

Inspireurope Kraków Regional Outreach Workshop – Summary Report 7-8 October 2021

Jagiellonian University hosted a virtual regional workshop that advanced the Inspireurope project's focus and support for at-risk scholars across Central, Southern and Eastern Europe by bringing together higher education institutions, researchers at risk, European and national policymakers, industry representatives and NGOs for discussions, dialogue and constructive engagement.

The regional workshop gathered researchers at risk, higher education institutions, organisations supporting researchers at risk, policymakers, civil society organisations, governmental and inter-governmental organisations for two days of important discussions on increasing support in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe in support of researchers at risk. Over 140 participants registered for the event, representing more than 70 institutions in 27 countries.

The event began with welcoming remarks by Prof. Beata Kowalska (Jagiellonian University), Prof. Dorota Malec (Vice-Rector of Jagiellonian University), Robert Piaskowski (City Kraków), and Sinead O’Gorman (Director, SAR Europe, on behalf of Inspireurope Project).

The first panel ‘Academic freedom in Central and Southern Europe - challenges and threats Hungary, Poland, Serbia’ was chaired by Dr Wojciech Burek (Jagiellonian University), and included Dr. Dániel Mikecz (Hungarian Academy of Science), Prof. Dušan Pavlović (University of Belgrade, Network of Academic Solidarity and Engagement), and Anna Białek (Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights). The panel addressed solidarity politics, human rights, and the historic and current status of national academies in challenges to academic freedom.

The keynote address, ‘Academic Freedom: Core Academic Value and Pillar of Democracy’ was delivered by Dr Olga Hünler, Off-University. Off-University is dedicated to the strategic preservation and support of academic life and knowledge where it is threatened by anti-democratic and authoritarian regimes. Dr. Hünler’s address discussed theoretical and practical dimensions of academic freedom, including current threats to academic freedom and the role of universities in advancing values that lead to the welcome and support of at-risk researchers.

The fourth panel, ‘Strengthening Support for Researchers at Risk in Central and Southern Europe’ was chaired by Joel Hanisek, Policy & Programme Manager for Scholars at Risk Europe and included the presentation of a new Inspireurope publication: "Researchers at Risk: National-level Actions in Europe", which was delivered by report co-author Marion Gues (PAUSE). The panel featured Interactive discussion amongst the following regional representatives from Greece, Poland, Italy, and Sweden around building and sustaining national initiatives to support researchers at risk: Prof. Alexandros Triantafyllidis (SAR Greece); Prof. Dominika Kasprowicz (Villa Decius Association); Dr Francesca Helm (SAR Italy); Karolina Catoni, SAR Sweden.

The final session on Day 1, ‘Career development & cross-national circulation of researchers in Europe: Euraccess TOP IV results’ was chaired by Dr Sybilla Stanisławska Kloc (Jagiellonian University) and featured Dimitrios Sanopoulos (National Coordinator of the Greek EURAXESS Service Network) who explained and address the specific uses and possibilities of EURAXESS in facilitating movement of researchers, including at-risk researchers, across Europe.



Day 1 also featured an informal networking session to replicate in-person event dynamics, which was held on the Spatial Chat application.

All breaks during Day 1 of the workshop included performances by The Choir in Contact, which performed under the direction of Dr. Wassim Ibrahim; together they were awarded the title of Multicultural Ambassador of Krakow in 2020.

Day 2 of the workshop began with a short session to address the current crisis in Afghanistan, 'From Kabul to Krakow' which was jointly chaired by Jagiellonian University researchers, Filip Ryba and Patrycja Król, and which featured interactive conversation with two at-risk researchers from Afghanistan based in Kraków: Alisher Ahahir and Masooma Sultani. Both worked in the field of journalism and media in Afghanistan.

The first full panel of Day 2 addressed 'Researchers at Risk: Contributions to European academy' and was chaired by Prof. Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska (Jagiellonian University) with contributions from Prof. Sema Bayraktar (Birarada Association); Dr Gilbert Nchongboh Chofang (Julius Kühn-Institut), and Prof. Candan Badem (Uppsala University). This panel addressed the substantive contributions of at-risk peers to European research projects and initiatives and considered questions of integration, mentorship, supports and development across relevant networks.

Continuing a focus on the arts and cultural from multicultural choral contributions led by Dr Wassim Ibrahim on Day 1, Day 2 also featured a midday curatorial virtual tour, led by Volha Kovalskaya, of an exhibition of art by young Belarusian artists.

The workshop focus on Belarus continued for the remainder of the day with the curatorial tour transitioning into a panel, 'Belarusian voices' that also featured Kovalskaya, in addition to Eduard Bukata, at-risk Belarusian researcher based at Jagiellonian University, who spoke about the 2020-21 political crisis in Belarus and diaspora involvement in relation to the advancement of academic freedom. The third speaker on this humanities-focused panel of emerging voices, which was chaired by Maria Świątkowska (Jagiellonian University), was Belarusian poet and activist Ekaterina Kavalionak-Hlukhouskava.

The final panel of the 2021 Kraków virtual workshop, 'Solidarity with Belarusian academics' focused on European initiatives supporting Belarusian academics. This was chaired by Prof. Joanna Hańderek (Jagiellonian University) and included presentations by Matteo Vespa (European Students' Union), Frank Albrecht (Philipp Schwartz-Initiative), and Adnieszka Stefaniak-Hrycko (National Agency of Academic Exchange), including NAWA's current solidarity programme for scholars & students from Belarus and the scope for sharing practices with others in Europe through national networks and focused dissemination.

