

Urgent appeal to European Governments and EU Institutions: Take Action for Afghanistan's scholars, researchers, and civil society actors

We, the undersigned higher education associations, networks, and leaders in the field of scholar protection, urge European governments and EU institutions to take immediate action to secure the lives and careers of Afghanistan's scholars, students, and civil society actors.

Many of the undersigned organisations are leaders in the field of provision of support to researchers and scholars at risk. These include the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR), the PAUSE programme in France, the Philipp Schwartz Initiative of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Council for At-Risk Academics and the IIE's Scholar Rescue Fund who arrange temporary positions at higher education institutions around the world for those who are unable to work safely in their home countries. European higher education institutions are at the forefront of these efforts: over the past two years, 80% of positions of safe haven arranged by SAR were in Europe.

Organisations supporting at-risk scholars are racing to offer assistance to researchers, scholars and civil society actors in Afghanistan who, at this moment, are desperately seeking ways to safety. For the better part of the past twenty years these scholars and civil society actors in Afghanistan have fought for a new, rights-respecting, forward-looking, knowledge-based Afghanistan. Many have worked for or in partnership with EU institutions, NATO partners, European governments and other international and civil society organisations. Hundreds travelled to Europe to seek an education and returned to their homeland, dedicated to values of openness tolerance and free expression. These are not the values of the Taliban, so their lives are now at risk. Timely government action can still make an enormous difference. We implore you to act on their behalf now.

Specifically, we seek immediate action from European Governments and EU institutions to:

- **Continue evacuation flights** for as long as possible so as to include scholars, students, and civil society actors who have supported the forward-looking, pluralist vision of Afghanistan that the EU, European governments, NATO partners and other international and civil society organisations embraced. **Do not end flights until all are safely out who wish to leave the country.**
- **Increase resettlement quotas** to help those in need of international protection, including researchers, scholars, and civil society actors. Ensure international protection is provided to current Afghan protection applicants through an expedited process, and prioritise and expedite family reunification applications.

SCHOLARS AT RISK
NETWORK
protection advocacy learning

cara
a lifeline to academics at risk

Alexander von Humboldt
Stiftung/Foundation

PAUSE
PROGRAMME NATIONAL D'ACCUEIL EN
URGENCE DES SCIENTIFIQUES EN EXIL

iie Scholar Rescue
Fund EUROPE

Inspireurope
Supporting Researchers at Risk

SCHOLARS AT RISK
NETWORK EUROPE

eua EUROPEAN
UNIVERSITY
ASSOCIATION

BSE RVATORY
MAGNA CHARTA UNIVERSITATUM

allea All European
Academies

EAIE
European Association for
International Education

DAAD Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

- **Create expedited complementary legal pathways** for candidates who demonstrate an existing host institution, job, or sponsor, including for families, that would facilitate their arrival and earliest adjustment. **Many European higher education institutions are ready to host scholars in temporary positions**; capture that opportunity by expediting the processing of individuals for whom they are ready to step forward, and providing logistical support.
- Waive **any intent-to-return and home residency requirements that may apply to visa applications** for Afghan scholars and researchers for the foreseeable future. Barring full waiver, issue authoritative guidance to consular and border officials supporting a determination of satisfaction of the intent to return by showing a willingness to return in the absence of the Taliban, or a credible, durable and rebuttable demonstration that the individual would be able to return and live safely under the Taliban.
- Establish a **dedicated EU fellowship scheme** for researchers and scholars at risk, including scholars, students, and civil society actors from Afghanistan, especially women and ethnic and religious minorities, to undertake fellowships, lectureships, researcher positions, or temporary academic positions at European higher education institutions. See the EU-funded [Inspireurope](#) project recommendation for a dedicated scheme [here](#). Some funds for such streams might be redirected from existing funds budgeted for Afghanistan programming, but which may not be possible to expend under the current conditions. Nevertheless, new funds will be required to meet the most urgent needs.
- Establish **dedicated national fellowships** for researchers and scholars at risk, including scholars, students, and civil society actors from Afghanistan, similar to existing national fellowship programmes run by the PAUSE programme in France and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's Philipp Schwartz Initiative in Germany.

The window in which to take these steps, save lives, and redeem some measure of Europe's investment in Afghanistan's future is rapidly closing. Your urgent intervention is needed to mobilize the relevant departments and agencies.

The eroding situation in Afghanistan poses a threat not only to the lives of our colleagues still in Afghanistan, but to the future of that country. The moral leadership of the European Union including its commitment to human rights, rule-of-law, and multilateralism, is needed now more than ever, and it is imperative to see those commitments put into practice at this time of crisis. The European higher education community is ready to do its part, but we need your help. If we move quickly, we can go a long way towards mitigating the worst of the threats and demonstrate continuing commitment to the future of Afghanistan and its people.



Endorsing Organisations:

Academic Freedom and Internationalisation Working Group	International Migration Research Network (IMISCOE)
Academics for Peace, Germany	Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT)
ALLEA- All European Academies	Marie Curie Alumni Association
Alexander von Humboldt Foundation	Magna Charta Observatory
BirAraDa Association	PAUSE
Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara)	Scholars at Risk Network
Central European University	SAR Denmark
Coimbra Group	SAR Europe
Compostela Group of Universities	SAR Finland
Council for European Studies	SAR Germany
Czech Rectors' Conference	SAR Greece
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)	SAR Italy
European Association for International Education (EAIE)	SAR Ireland
European Students Union (ESU)	SAR Norway
European University Association (EUA)	SAR Slovakia
EASA - European Association of Social Anthropologists	SAR Sweden
Euroscience	SAR Switzerland
Flemish Interuniversity Council (VLIR)	Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences
Gerda Henkel Foundation	swissuniversities
Global Campus of Human Rights	The Guild
German Rectors Conference (HRK)	Threatened Scholars Integration Initiative of the Open Society
Global Student Forum	University Network
IIE -SRF Europe	UAF
Inspireurope: Initiative to Promote, Integrate and Support Researchers at Risk	UNICA
	Universities Austria
	Universities Ireland

For more information and further action:

- **Media** inquiries contact: Sinead O’Gorman, Scholars at Risk Europe, sareurope@mu.ie
- Add your **organisation or network’s endorsement**: Joel Hanisek, Scholars at Risk Europe, sareurope@mu.ie
- For **higher education institutions**: If your institution is willing to host at-risk individuals from Afghanistan, please complete the survey at <https://bit.ly/3kjPv9S>

Scholars at Risk is an international network of over 500 higher education institutions in 40 countries, including over 350 in Europe, whose core mission is to protect threatened scholars and intellectuals, principally by arranging temporary positions at network-member institutions for those who are unable to work safely in their home countries. Over the last 20 years our network has assisted over 1500 threatened scholars, students, and practitioners. SAR’s European office, based in Ireland, supports and coordinates activities of SAR sections in 12 European countries. SAR partners, notably the PAUSE programme in France, the Philipp Schwartz Initiative of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Council for At-Risk Academics and the IIE’s Scholar Rescue Fund, all leaders in the field of support to scholars, have also arranged positions for hundreds of scholars at European higher education institutions. For information visit www.scholarsatrisk.org.

