European universities welcoming researchers at risk, promoting academic freedom

Presentation by Orla Duke, Programme Manager, Scholars at Risk Europe at Maynooth University, Ireland

EUA 2020 webinar series, April 22nd at 2pm CET
SAR Europe

- Scholars at Risk (SAR) Europe is hosted at Maynooth University, reflecting the shared commitment to the principle of Academic Freedom

- SAR Europe is the coordinator of European activities of over 300 member universities incl. national SAR sections in 11 European countries & coordinates the 10-partner H2020 project; Inspireurope

- Aim to strengthen collective voice & contribute to informed policymaking at European Level

Launch of SAR Europe, European Parliament, Brussels, November 2018
Approaches taken by the SAR Network

The Scholars at Risk Network protects threatened scholars and promotes academic freedom in the following ways:

**PROTECTION**
- Hosting threatened scholars for temporary academic visits
- Referring scholars to the network for assistance

**ADVOCACY**
- Academic Freedom Monitoring Project
- Scholars-in-Prison Project
- Student Advocacy Seminars & Legal Clinics

**LEARNING**
- Biennial Congress
- Online learning through MOOC on Academic Freedom
- SAR Speaker series

Aligns to these institutional strategies

- Refugee Integration Strategy
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Internationalisation at home
- University Policy on Academic Freedom
SAR’s 2019 ‘Free to Think’ report outlines the following:

- **324 reported attacks in 56 countries**, (Sept ‘18-Aug ‘19)
- **97 incidents of violent attacks** on higher education communities in 40 countries
- **87 incidents of wrongful imprisonment** & 70 incidents of wrongful prosecution

Current challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Some countries using crisis to crackdown on activists
- Many European countries have suspended asylum procedures
- Additional support needed for hosted scholars
Protecting Scholars at Risk

In the 2018-2019 academic year, SAR received 581 applications for assistance from a range of countries & wide variety of disciplines.

Scholar Disciplines

- Social Sciences: 32%
- Physical & Life Sciences: 26%
- Arts & Humanities: 16%
- Business & Finance: 9%
- Law & Human Rights: 5%
- Medicine & Public Health: 5%
- Journalism & Writing: 4%
- Mathematics & Info. Science: 3%

Scholar Countries of Origin

- TURKEY: 65%
- SYRIA: 13%
- IRAQ: 3%
- Other MENA: 7%
- Asia: 1%
- Americas: 4%
- South Asia: 1%
- Central Europe: 1%
- Other Europe: 1%
Develop a long-term sustainable cross-sectoral European support structure

Contribute to informed policymaking across Europe to strengthen support

Bridge the gaps between national and European support mechanisms

Improve career development opportunities for researchers at risk

Prepares the work environment in academic and non-academic sectors

Grow the network of actors supporting researchers at risk with an emphasis on CESEE

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 857742
Call to action

- Participate in Inspireurope consultation process – current survey for HEIs can be found on the EUA website or here: bit.ly/2vSDS45

- Attend the first Inspireurope Stakeholder Forum (online) on June 8th from 9.30 – 17.30 (CET). Registration is free and open shortly to all here

- Register for and view previous Inspireurope webinars here

- Join the Inspireurope mailing list by emailing inspireurope@mu.ie

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Call to Action

▪ Encourage faculty, staff and students to enrol in free online course; “Dangerous Questions: Why Academic Freedom Matters”

▪ Engage students through SAR’s Student Advocacy Seminars and campaigns on behalf of Scholars in Prison

▪ Consider inviting a speaker to campus through the SAR Speaker Series
Thank you!

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