

SAFE – Supporting at-risk researchers with fellowships in Europe

Useful information for host institutions

Definition

The European Commission in its [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Guidelines for Inclusion of Researchers at Risk](#) defines researchers at risk as “researchers, scholars and scientists at all stages of their careers who are experiencing **threats to their life, liberty or research career, and those who are forced to flee or have been displaced because of such threats**”.

As such, hosting and working with at-risk researchers is sensitive and requires certain care. Below, you can find a collection of important information and links regarding various topics that might occur before/while hosting an at-risk researcher.

1. Communication

a. Communication with the SAFE team

- The SAFE team is careful not to mention personal details of the fellow (name of the researcher and the family, passport numbers, etc.) in emails. Instead, the **application number is used for reference**.
- As far as possible, all documents relevant to the application/fellowship are shared via **online folders with restricted access**. Documents are **not shared via email**.

b. Public communication

- The SAFE team and the donor (European Research Executive Agency) are careful **not to disclose the countries of origin** of the fellows publicly.
- Any personal information about the researchers will not be disclosed without **explicit consent of the researchers**.
- In case of uncertainty, the host institutions can contact their **Data Protection Officers** for guidance.
- The host institutions must comply with the EU and the SAFE project's **visibility and communication guidelines**, as mentioned in article 4 of the Fellowship Agreement. These obligations also apply to the researcher's work and participation in networking and training sessions.
- Even when outside their home country, researchers might be subject to online and offline [repression](#).

2. Arrival of fellows

a. Visa

- The host institution, together with the researcher, is advised to consult the website of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and the official website of the **Embassy/Consulate** of the host country in the researcher's home country to verify the list of required documents for the visa application.

- The host institution is asked to provide all **official documents** required on its side, on institutional letterhead and duly signed by the authorised person. These may include: the employment contract and/or invitation letter, proof of health insurance, proof of suitable accommodation.
- The host institution is encouraged to support the researcher in checking all required **personal documents**, such as a valid passport, travel documents, proof of sufficient financial resources, copies of academic qualifications or any additional documents requested by the Embassy/Consulate.
- It is recommended that the host institution contact the [Euraxess National Contact Point](#) in the host country. Euraxess is the largest pan-European initiative promoting researcher mobility and career development. Among its administrative and legal support activities, it provides guidance on entry visas. Consult the relevant [Euraxess National Portal](#) for up-to-date information.
- Scholars at Risk Europe has collected useful information on **entry requirements** per country on their [webpage](#).

b. Welcome and orientation

- The host institution is welcome to provide **pre-arrival guidance** by sharing practical information with the researcher before arrival, including addresses, campus and city maps, and guidance on local transportation. [Here](#) you can find a collection of useful links offered by Scholars at Risk Europe.
- **Personalised support** is recommended during the first days to help the fellow settle into both the institution and the local community. This may include opening a bank account, assistance with healthcare, social and professional matters, language learning support, and fostering social integration for the researcher and the researcher's family.
- The host institution may wish to provide a **list of useful contacts**, including emergency numbers, institutional focal points, and local NGOs/associations offering support to migrants, refugees, and international researchers.
- The [Euraxess](#) network provides comprehensive support to researchers at risk, facilitating both their practical and professional integration into the host country.

Further information:

You can also find further information on the following websites:

- [SAFE Resources page](#)
- [EU Immigration Portal](#)
- [Inspireurope+ Resources page](#)
- [PAUSE Welcome handbook for host institutions](#) (in French language)
- [‘Academic Refuge’ Project Handbook](#)
- [Guidelines for Universities Hosting Human Rights Defenders](#)

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