

## 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	Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT)
Academics for Peace, Germany	International Migration Research Network (IMISCOE)
ALLEA- All European Academies	Inspireurope: Initiative to Promote, Integrate and Support Researchers at Risk
Alexander von Humboldt Foundation	Marie Curie Alumni Association
BirAraDa Association	Magna Charta Observatory
Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara)	PAUSE
Central European University	Scholars at Risk Network
Coimbra Group	SAR Denmark
Compostela Group of Universities	SAR Europe
Council for European Studies	SAR Finland
Czech Rectors' Conference	SAR Germany
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)	swissuniversities
Gerda Henkel Foundation	The Guild
Global Campus of Human Rights	Threatened Scholars Integration Initiative of the Open Society University Network
German Rectors Conference (HRK)	UAF
Global Student Forum	UNICA
IIE -SRF Europe	Universities Ireland



swissuniversities



SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK DENMARK SECTION

SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK FINLAND SECTION

SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK GERMANY SECTION

SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK IRELAND SECTION

SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK ITALY SECTION

SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK NORWAY SECTION

SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK SLOVAKIA SECTION

SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK SWEDEN SECTION

SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK SWITZERLAND SECTION

## For more information and further action:

- **Media** inquiries contact: Sinead O’Gorman, Scholars at Risk Europe, [sareurope@mu.ie](mailto:sareurope@mu.ie)
- Add your **organisation or network’s endorsement**: Joel Hanisek, Scholars at Risk Europe, [sareurope@mu.ie](mailto:sareurope@mu.ie)
- **For higher education institutions**: [If your institution is willing to host at-risk individuals from Afghanistan, please complete the survey at \[link\].](#)

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.scholarsarisk.org](http://www.scholarsarisk.org).