

## World Refugee Day 2021 – AUTH Press release

On the occasion of the World Refugee Day on June 20th, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki is happy to announce that it has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the international Scholars at Risk network (SAR). The MoU aims at enhancing the cooperation on the establishment and development of a Greece SAR section within Greek HEIs.

Scholars at Risk (<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/>) is an international network of higher education institutions dedicated to promoting academic freedom and defending the human rights of scholars worldwide. The network is hosted at New York University, and since its founding in 2000, has grown to include more than 540 member institutions in 40 countries. The co-operation between SAR and AUTH (first Greek University to join SAR) on building a national SAR section in Greece started in 2018, during the *S.U.C.R.E.: Supporting University Community pathways for REfugees-migrants* project, and advanced under the frame of the *Inspireurope: Supporting Researchers at Risk* project. *Inspireurope* initiative is a 3-year project (September 2019-August 2022) funded by the European Commission under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action (HORIZON-MSCA). The project is led by a consortium of ten European partners active in supporting researchers at risk and is coordinated by Maynooth University; host of Scholars at Risk Europe; and aims to forge a coordinated, Europe-wide alliance in defense of scholars that face threats, persecution, or violence; and in active support of their effort to secure a safe work environment in Europe. Aristotle University, as one of the 10 consortium partners, participates in most phases of the Initiative, and has a leading role in the outreach activities throughout Central, Eastern and South Europe in support of researchers at risk.

In 2021, two more Greek Universities, the University of Aegean and Ionian University, became SAR members and joined forces with AUTH on active defense of academic freedom through the collaboration on the development of the SAR Greece section. At least three more Greek Universities are going to join SAR soon; others have expressed great interest, too. At the 96th Synod of Greek Universities' Rectors (April 22, 2021) Prof. Alexandros Triantafyllidis, AUTH's SAR representative, together with Prof. Katsios from Ionian U. and Prof. Nagopoulos from U. of Aegean, presented the actions so far. The effort was very positively received as confirmed by the Synod's related press release. Under this frame, AUTH will organize an event on October 1, 2021 to mark the official launch of SAR Greece section. (Details on this event will be shared on time).