

### Newsletter, August 2024

## SCHOLARS AT RISK

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NETWORK  EUROPE



#### **Briefing on Monitoring, Assessing and Reporting Academic Freedom & Researchers at Risk August 12, 2024**

*Inspireurope+ is an EU funded project that works to strengthen and coordinate support in Europe for researchers at risk. Researchers at risk are scholars, scientists, and researchers who face threats to their life, liberty, or research careers, including those who have been displaced because of such threats. Building on the work undertaken by Inspireurope (launched under MSCA in 2019), Inspireurope+ proceeds from the view that excellence in research depends upon free and open scientific debate and requires a diversity of perspectives and methodologies to flourish. The need to expand support for researchers at risk is urgent, and the value of a coordinated effort across countries and institutions that is dedicated to providing support for researchers at risk has never been clearer.*

#### **Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Researchers at Risk**

Academic freedom is a universal right and essential to quality education, teaching and research. It is a driver of innovation, enhances the capacity of researchers to acquire, generate and distribute knowledge, and thereby protects societies' capacity for self-reflection. Its protection, promotion, and enjoyment require the autonomy of academic, research, and teaching institutions. Persecution, harassment, intimidation and violence directed at scholars, scientists and researchers not only place individual lives and careers in jeopardy, such threats also put the very future of research at stake, directly contributing to the decline of academic freedom.

#### **Reported attacks on researchers, scholars and higher education communities.**

Scholars at Risk's *Academic Freedom Monitoring Project* has, since 2011, documented severe attacks on researchers, scholars, students and higher education communities, implicating tens of thousands of victims in over 100 countries.<sup>i</sup> These include killings, violence, and disappearances; wrongful prosecution and imprisonment; loss of position; improper travel restrictions and other severe or systemic issues. Threats come from a range of state and non-state actors, including armed militant and extremist groups, police and military forces, government authorities, and members of higher education communities.

SAR's 2023 *Free to Think* report, the ninth in a series of annual reports on attacks on higher education communities around the world, analyses 409 reported attacks in 66 countries that occurred between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023.<sup>ii</sup> Due to limited data and monitoring resources these figures represent only a tiny fraction of the overall number of attacks occurring. However, a growing awareness of the importance of academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and ensuring the safety of researchers, has resulted in the emergence of additional measures to monitor attacks on the higher education community. Most significantly, since 2020 the *Academic Freedom Index* provides an annually updated country score of de facto levels of academic freedom across the world.<sup>iii</sup>

#### **Expansion of monitoring and reporting of attacks on researchers and academic freedom.**

However, data on academic freedom violations globally remains incomplete with attacks often going unreported and unacknowledged. Extending monitoring efforts into more countries, more regions, and more languages is essential for gaining a greater understanding of the volume and nature of attacks on researchers and to support the creation of more effective protection responses. With 144 EU Delegations and Offices around the world, the EU and the Member States are strategically placed to gather country specific information, raise awareness, and enable much needed support for researchers at risk.<sup>iv</sup>

#### **Call on EU Delegations and Member States Embassies and Consulates (thereafter "Missions"):**

# Monitoring, Assessing and Reporting Academic Freedom and Researchers at Risk

The Inspireurope+ consortium is pleased to share a new policy briefing highlighting the role of EU Delegations and Member State Embassies and Consulates in defending academic freedom. Often a first point of contact for researchers at risk, Diplomatic Missions can be early warning mechanisms and sources of up-to-date information on global attacks on academic freedom. The briefing makes several recommendations to Diplomatic Missions advising on how they can lead in the protection of academic freedom by conducting monitoring, assessing and reporting activities. Available [here](#).

## Inspireurope+ webinars for researchers at risk

Inspireurope+ regularly holds webinars to address the key professional needs of researchers at risk. Webinars are led by project partner, Cara (Council for at-Risk Academics). Previous webinars have addressed topics such as publication strategies, research ethics and integrity, and networking for researchers at risk. Recordings can be found on the [SAR Europe website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

Stay tuned for future webinars focusing on **Navigating Careers outside of Academia (Autumn 2024)** and **Understanding the European Higher Education Sector (Spring 2025)**.



Select Funding Opportunities

## PAUSE Programme: 2024 Call for Applications

The [PAUSE programme](#) supports scientists and artists in exile by facilitating their hosting in higher education and research institutions or cultural institutions across France. Applications are welcome from higher education and research institutions under the aegis of the French Ministry for Higher Education and Research; EESPIG- designated private higher education institutions; and institutions or structures supported or under the remit of the French Ministry of Culture. Hosting projects are co-funded by the PAUSE programme.

**Deadline: 26 September 2024**

[Learn more and apply >>](#)



## MSCA4Ukraine: 2024 Call for Applications



[MSCA4Ukraine](#), an EU-funded fellowship scheme for displaced researchers from Ukraine has opened a new call. With a [recent top-up of 10 million euro from the European Commission](#), the scheme will support around 50 additional researchers displaced from Ukraine by means of fellowships of up to two years and other supports. Comprehensive information on the second call for proposals, including all relevant documents, is available on the [SAR Europe website](#). A launch event took place on 14 June 2024, a full recording of which may be found [here](#).

**The application portal will close on 5 September 2024 at 11.59 CEST.**

## Your guide to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions: from applying to managing your project



The [European Research Executive Agency](#) has recently published [a guide to MSCA projects](#). From recently updated information packages to guides for applicants, the article is a go-to resource for all MSCA-related questions, providing clear, concise, and comprehensive guidance.

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Select Partner News & Resources

## Launch of Supporting At-Risk Researchers with Fellowships in Europe (SAFE) project



A new initiative for researchers at risk in Europe, the “SAFE” project, is due to commence on 1st September 2024. Funded by the European Commission for a 3-year period, SAFE is a fellowship programme for non-European researchers facing danger in their home country. The project will support 60 researchers at risk coming from a non-EU Member State, selected on the scientific quality of the work and the danger they face in their country of origin.

The consortium is coordinated by the [German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\)](#) and brings together the [Mediterranean Universities Union \(UNIMED\)](#), [Campus France](#) and Inspireurope+ partner, [the PAUSE programme hosted by the Collège de France](#). Among associated partners, other Inspireurope+ partners will be represented: the [Alexander von Humboldt Foundation \(AvH\)](#), the [European University Association \(EUA\)](#) and the [Aristotle University of Thessaloniki \(AUTH\)](#).

More information on the SAFE project will be available soon.

## SAR submits report on Egypt to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review

On 17 July 2024, SAR filed a submission on Egypt to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review. The report was prepared in collaboration with the legal clinic of the [Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism at McGill University](#), Canada. The submission highlights the persistent pattern of repression targeting scholars, students, and higher education institutions in Egypt, which has resulted in the country ranking among the bottom ten percent globally for academic freedom protection over the past decade. SAR extends its gratitude to the faculty and students at [McGill University](#) for their research and drafting contributions. Read the submission [here](#).

To learn more about opportunities to contribute to similar submissions in the future, please visit the [Academic Freedom Legal Clinics](#) page on SAR's website.

## SAR's Free to Think Report 2024

This year's edition of SAR's annual report on academic freedom – *Free to Think 2024* – will be released on 26 September 2024. The report draws from [SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project](#) and details the most pressing global threats against academic freedom from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. This year, SAR was alarmed by the use of police force in response to peaceful student protests across North America, Europe, and Asia; growing restrictions on cross-national research collaboration; and the enactment of state laws prohibiting specific types of speech, writing, and teachings in academia. As evidenced by the number of academics across countries like Germany, China, India, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua who have been subject to job loss, unlawful imprisonment, killings, and forced disappearances, trends against academic freedom have had dire repercussions for both the



livelihoods of academics and for the broader state of academic freedom in 2024 and beyond. It is crucial that policymakers and international human rights leaders recognize the risks to academic freedom detailed in SAR's *Free to Think 2024* report and take concrete steps to defend the right of scholars to think, write, and research freely.

Learn more in *Free to Think 2024* when it is released on **26 September, 2024**.

## **IIE Scholar Rescue Fund Forum 2024: Building partnerships to support threatened and displaced scholars**



Inspireurope+ associate partner, [IIE Scholar Rescue Fund](#), will host a one-day conference on **10 October 2024** in Brussels to highlight innovative partnerships and initiatives driving sustainable programming to support threatened and displaced scholars. Participants will learn from IIE-SRF partners across sectors and at the local, regional, and national levels whose efforts are enhancing existing support models and bridging geographic distances. The event will also feature IIE-SRF fellows and alumni who are impacting their home and host communities. Further details, including registration, are available [here](#).



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**Our mailing address is:**

SAR Europe  
Maynooth University  
Iontas Building, North Campus  
Maynooth, Kildare W23 F2H6  
Ireland