunities to researchers at risk in the region, including by widening the possibilities for threatened scholars to publish outside of their home countries.

SAR Slovakia has applied for Erasmus+ funding to diversify its sources of funding and to foster added support for researchers at risk.

SCHOLARS AT RISK
NETWORK  SLOVAKIA SECTION

More information on SAR Slovakia can be found [here](#).





Country focus: Sweden

“To give cohesion and structure to the network, SAR Sweden appointed a steering group in 2020 in charge of managing issues between the biannual section meetings. The appointment of this steering group, composed of representatives of SAR Sweden members, quickly resulted in a higher level of activities within SAR Sweden.”

- Karolina Catoni, International Relations Officer and coordinator of SAR Sweden at the University of Gothenburg

By Karolina Catoni, International Relations Officer and coordinator of SAR Sweden at the University of Gothenburg

SAR Sweden, the Swedish section of the Scholars at Risk Network, was officially launched in 2016 at the University of Gothenburg. From an informal and small group of Swedish higher education institutions engaged in the defence of scholars at risk, SAR Sweden has now become a vibrant community with representatives from 22 universities nation-wide.

Thanks to the commitment of its members, SAR Sweden facilitates the hosting of approximately six researchers at risk per year, currently coming from Syria, Turkey, Tajikistan, Iran and Tanzania. The majority of universities cover the cost of hosting researchers from their own funds. The section has however implemented a co-funding scheme, covering up to 50% of the costs related to the hosting of researchers at risk within social sciences and humanities. The financial capacity is limited, and SAR Sweden is exploring how to expand its collaboration with public and private funders to increase opportunities for researchers at risk in Sweden also within other disciplines.

Having a strong and large network of universities involved is key both when it comes to putting the issue of researchers at risk on the national agenda but also to expanding opportunities in the host country for scientists forced into exile. In this regard, national actors within the higher education community and beyond, such as Ministries or Rectors Conferences, can greatly facilitate the creation or the development of a national-scale initiative: their participation in the initiative at an early stage should then be considered. The university leadership plays also an important role for the level of institutional engagement and activity.

What kind of network can be created?

When creating the network, it has, from a Swedish perspective, been important to create a flat and inclusive structure in order to ensure the engagement of all its members. The network can have a university as the champion of researchers at risk, and the university leadership can influence

peers and bring more members into the network. Communication is an important part of the network's success, and the participation of SAR Sweden on the national and international stage has paid off: a greater number of Swedish universities have joined the network, ultimately leading to a stronger engagement at the universities' leadership-level.

To give cohesion and structure to the network, SAR Sweden appointed a steering group in 2020 in charge of managing issues between the biannual section meetings. The appointment of this steering group, composed of representatives of SAR Sweden members, quickly resulted in a higher level of activities within SAR Sweden. The network is now looking at ways to develop activities that are more inclusive for the universities currently not hosting scholars at risk, in order to keep and strengthen their engagement.

What resources can be pursued?

The question of financial resources is vital to enable universities to host more researchers at risk. For now, host institutions mainly mobilise their own resources to host scholars at risk. The co-funding scheme offered by SAR Sweden is limited due to a lack of financial means: the network is currently working with private and public actors to raise funds.

It is important to investigate the landscape of available national research funding, foundations and donors to see who to approach for discussion on funding opportunities for researchers at risk. Involve academics in the work and preferably also a Vice-Chancellor that can take the lead. Research foundations are often interested in having the opinion of the university leadership-level so having one of them on board, championing for researchers at risk, will strengthen a case for funding.

What is the value of organising support for researchers at risk on a national level?

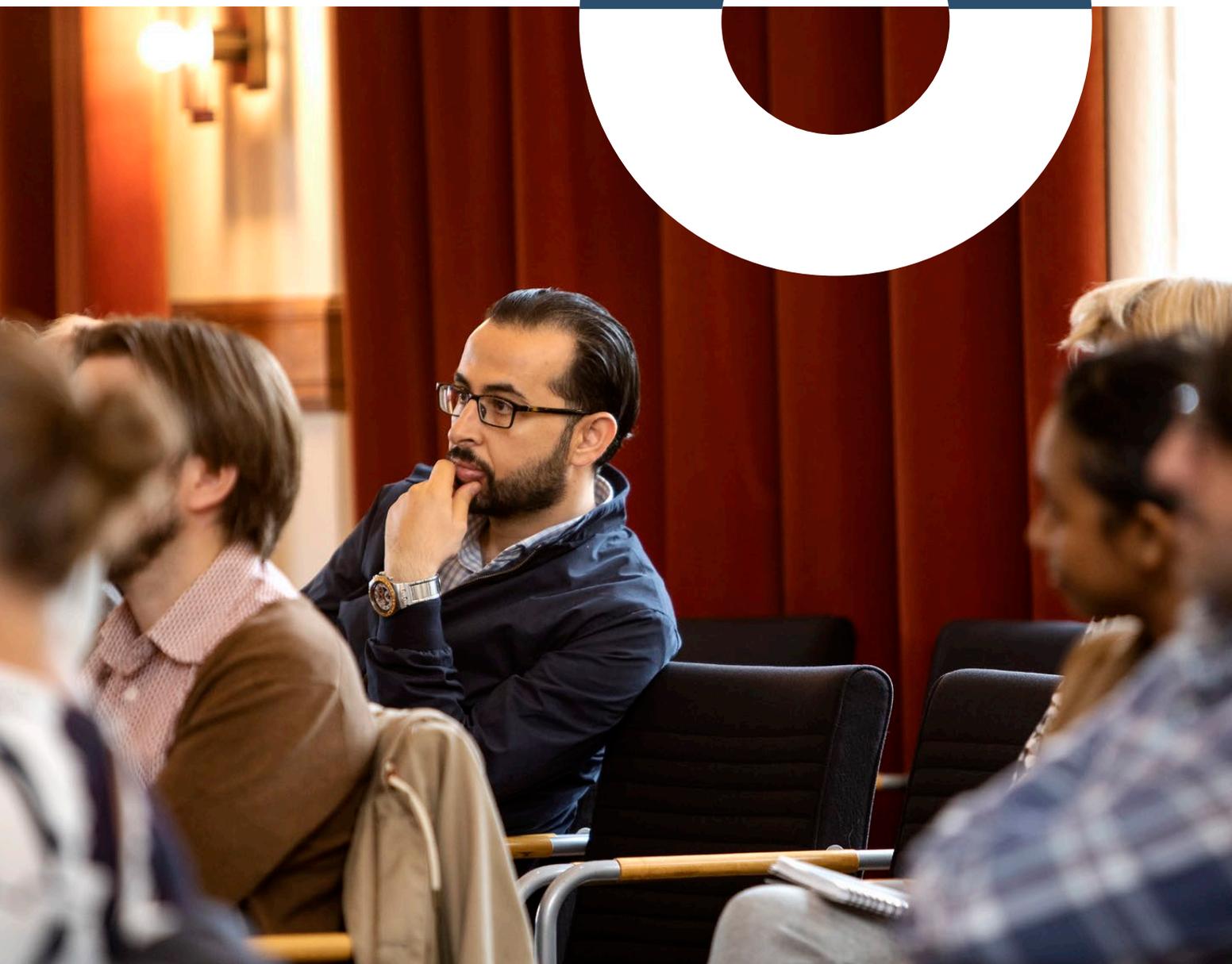
Creating a nation-wide network is important to alert the scientific community and civil society on the threats to academic freedom around the world. Beyond that, it is also and above all a way to give more opportunities to the hosted researchers.

Several at-risk scholars have been offered a second placement in Sweden through SAR Sweden. This has especially been important for families with school-aged children. Overall, there has been a big interest among scholars to stay in Sweden after their first placement. Facilitating the sustainable professional integration of hosted researchers also involves opening up to other types of careers. To do so, SAR Sweden engages in outreach to potential employers outside academia for cooperation.

SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK SWEDEN SECTION

More information on SAR Sweden can be found [here](#).

University of Gothenburg ©Johan Wingborg





Country focus: **Switzerland**

*“A well networked leadership with drive
is crucial to get things moving.”*

*- Roger Pfister, Chair of Scholars at Risk
Switzerland*



National-level activities in Switzerland in support of researchers at risk are primarily taking place in the framework of the Swiss section of the Scholars at Risk Network. The movement towards the establishment of SAR Switzerland in 2016 had its roots in Western Switzerland, with the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne joining Scholars at Risk in 2008 and 2010 respectively. Over the years, more and more key higher education institutions joined the global SAR network. To date, 24 higher education institutions and associations are part of SAR Switzerland. The Swiss section of SAR serves as a platform to exchange experiences and achieve synergy effects with and amongst its members. For example, funding could be secured from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), initially for 5 scholars over the three-year period 2020-23. By 2021, 11 scholars at risk have been hosted by SAR Switzerland, which provides them with information, advice and referrals regarding fellowships and networking opportunities.

Interview with Roger Pfister, Chair of SAR Switzerland

What advice would you give new initiatives for researchers at risk or those interested in establishing such initiatives in other countries/regions?

Including key institutions in your network is important to give weight to the movement and to attract new member organisations. A well networked leadership with drive, then, is crucial to get things moving.

What are the benefits of operating at a national scale?

It's a matter of increased standing and recognition, for one. In addition, it allows follow-up solutions for scholars at risk, whose stay at the first hosting institution has come to an end. Three scholars were able to extend their stay in Switzerland this way.

What advice would you give on securing funding?

A personal approach by the SAR Switzerland leadership with key decision-takers at the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) was critical to secure funding. This resulted in a pragmatic solution in that the application guidelines for an existing funding line that offered itself for that purpose were extended and opened up.

SCHOLARS AT RISK
NETWORK  SWITZERLAND SECTION

More information on SAR Switzerland can be found [here](#).





Country focus: United Kingdom

“Cara’s role has changed several times over the years, depending on circumstances and resources. In recent years, until about 2010, the main focus was on refugees, i.e., helping those already in the United Kingdom who needed help to get back into academia. But, in response to the crises in the Middle East, Cara switched its focus to those still in immediate danger, going back to its earlier ‘rescue mission’ role – with a longer-term emphasis on return...”

- Stephen Wordsworth, Executive Director of Cara

The UK-based Cara (the Council for At-Risk Academics) is one of the leading organisations in the provision of support to researchers at risk. Cara was founded in 1933 by Britain's foremost academics and scientists, in response to Hitler's decision to expel hundreds of leading scholars from German universities on racial or political grounds. Thousands of researchers have been supported by the organisation since 1933. Cara's founders, all academics and scientists in the United Kingdom, defined their mission as 'the relief of suffering and the defence of learning and science'. That is still Cara's mission today. Now it is working to support academics from anywhere in the world who are suffering as a result of discrimination, persecution, violence or conflict.

Cara's Fellowship Programme is currently working with around 330 academics and 470 family members, most hosted at, or on their way to, universities in the UK (the 123 members of the Cara-SAR UK Universities Network), but also with a number elsewhere, in Europe and beyond, including Australia, Canada, Malaysia, Ireland, France, Germany and India. In recent years most of those seeking help through the Fellowship Programme have come from the Middle East, notably Syria, Turkey and Yemen, with smaller numbers also from south Asia and Africa, but events in 2021 have led to appeals for help also from Myanmar and Afghanistan.

Cara offers fully funded placements/Fellowships for at-risk academics, including very 'early career' academics needing to complete Master's or PhD qualifications (Cara defines an 'academic' as someone who has held a teaching or research post at a university or equivalent institution). Multi-year support is standard – e.g., 3-4 years for a PhD, 2 years for postdoctoral study (the maximum allowed under UK visa rules). Some Fellows complete a PhD then go on to post-doctoral research, so Cara's support can extend to six years or more. Mentoring and career development support is provided, in coordination with the host university.

In addition, Cara's regionally based Syria Programme (SP), launched in 2016 as Cara's third regional programme, is working with over 180 exiled Syrian academics, mostly in Turkey, offering a wide range of training and research opportunities. As participants' skills and experience have developed, research has increasingly become the Programme's main focus, offering the best way for participants to enhance their understanding of international standards and good practice, to make vital professional connections, to build their academic profile through publication in peer-reviewed journals and to continue to make their important academic contribution even while in exile. With the expertise of the Programme's participants becoming increasingly evident, several UK universities are now enlisting SP participants in support of their own research programmes, further promoting their integration into global higher education.



Interview with Stephen Wordsworth, Executive Director of Cara

What are the concrete ways in which UK universities are supporting at-risk scholars and researchers?

They provide places and funding (around £20m in the last five years in fee waivers, accommodation, living costs etc.) to support those being helped under Cara's Fellowship Programme. Hundreds of individual academics also work pro bono in Cara's Syria Programme (SP) as tutors, and many more are stepping forward now to take on mentoring roles for Cara Fellows and SP participants.

How are UK universities collaborating with each other to support at-risk scholars/researchers? What are the benefits to such collaboration across institutions?

Cara acts as coordinator of the Cara-SAR UK Universities Network and keeps in close touch with member universities across the UK, helping to facilitate contacts and to share experience and good practice. Regional groupings also exist and work with Cara in various ways. For example, the Northern Consortium acts as a commercial and philanthropic arm of 10 Northern UK universities. It provides Cara with an additional annual grant to support Fellowships, over and above what their member universities are already doing on an individual basis.

What have been key lessons by Cara since its establishment?

Cara's role has changed several times over the years, depending on circumstances and resources. In recent years, until about 2010, the main focus was on refugees, i.e., helping those already in the United Kingdom who needed help to get back into academia. But, in response to the crises in the Middle East, Cara switched its focus to those still in immediate danger, going back to its earlier 'rescue mission' role – with a longer-term emphasis on return, as these people will all be needed to help rebuild their countries when they can go back (this is very much their view too, in nearly all cases).

This required a big shift in fundraising too – in the years 2012-2020 Cara built up its income from around £600,000 pa to (2020) £2.75 million. In particular, the support directly provided by UK universities for Cara Fellows (fee waivers, funding for accommodation, living costs) has massively increased over that period.

What advice would you give new initiatives for researchers at risk or those interested in establishing such initiatives in other countries or regions?

Be flexible and work hard to build support among the university community in your country, including top university leaders. That's where most of your support, practical and financial, will come from.

cara

a lifeline to academics at risk

More information on CARA-SAR UK Universities Network can be found [here](#).

Conclusion

This report has offered an overview of the national-level support initiatives in Europe for researchers at risk. By illustrating that the structures in the various countries differ – at times significantly – from each other the report demonstrates that there is no one-size-fits all approach. Existing national networks or assistance programmes for researchers at risk introduced in this report may nonetheless provide models and templates for the new national programmes that are still needed in Europe. Representatives of existing programmes have shared insights into how national programmes are sustained in order to support researchers at risk and stand ready to advise those interested in getting involved. New initiatives can build on these existing models to make the best use of precious experience, time and funds. The Inspireurope project is driving these efforts by working with partners to promote information-sharing, mutual learning, and the development of best practices.

Additionally, Inspireurope is working to increase participation from Central, Eastern and Southern Europe in activities to support researchers at risk. The experiences of stakeholders in Poland, Slovakia and Greece in developing activities to support researchers at risk are highlighted in this report. Our hope is that such efforts will inspire others in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe to take up similar efforts in their countries.

As can be seen in this report there is a variety of excellent work, including advocacy, that is already underway at the national level in Europe in support of researchers at risk. Still, every year, as the Inspireurope mapping report documents, there are many more qualified candidates seeking urgent positions of safe haven than there is current funding to provide¹. Additional state-funded initiatives like those in Germany and France would be a significant contribution to addressing the current shortfall in material support for researchers at risk.

In addition, as noted earlier, Inspireurope has proposed new actions to be taken at EU level in order to promote the integration and social inclusion of researchers at risk with a migrant background and to further complement existing initiatives and programmes working to support scholars at risk. In particular, Inspireurope has recommended the establishment of a dedicated EU fellowship scheme for researchers at risk with three tracks². The detailed proposal is based on the experience of consortium partners implementing similar schemes and/or arranging positions in Europe for researchers at risk. Inspireurope partners propose a fellowship programme with three tracks:

Track 1: Urgent placements for researchers at risk (outside the refugee process)

Track 2: Refugee researchers and follow-up placements for at-risk candidates outside refugee process

Track 3: Encouraging the establishment of national fellowship programmes

Track 3 will be of particular relevance to national-level actors interested in setting up support programmes for researchers at risk. Additional dedicated support initiatives at the national and EU levels would address some of the most prominent challenges faced by researchers at risk in accessing current EU and national research fellowships. These challenges relate to mobility requirements of current schemes, inflexible timelines for applications, and competitiveness.

Crucially, in addition to providing urgent support to individual scholars, dedicated national-level support for at-risk scholars serves to publicly highlight the crucial role of scholars, free inquiry, and free expression in democratic societies.

¹ **Researchers at Risk: Mapping Europe's Response, Report of Inspireurope project.**

² **Inspireurope's proposal for an EU fellowship scheme for researchers at risk.**

Summary of Key Advice

- There is no one-size fits all approach to organising a national-level initiative in support of researchers at risk. Inspireurope encourages the creation of new state-funded programmes to support researchers at risk, like the PAUSE programme in France and the Philipp Schwartz Initiative in Germany. We stand ready to advise governments interested in setting up new national-level initiatives. Contact us at inspireurope@mu.ie
- In addition to government-backed programmes, world leaders in the provision of support to researchers at risk and refugee researchers provide complementary frameworks for participating in activities to support researchers at risk. SAR sections, IIE-SRF partnerships, Cara and UAF support have all been discussed above. Tap into these existing networks and resources if interested in establishing a new national-level initiative.
- Organising efforts at the country level can allow for: pooling of resources (financial and human); sharing and deepening of expertise on supporting researchers at risk or promoting academic freedom; a stronger voice for advocacy on academic freedom; an increase in the likelihood of sustainable activities over the medium to long-term.
- Those considering establishing an initiative should identify and bring together the institutions interested, then speak with existing networks in other countries to learn from them. Following that, try to get the national government interested.
- State ministries should be encouraged to support national initiatives through fellowship schemes, like in France and Germany, and/or academic freedom advocacy campaigns like in Slovakia.
- Don't let lack of funding be an obstacle to getting started in your country. Start small and build up over time. Begin by raising awareness about the issues facing researchers at risk, or invite a researcher for a speaking tour at a few institutions in your country.
- If possible, identify an influential 'champion' for the proposed national-level initiative (e.g., university rector or high-profile public intellectual) who is willing to raise the idea of a national programme within existing conferences/meetings (e.g., rectors' conferences, international education networks, business networks etc).
- While national-level networks/programmes in support of researchers at risk are usually formed after multiple institutions in a given country are actively involved in hosting researchers at risk or related activities, it has also happened that single institutions play a leading role in initiating the effort. Someone needs to take the first step! It could be you!
- Lean on the experience of other national initiatives and organisations with long experience in this work as you work to set up an initiative in your country. While every national context is different, there is no need to reinvent the wheel.
- Identify and approach organisations or networks of higher education institutions operating at a national level to invite their support.
- Point to existing work elsewhere in Europe. Let relevant policymakers (e.g., ministries of education/foreign affairs) in your country know about existing initiatives and ask for a meeting to discuss establishing something similar in your country.
- It is important to consider that not all member institutions and their representatives across a national network might be aware of the necessary measures that need to be adopted to respect the security concerns and privacy of at-risk scholars. The latter may continue to be at risk in relocation countries, and the violations of their privacy and security can have consequences for their family members, colleagues, or students who stayed back. It is advisable that before inviting a scholar to seminars or other public events the involved institutions consult with each other and the

scholars in question to arrange the necessary measures. It helps also considering a 'training' webinar for the national networks about security concerns and privacy protection.

- Support Inspireurope's **recommendation for an EU fellowship scheme for researchers at risk**. The proposed track 3 of the scheme would provide support for the establishment of new national initiatives for researchers at risk.
- As discussed in the Inspireurope recommendation for an EU fellowship scheme, Inspireurope recommends that new national fellowship schemes would have 3 or 4 application deadlines per year, a fellowship period of a minimum of 2-3 years, and well-thought-out recruitment, vetting, evaluation and placement structures agreed upon in advance.
- New schemes should also be open to candidates seeking to transition from the academic to the non-academic sector.
- In addition to providing urgent support to individual scholars, dedicated national-level support for at-risk scholars serves to publicly highlight the crucial role of scholars, free inquiry, and free expression in democratic societies. Public attention to these issues is needed now more than ever.



Thank you!

Contributors to the report:

SCHOLARS AT RISK
NETWORK  DENMARK SECTION

 Scholar
Rescue Fund

 FINNISH NATIONAL
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

PAUSE
PROGRAMME NATIONAL D'ACCUEIL EN
URGENCE DES SCIENTIFIQUES EN EXIL

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NETWORK  SWITZERLAND SECTION


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Inspireurope

Supporting Researchers at Risk

Project Partners:



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eua EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION



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GIURIDICHE E STUDI INTERNAZIONALI
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

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SCHOLARS AT RISK
NETWORK

protection advocacy learning



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