Welcoming researchers at risk: considerations for new employers and host organisations in Europe

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 857742
Speakers

- Sarina Rosenthal, Senior Program Officer for Protection Services, Scholars at Risk
- Marit Egner, Senior Adviser, Department of Research Administration, University of Oslo
- Bodil Stelwagen, Foundation for Refugee Students (UAF) in the Netherlands
- A researcher at risk now based in Europe
- Orla Duke, Programme Manager, Scholars at Risk Europe

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Topics

• Introduction and vocabulary
• Getting started
• Selecting and welcoming the researcher
• Making the most out of the stay
• Various arrangements and services
• Preparing for next steps
• Answers to Questions

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Project Facts

Title: Initiative to Support, Promote and Integrate Researchers at Risk in Europe

Call: H2020-MSCA-RR-2018

Project dates: September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2022

Website: https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sar-europe/inspireurope

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Objectives

1. Groundwork for a long-term, cross-sectoral, European support structure
2. Contribute to informed policy-making in Europe
3. Bridge the gaps between national and European support mechanisms, between academic and non-academic sectors
4. Improve career development opportunities for researchers at risk
5. Prepare the work environment
6. Grow the diversity of actors supporting researchers at risk

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**Researcher:** “a person active in research, including at a training level, of at least post-graduate or equivalent level”, and includes “all stages of researchers’ careers—be they doctoral candidates or highly experienced researchers”, early stage and more experienced researchers.” (MSCA definition)

**At Risk:** “researchers who are at risk in their countries of origin (due to discrimination, persecution, suffering and/or violence), or are seeking refuge out of these reasons or have recently found refuge in Europe”. (in line with definition in MSCA work programme)

**Host organisation:** Organisation, institution or business welcoming a researcher at risk to do relevant activities in the organisation through employment, fellowship or internship.

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External networks and programmes

1. Scholars at Risk (university network and support programme, international with country sections)
2. Scholar Rescue Fund (Funding scheme, international)
3. Philipp Schwartz initiative (Funding scheme, Germany)
4. PAUSE (Funding scheme, France)
5. UAF (Coaching and funding scheme, the Netherlands)
6. CARA (University network and support programme, UK)
7. Bridge I and II (European projects 2017-2020)
8. Various national programmes for refugee integration
9. various fellowships not particularly for researchers at risk incl. MSCA

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Getting started - Resources

1. Raise awareness and garner interest among colleagues
   • Establish a committee; assign and share responsibilities

2. Identify internal financial resources
   • Central administration, department, fundraising, etc.

3. Discuss academic needs on campus
   • Consider responsibilities for at-risk researcher
   • Set parameters for potential visiting research positions

4. Explore external resources
   • Alternative funding sources
   • Connect with organizations/universities about best practices

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Selecting and inviting the researcher

To ensure a strong academic match, some aspects to consider include:

- Purpose of hosting an at-risk researcher
- Geography/diversity of candidates
- Discipline/field
- Risk
- Academic training/experience
- Publications
- Language
- Family

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Welcoming the researcher

Practical preparations

• Contract
• Immigration and travel
• Housing
• Security preferences
• Administrative set-up

Welcome phase

• New employee orientation
• Connect with mentors
• Meet international office
• Allow time for adjustment
• Guidance on resources/benefits on campus

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Making the most out of the stay

• Academic activity and networking
• The academic mentor
• Updates and filling academic gaps
• Competence and career development
• Safety and well-being
• Academic and social networking

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Various arrangements

- Look into the available (career) services at hosting institute

- Difference between:
  - International employment (contract university)
  - Guest researchers fellowship (guest agreement)
  - Refugees with asylum status

- Connect with diversity/international programs

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Various services

- Expectation management towards researcher
  o Background (personal circumstances, family conditions, housing)
  o Do wishes and needs meet the possibilities?

- Extras: Time for adjustment, guidance in intercultural communication, appointment with immigration lawyer, mentor and guide
Next steps

1. Important to start planning early!

2. Some alternatives:
   - Return to home country if safe
   - Normally announced position in the same organisation or another organisation/ inside or outside academia/ in the same or another country
   - Obtaining external research funding e.g. MSCA
   - A new position/fellowship for researchers at risk
   - Apply for asylum and continue job search

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Questions and Answers

Topics of the webinar

- Introduction and vocabulary
- Getting started
- Selecting and welcoming the researcher
- Making the most out of the stay
- Various arrangements and services
- Preparing for next steps

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Comments and suggestions

Do you have:
• Ideas for new webinar topics?
• Questions or comments?

Contact us at inspireurope@mu.ie

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