



Supporting Researchers at Risk

*Initiative to Support, Promote and Integrate  
Researchers at Risk in Europe*

# Inspireurope Outreach Workshop

## Thessaloniki, Greece and online

### 30 September 2020

Agenda

Venue: Aristotle University Research Dissemination Center



<https://inspireurope.auth.gr/en/conference>



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<https://maynoothuniversity.ie/sar-europe/events/inspireurope-outreach-workshop-thessaloniki-greece-september-30th-2020>



*This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 857742*

**Wednesday September 30**

**2nd Outreach Workshop on supporting researchers «at risk»**

**Summary and Conclusions**

The **2<sup>nd</sup> Outreach Inspireurope Workshop 2020** was hosted by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), partner of Inspireurope Initiative, on September 30<sup>th</sup> 2020, at the Research Dissemination Center (KEDEA) of AUTH\*, aiming to raise awareness and inform key stakeholders and organizations in Greece and surrounding countries about the possibilities of active participation in supporting researchers facing discrimination, persecution or violence, in order to continue their academic/professional course in a safe working environment, in Greece and in the rest of Europe. The initiative is funded under the European Commission's [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#) and coordinated by Scholars at Risk Europe, based at Maynooth University, Ireland.

The participants of the Workshop were distinguished personalities, representing the European and the Greek Government (Margaritis Schoinas, Vice-President of the European Commission with the portfolio for Promoting the European Way of Life; Theodoros Karaoglou, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Responsible for Makedonia-Thrace; Gregory Dimitriadis, Secretary General for International Economic Affairs in the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Board Enterprise Greece), high ranking Academic Administrators (rectors and professors), representatives of the partners of the Program, members of ongoing Programs, stakeholders such as vocational chambers, agencies that promote employment, NGOs, as well as refugee researchers, who have already found or are seeking a safe environment in Greece and the rest of Europe.

**Main Conclusions**

- 1) The Workshop managed to bring together a diverse audience, with more than 230 registrations, of academics, professional experts, high ranking officials and refugees with high academic qualifications from Greece and other European countries. It succeeded in raising awareness, especially as regards Greek Universities and Authorities, of the importance of supporting researchers at risk with a variety of actions. Aristotle University made a good start by announcing a one-year scholarship for a researcher at risk.
- 2) The Workshop, also, acted as a triggering event for the development of a Scholars at Risk (SAR) section in Greece for interested higher education institutions, NGOs, government representatives, and individuals to be further discussed during a dedicated online meeting in October.



- 3) It pointed out both the challenges and already existing good practices in supporting researchers at risk with an emphasis on the current situation in Greek Universities.
- 4) It is clear that the challenges facing researchers in the refugee process differ from those outside the refugee process who are visiting researchers on work visas. As Inspireurope formulates policy recommendations in the coming months we will be working on specific, detailed suggestions that take into account these quite different immigration statuses, each of which brings its own requirements.
- 5) More national fellowship programmes are needed in Europe - there are only 3. The project is ready to advise on the establishment of these.
- 6) More attention is needed in these discussions on the skills and competencies that researchers bring to their host institutions and to Europe.
- 7) For those interested in the issues raised in the opening session about academic freedom and how to address the root causes of intellectual repression we invite you to join an online event in November to launch SAR s 2020 Free to think report. Please sign up to SARs email or Inspireurope to learn more.

Our ambition is to contribute to job creation and a safe working environment for researchers at risk within both academic and non-academic sectors.

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\* The first Outreach Workshop took place at the Jagiellonian University of Krakow in 2019



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## ANALYTICAL PRESENTATION OF THE SESSIONS

### Opening Session, Welcome addresses

**Moderator: Professor A. TRIANTAFYLIDIS.**

- **Nikos PAPAIOANNOU**, Rector of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), Professor of the School of Veterinary studies
- **Margaritis SCHINAS**, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Promoting the European Way of Life
- **Theodoros KARAOGLOU**, Vice- Minister of Internal Affairs of Responsible for Makedonia-Thraki
- **Gregory DIMITRIADIS**, Secretary General for International Economic Affairs, Chairman of the Board Enterprise Greece, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic Republic
- **Sinead O’GORMAN**, Director, Scholars at Risk Europe, Maynooth University, Ireland (Coordinator of Inspireurope)

Professor A. Triantafyllidis, on behalf of the organizing committee, welcomed the participants to the event, either physically present in the room or attending virtually. He analyzed the significance and importance of the event being the 1<sup>st</sup> in Thessaloniki and he presented the topics of discussion and the agenda.

Professor N. Papaioannou, Rector of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), underlined that the Aristotle University is the first Greek university member of the global SAR network. Participating in Inspireurope is a further important initiative towards the successful support of refugees and immigrants by the academic community. He also referred to SUCRE, a previous AUTH project that made the first step for establishing a Scholars at Risk (SAR) Greek section by bringing together SAR and Greek universities representatives. SUCRE effectively analysed ways to support researchers at risk in their effort to continue their academic and professional career in a safe work environment in Greece and in the rest of Europe. Closing his speech, Rector N. Papaioannou, announced that the AUTH Research Committee decided to fund a researcher at risk with an annual scholarship for research at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Mr. M. Schinas, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Promoting the European Way of Life, highlighted in his keynote message the significance of scientific cooperation and solidarity, vital for a global future. To restore global security, it is needed to bridge talents beyond the borders. Academic freedom is highly essential. The European Commission has several initiatives to support researchers and scholars at risk and to protect fundamental rights with respect to academic freedom: for instance the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programmes, as well as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions is one of the most internationalized European programs, and the European Commission will continue to support researchers in the new Horizon framework.

Mr. Th. Karaoglou, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, responsible for Makedonia-Thrace, spoke about the great importance of the topic of the workshop. Furthermore, he laid emphasis on three words that are closely related to each other (*inspiration, support, career*). Inspiration strengthens creativity, support provides meaning to the word cooperation and the combination of the two above concepts leads to improved career possibilities.



Mr Gr. Dimitriadis, Secretary General for International Economic Affairs in the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Chairman of the Board Enterprise Greece, mentioned that the 16<sup>th</sup> sustainable development goal of the United Nations very clearly states the need for promoting peaceful society for sustainable development and providing access to justice for all. Discrimination creates a serious economic defectiveness for any company, organization and even country. Furthermore, with his position as the General Secretary for International Economic Affairs and the Chairman of the Board Enterprise Greece, he has a clear mandate to boost the Greek economic ecosystem by creating international market opportunities and to promote the Greek brand abroad. Sustainable development is central in this effort. Therefore, Hellenic trade and related investment strategies put strong emphasis on the realization of the United Nations sustainable development goals.

Mrs. S. O’GORMAN from Maynooth University (Ireland), Director of Scholars at Risk Europe and Coordinator of Inspireurope, underlined that SAR Europe is dedicated to protect scholars and academic freedom and that Aristotle University of Thessaloniki is an important member of this network. She mentioned that during the 20 years of the Scholars at Risk existence, researchers and scholars from all around the world have sent 5.000 requests for assistance. However, the current pandemic created many different challenges for researchers at risk in both home and host countries. The good news are that all stakeholders of Inspireurope are experienced and open to dialogue with policy makers across Europe to reach applicable solutions.



#### Opening Session, Welcome addresses

Alexandros TRIANTAFYLLIDIS, Nikos PAPAIOANNOU, Konstantinos TSITSELIKIS, Mathieu SCHNEIDER, Gregory DIMITIRIADIS.



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## Opening Session, Scientific knowledge and academics under persecution

**Moderator: Professor A. TRIANTAFYLLIDIS.**

- **Konstantinos TSITSELIKIS**, Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Regional Studies, University of Macedonia

Professor K. Tsitselikis, Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Regional Studies, University of Macedonia, spoke about the significance of freedom of speech and freedom of thoughts. According to Prof. Tsitselikis freedom of speech is a pillar of our political and legal configuration, while freedom of thoughts is the means to challenge the established state of the art and policies. The one who is free in that sense can speak against any governor and thereby he/she can generate new ideas. So freedom of speech and freedom of thought constitute the basic cornerstones of our socio-political ability to adapt and to develop, which in turn is a foundation of our democracy. In our social or professional life, we are now facing limitations of moral, political, legal and professional character. In his conclusions he mentioned an important comment of the European court for Human Rights: «Freedom of expression also covers information or ideas that offend, shock or disturb the state for any section of the population».

## Opening Session, Building a culture of welcome at Greek universities

**Moderator: Professor A. TRIANTAFYLLIDIS.**

- **Chrysi VITSILAKI**, Rector of Aegean University, Professor of Preschool Education and Educational Planning Department: Hosting Refugees in Academic and other Programmes of the University of the Aegean
- **Mathieu SCHNEIDER**, Vice-Président de l'Université de Strasbourg: Welcoming Researchers at Risk to French Universities
- **Henriette STÖBER**, Policy Analyst, EUA - European University Association: Welcoming Researchers at Risk at European Institutions – an Inspireurope mapping report
- **Dionysios CHIONIS**, Professor of Economics, Democritus University of Thrace: Terms and conditions of a successful cooperation with foreign researchers; the case of Greek Universities
- **Ahmad Arash HEMATI**, Founder of Study in Greece & Sustainability coordinator of Volvo group: Challenges for studying and post studying in Greece for refugees

Professor Chr. Vitsilaki, Rector of Aegean University, pointed out that Academic Institutions have been actively engaged in the refugee crisis for over two decades on top of a great degree of voluntary engagement of members of the academic community from the beginning of the refugee flows to the islands. Yet, she asked for deep, structured forms of intervention in the refugee crisis. Furthermore, she mentioned the project SCIREA (Science for Refugee Scientists in Aegean Archipelago) which gives emphasis on the practical issues of conducting CVs, job-seeking in Europe and asylum procedures. She also pointed out the European internship network PRAXIS, which informs participants about job and research opportunities and she mentioned the educational interventions for refugees at the University of the Aegean: the Faculty of Humanities (established in 2016) declared that it aims to support refugees residing on the island Rhodes. (Further information in <https://refugeeobservatory.aegean.gr>, <https://refugeeobservatory.aegean.gr/bolg> and <http://repository-refugeeobservatory.ekt.gr/refugeeobservatory/?locale=en>.)

Professor M. Schneider, Vice-Président de l'Université de Strasbourg, spoke about how French universities build a culture of welcome to refugees. He pointed out an example with a Turkish sociologist at the Strasbourg University. Pinar took her Ph.D in 2009 by Strasbourg University and in 2016 became Associate Professor at Nice University. He also mentioned some key figures: for example, there are 400 refugee students since 2015,



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eight scholars at risk since 2017, seven of them on temporary academic position and one in a permanent position outside the university. He also mentioned the national program PAUSE, which gives financial support of around 50-80% of the employment costs for scholars at risk for 2 years, along with indirect support in terms of training courses, meetings and advocacy.

Mrs. H. Stöber focused on the role of the European University Association (EUA). According to the data she presented, 55% of hosting institutions receives some external funding as scholarships, fellowships, grants etc., and 10% were able to repurpose external funds received for other activities. It is also interesting that 84% of researchers at risk find employment that matches to their academic and professional background, 65% managed to move from their fellowship placement into different employment and 64% succeeded in enhancing their linguistic skills. She concluded that the Report for the Inspireurope project, “Researchers at Risk: Mapping Europe’s Response”, will be available on October 30 in <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sar-europe/resources>. The data set from the Inspireurope surveys with researchers at risk and hosting institutions will be also available on October 30 <https://www.slideshare.net/EurUniversityAssociation/presentations>.

Professor D. Chionis spoke about the terms and conditions for a successful cooperation with foreign researchers and mentioned the case of Greek universities. He argued that the recent refugee crisis has modified the features of the migrant population and that we have to keep in mind that inflow of migrants and refugees, legal or illegal, generates opportunities and challenges for Greece. If migration is managed successfully, it may bring a number of benefits to the ageing population. Furthermore, immigrants preferred to be self-employed in order to avoid lower paid job. He proposed to provide a fast-track work visa, an entrepreneur visa and a special start-up visa. The necessity of this step becomes obvious if we consider that immigrants researchers and scientific staff show a lower absorption in the Greek labor market, while in 2020, there was no registration from immigrants in the Economic Chamber of Greece.

Mr. A. HEMATI, Founder of Study in Greece, Sustainability coordinator of Volvo group, presented the challenges for studying and post studying in Greece for refugees, through his personal experience. He mentioned the requirements for an immigrant to be able to attend a Greek university, the challenges after graduation and some key facts about the refugee enrollment rate in public schools on Greek islands.



#### Opening Session, Building a culture of welcome at Greek universities

Alexandros TRIANTAFYLLIDIS, Ahmad Arash HEMATI, Konstantinos TSITSELIKIS, Mathieu SCHNEIDER, Henriette STÖBER, Dionysios CHIONIS, Chrysi VITSILAKI.



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## Afternoon workshops on preparing the work environment to welcome researchers at risk:

### A. Preparing the work environment in academia

**Moderators: Professor A. STOGIANNIDOU and Mrs. E. ANDRIANOPULU.**

- **Orla DUKE**, Programme Manager, Scholars at Risk Europe, Maynooth University, Ireland: Overview of funding opportunities/ academic placements in Europe for researchers at risk
- **Eleni ANDRIANOPULU**, BRiDGEs Project Coordinator, Bielefeld University: Bridges for Researchers in Danger Going to Europe. Academic Mentoring and further results of the projects BRiDGE and BRiDGE II
- **Marit EGNER**, Senior Adviser, Office for Research and International Cooperation, Department of Research and Innovation Administration, University of Oslo: The temporary university fellowship as a stepping-stone in career development
- **Colette GERARDS**, Project Manager, International Cooperation Projects, VU Amsterdam: The relationship between long term perspective of scholars and the labour market in host countries
- **Christina KONGOULIDOU**, Head of International Relations Office, University of Piraeus: The inclusion of refugee students in all cycles of studies. The case of the University of Piraeus
- **Cengiz AKTAR**, Lecturer, Faculty of Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies, University of Athens: An academic's journey the last 10 years

In her speech, Mrs. O. Duke pointed out that there are resources available for researchers at risk, as well as research funding open to all researchers, regardless origin – for instance 13 National SAR Sections, PAUSE programme - Collège de France, Philip Schwartz Initiative (PSI) - Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation, IIE – Scholar Rescue Fund (SRF), IIE-SRF/EDUFI Fellowships Finland, Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA), UK, Federal state programmes in Germany, Academy in Exile (AiE) etc. Finally, she mentioned the upcoming events and activities of Inspireurope program.

Mrs. E. Andrianopulu presented the two European programmes BRiDGE and BRiDGE II and their results, which can be summarized as follows: 50% of migrants need 5 to 6 years time to integrate into the workplace and 15 years to reach a 70% employment rate; the percentage of highly educated people among the whole population of refugees is almost the same as for the native born people; more than 250 highly skilled refugee researchers located in 21 countries in Europe and the Middle East benefited directly from the project through mentoring and training. The project succeeded in having high training rates: 104 researchers at risk, 33 non-academic and 80 academic mentors throughout Europe were involved in many actions and 224 refugee researchers across Europe were interviewed in order to shed light to their circumstances and needs. Future projects are advised to be more focused on sustainable involvement and training of academic mentors.

Mrs. M. Egner spoke about temporary university fellowships for researchers at risk. She mentioned that these temporary positions are funded from external fellowship or university core budgets. They are initiated by the researcher's need and most of the time there is a mentor or academic contact person at the hosting institution. She underlined that researchers at risk contribute as other researchers and have the same needs as other researchers plus some extra challenges. Furthermore, she pointed out that there is a need for a safe environment and for support of professional development and stated that institutional/administrative contact persons, academic mentors and career development courses are definitely essential for such a support.

Mrs. C. Gerards, presented the career needs and opportunities for scholars at risk based on the S.U.C.RE IO 3 (Institutional Support for Refugee Scholars in Higher Education). S.U.C.RE focused on the response of Universities to academic needs of refugee/migrant students and scholars and on the development of training modules addressed to volunteers working with refugees. Furthermore, she pointed out that there are some relevant career paths, such as academic mentoring and dual career perspective (in Academia) and dual career



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perspective and job coaching (in private sector). At the same time, a colleague of Mrs. Gerards, Mr. Dornmans underlined that the guidelines for enabling the long term perspective of scholars in local labour markets in host countries involve: (i) matching processes, (ii) joint projects and perspectives for development and (iii) supporting career opportunities.

Mrs. Ch. Kontogoulidou, spoke about the inclusion of refugee students in all levels of studies, and she focused specifically in the case of the University of Piraeus. She mentioned that they had many applications from refugees who wanted to join the curricula of the University of Piraeus. Moreover, the University has included in its strategy the possibility to offer Training Courses even though not all refugees had relevant, certified documentations. Moreover, she pointed out that the University of Piraeus is open to welcome refugees in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> level of studies,.

Prof. C. Aktar described his personal experience since 2013, when his University in Istanbul decided to abolish the department of the European Union Studies. Initially, prof. Aktar joined another University in Istanbul where he provided post-graduate courses on EU methods. Many other academicians experienced similar paths, and a huge number of them were forced to find jobs abroad.



#### Afternoon workshops on preparing the work environment to welcome researchers at risk: A. Preparing the work environment in academia

A. STOGIANNIDOU, Christina KONTOGOULIDOU, Eleni ANDRIANOPULU, Marit EGNER, Jorn DORNMANS, Orla DUKE, Colette GERARDS.



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## B. Preparing the work environment in the non-academic sector

**Moderators: Professor G. ZAROTIADIS and Mrs. D. SYRRI.**

- **Despoina SYRRI**, Director, Symbiosis-School of Political Studies in Greece, Council of Europe Network: Introductory remarks
- **Kleovoulos THEOTOKIS**, General Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Professional Chamber in Thessaloniki: How could Researchers at Risk (R@R) be integrated into the work environment?
- **Spyros IGNATIADIS**, General Director of Greek Exporters Association (SEVE): Enhancing International Business via Triple Helix Model of Innovation
- **Dimitrios VARADINIS**, Attorney at Law- Legal Services Coordinator at Praksis NGO: Legal hurdles for integration in the labour market
- **Christina MALIGKOUDI**, School of Modern Greek Language, AUTH: Language issues and access to the labour market
- **Ioannis KATSIKIS**, CEDEFOP, Refugee skills and labour market needs: How matching can support lawful adult refugee mobility
- **Mahmoud ABDELRASOUL**, Medical Doctor, Trainer of intercultural mediation, Greek Refugee Forum, Member of Board, Almasar General Director: A personal story

Mrs. D. Syrri, Director in Symbiosis-School of Political Studies in Greece, pointed out that in Greece a very aging and mostly still culturally homogeneous population has adverse effects on the local labour force and feels uncertain with respect to immigration dynamics. “Inspireurope” looks into ways of welcoming and addressing the multifaceted relationship between international academic mobility and inequalities. The study of this relationship should transcend the common question, “of who goes where and whether?” “how foreign scholars and faculty members will improve their CV’s?”. Finally, she mentioned that in order to efficiently regulate and govern the living and working conditions for refugees, we need to be aware of their needs and remarks. Access to and outcomes of international academic mobility is affected by disparities of labour market, nations states regulations, higher education systems and by individual characteristics such as gender, age, career stage etc.

Mr. K. Theotokis, was unable to participate.

Mr. S. Ignatiadis, General Director of Greek Exporters Association (SEVE), spoke about how international businesses could be enhanced via the Triple Helix Model of Innovation and more specifically, how export companies can benefit from researchers at risk. Mr. Ignatiadis mentioned that the extroversion of firms is an important factor for business and economic growth, especially in small countries like Greece. Furthermore, firms’ internationalization stimulates investment in Greece. Finally, he pointed out that Greece is part of the international community and besides our excellent research staff, we have to cooperate with researchers from all over the world in order to obtain and share knowledge and Know-how, so much needed in the highly competitive world we live in.

Mr. D. Varadinis, referred to the right to work and free choice of employment as a fundamental social right. The recognition of this right includes the provision of technical and vocational guidance and training programmes, the fact that everyone has a right to the enjoyment of just and favourable, safe and healthy working conditions, as well as to a fair remuneration. Furthermore, he underlined that contracting parties shall treat all refugees, those who lawfully stay in our countries but also the rest, with respect to conditions and wages, not less favourable than native workers in agriculture, the industry and commerce. Finally, Mr Varadinis cited Article 22 (of the Greek constitution) and Article 27 of law 4636/2019 of International



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Protection and other provisions, Article 29 with respect to the recognition of Academic Titles and finally Article 53 about access of asylum seekers to labour market, as the main legal framework that we all need to consider.

Dr. Ch. Maligkoudi (School of Modern Greek Language, AUTH) mentioned the language issues and the resulting difficulties with respect to labour market access. She mentioned that many European countries have introduced formal linguistic requirements. The evidence of having proficiency in the host country language and knowledge with respect to the local way of living, is often a legal requirement for staying and being active in a country. Closing her speech, she presented the Greek universities that provide courses to refugees for learning Greek (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, University of the Aegean and the National Kapodistrian University of Athens).

Mr. I. Katsikis, spoke about the refugee skills and the labour market needs. He presented the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training – CEDEFOP, based in Thessaloniki, as well as how it supports the development of European vocational education and training (VET) policies and contributes to their implementation. With respect to the focus of our workshop, CEDEFOP provides support in creating labour mobility opportunities for refugees, especially in order to support them in moving legally from first asylum countries to other countries, where they can make use of European wide recognisable professional skills in accordance to the local labour market needs.

Last but not least Mr. M. Abdelrasoul, Medical Doctor and trainer of intercultural mediation in the Greek Refugee Forum, presented his personal story. He mentioned that great difficulty originates from the fact that there are no programs in camps to support and to strengthen skills, especially for younger and well-educated refugees. Existing skills building programs are of small duration. Furthermore, he also pointed out the need for linguistic and socio-cultural support.



Afternoon workshops on preparing the work environment to welcome researchers at risk: B. Preparing the work environment in the non-academic sector

Grigoris ZAROTIADIS, Despoina SYRRI, Dimitrios VARADINIS, Christina MALIGKOUDI, Spyros IGNATIADIS.



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