

Defending Academic Freedom by Supporting Students at Risk. Towards a European Approach?



**Joint online event
on Tuesday,
16 November 2021,
10:00 - 12:45**

1 Concept Note

As the tense situation in Belarus - and more recently in Afghanistan - have accentuated the need to support student human rights activists at risk of persecution in their home countries, several European countries react to this need with support programmes or schemes. European stakeholders have pronounced calls for action at European level, coordinating efforts to defend academic freedom as a core European value by supporting students at risk, for example the [European University Association](#) and the [European Students' Union](#).

The German Academic Exchange Service ([DAAD](#)) has recently started a scholarship programme for students at risk (Hilde Domin Programme); the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills ([HK-dir](#)) has a students at risk-programme running since 2013; and the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange ([NAWA](#)) has started a programme targeting students at risk from Belarus.

On 16 November 2021, the three organisations are organising a joint hybrid event in Brussels/online, targeting European policy makers and stakeholders, to

- inform about national programmes protecting students at risk;
- give a voice to students, who have benefitted from these existing programmes;
- explore possibilities to complement, coordinate and expand the support for students at risk at European level.

2 Programme

10:00 – 10:20	Opening and Keynote Speech
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome by the host organisations - Keynote by Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans, European Commission (tbc)
10:20 – 11:15	Presentation of national programmes and student experiences
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short presentations by the leadership of DAAD, HK-dir and NAWA - Interviews with students from each national programme - Questions and Answers
11:15 – 11:30	Short break
11:30 – 12:30	Panel discussion about coordination and support on European level
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Themis Christophidou, Director-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission (tbc) - Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, Member of European Parliament - Michael Vorländer, Head of Unit Education and Research, Permanent Representation of Germany to the European Union - Matteo Vespa, Executive Committee Member of the European Students' Union - Prof. Marcin Pałys, Board Member of the European University Association (Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland) <p>Moderation: David Croisier, Higher Education Policy Analyst at Eurydice</p>
12:30 – 12.45	Closing remarks