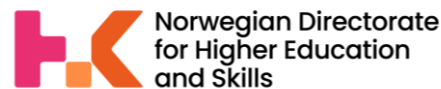




Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service



Contact person: Michael Hörig,
Director, DAAD Brussels
hoerig@daad.de

29.03.2022

Call for the establishment of a European Expert Group on “Students and Researchers at Risk”

Dear Executive Vice-President Vestager, dear Vice-President Borrell Fontelles, dear Vice-President Schinas, dear Commissioner Gabriel, dear Commissioner Várhelyi,

The European Union should be a haven for international students and researchers that face the risk of persecution or that were forced to flee due to armed conflict. This solidarity belongs to the core of our shared European values, our “European Way of Life.”

Most recently the war in Ukraine has again demonstrated the importance to take European action. The European Union’s response to the crises in Syria and Belarus, which included the higher education sector (Madad Fund, EU4Belarus scholarships), can act as a blueprint for further action. The signals coming from the responsible Directorate Generals are very encouraging and we welcome any European scheme that would complement the many ongoing initiatives already taken by member or associated states.

In that sense, the signatories of this letter call upon the European Commission to take a systemic approach and to **establish a European Expert Group on “Students and Researchers at Risk.”** The purpose of such an Expert Group would be to facilitate the policy dialogue between EU institutions, member states and stakeholder organisations and to coordinate the design and implementation of possible European funding and support instruments. Ideally, the members of the Expert Group shall include representatives of relevant EU Commission DGs and bodies, the European Parliament and national level policy representatives. The participation of external experts (i.e. representing organisations implementing funding programmes and umbrella organisations in higher education and research) should be ensured through a call for expression of interest.

The signatory organisations have a track-record in supporting students and scientists at risk. In November 2021, DAAD, HK-Dir and NAWA published a joint proposal for European action in support of students at risk, listing a set of concrete measures to be taken in the short-, mid- and long-term ([link](#)). Consortium partners of the Inspireurope project, including EUA and Scholars at Risk Europe, have issued a detailed proposal for a possible European fellowship scheme for researchers at risk ([link](#)).

All signatories are willing to join efforts in and call for establishing a coordinated European approach to cater for the vulnerable yet highly talented group of students and researchers at risk. We remain at your disposal to discuss in more details any European initiative that supports our common cause, and we would sincerely appreciate the establishment of the proposed European Expert Group.

On behalf of

DAAD, Dr. Kai Sicks, Secretary General

Grażyna Żebrowska
Elektronicznie podpisany przez Grażyna Żebrowska
Data: 2022.03.29 13:34:06
+02'00'

NAWA, Dr. Grażyna Żebrowska, Director General

EUA, Amanda Crawford, Secretary General

ACA, Ulrich Grothus, President

HK-Dir, Sveinung Skule, Director General

ESU, Martina Darmanin, President



POLISH NATIONAL AGENCY
FOR ACADEMIC EXCHANGE

