



Network of Universities
from the Capitals of Europe



Webinar

Universities responding to forced displacement Challenges and opportunities

Promoted by the University College Dublin

25 November 2020

10:00-12:00 CET

Migrant and refugee issues were in the news headlines for many years before COVID-19 and now they appear rather neglected despite the fact that many are still struggling to reach the European Union and once succeeding it, to start a new life. According to the UNHCR, access to university education and research is a fundamental part of the protection and the inclusion strategy of a refugee. However, it is still difficult for many displaced persons to (re-)start their academic career in Europe. Thus, how do universities react to this situation and how should they address the challenge?

The webinar will share higher education initiatives addressing the challenge of forced displacement of academic staff. UNICA member institutions from different regions of Europe (University of Oslo, University College Dublin, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) will share good practices and present the challenges that result from forced displacement and threats to academic freedom.

To provide an in-depth and personal perspective of the situation, participants will have the opportunity to listen to testimonies from affected academic staff as well.

FINAL PROGRAMME

10:00–10:15 Welcome address of Unica President **Luciano SASO**, **João Mario GRILO**, Chair of the Unica & The City Working Group, Full Professor at Nova University of Lisbon, and **Joe CARTHY**, College Principal and Dean of Science of University College Dublin

10:15–11:25 Testimony by **Amal ALSAMANN**, Reporting & Data Analyst at RIDM, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

10:25–10:35 Beyond academic excellence. Contributing to the EU Challenges and the issue of Forced Displacement by **Michalis SPOURDALAKIS**, Professor of Political Sociology, Dean of the School of Economics and Politics, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens

10:35–10:45 Researchers at Risk - How universities are joining forces through EU projects by **Marit EGNER**, Senior adviser at the University of Oslo

10:45–10:55 Responding to forced displacement: Sanctuary Initiatives at University College Dublin by **Muireann Ní RAGHALLAIGH**, Assistant Professor of Social Work at UCD's School of Social Policy Social Work and Social Justice

11:55–11:05 Between Internationalization and Defending Academic Freedom: Freie Universität Berlin and its programs in support of scholars at risk by **Achim ROHDE**, Academic Coordinator, Academy in Exile, Freie Universität Berlin

11:05–11:15 How socially inclusive are our universities to refugees? Policies and practices of two public universities in Norway by **Juhar Yasin ABAMOSA**, PhD candidate, University of Bergen

11:15–11:25 Why listening to migrants is important: the limits of data on migration by **Ahmad Wali Ahmad Yar**, PhD researcher, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

11:25–12:00 Discussion moderated by Joe Carthy



Luciano Saso, President of UNICA

Prof. Luciano Saso (Faculty of Pharmacy and Medicine, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy) received his PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences from Sapienza University in 1992. He is author of more than 220 scientific articles published in peer reviewed international journals with impact factor (SASO-L in www.pubmed.com, total impact factor > 500, H-index Google Scholar 45, Scopus 37). He coordinated several research projects in the field of pharmacology and has been referee for many national and international funding agencies and international scientific journals in the last 30 years. Prof. Saso has extensive experience in international relations and he is currently Vice-Rector for European University Networks at Sapienza University of Rome. In the last 15 years, he participated in several projects including IMS2020, EGRACONS, IMOTION, BUCUM, UZDOC, TRAIN and has been speaker and chair at many international conferences organised by UNICA and other university networks. He coordinates the Sapienza team in the European University CIVIS (www.civis.eu). Prof. Saso has been Member of the Steering Committee of UNICA for two mandates (2011-2015) and in November 2019 he has been re-elected President of UNICA for the second mandate (2019-2023).



João Mario Grilo, film director, Full Professor, Communication Sciences Department, NOVA University of Lisbon

Born in Figueira da Foz, Portugal, 1958. Studies of Economics in Coimbra, Degree in Sociology at ISCTE in Lisbon, MA, PhD and Aggregation in Communication Sciences / Cinema in the NOVA Faculty of Human and Social Sciences where he is, actually, a Full Professor, teaching a Film Directing seminar and coordinating the new PhD in Artistic Studies, the PhD in Digital Media and the MA in Film/Television. He is author of several books on cinema and film studies: *The Order in Cinema* (1997), *The Lessons of Cinema* (2006), *The Cinema of Non-Illusion* (2006), *The Imagined Man* (2006), *The Book of Images* (2007), *Film & Philosophy: Mapping an Encounter* (2014). As a filmmaker he directed his first feature film, *Maria*, in 1978, followed by *The Foreigner* (1982), *The King's Trial* (1989), *The End of the World* (1993), *Saramago : Documents* (1994) , *The Eyes of Asia* (1996) , *Out of Sight* (1998), *451 Forte* (2000), *The Break* (2002), *Proof of Contact* (2004), *The Flying Carpet* (2008), *Two Women* (2010), *Your Home* (2012), and he is concluding a documentary - *VieirArpad* (2020) - and a feature film - *Field of Blood* (2020). Still, as a film director, he represented Portugal, in the Official Selections of the Festivals of Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Locarno, Rio de Janeiro, among others.



Joe Carthy, College Principal and Dean of Science at University College Dublin

Professor Joe Carthy is College Principal and Dean of Science at UCD. He leads the UCD in the Community (<http://www.ucd.ie/ucdinthecommunity/>) initiative at UCD and also chairs UCD's Employee Engagement Committee. He was the founding Director of the UCD Centre for Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Investigation and was a

member of the Irish government's Internet Content Governance Advisory Group. Professor Carthy has a strong record in winning funding for research. He has also supervised/co-supervised 34 Research students to completion and is the author of a series of scientific publications and one undergraduate textbook.



Amal Alsamman, Reporting & Data Analyst at RIDM

Research Information and Data Management Unit/Research & Data Management Department. In order to escape the war in Syria and fleeing armed conflict, she has applied for asylum in Belgium. Since 2015, she has been living in Belgium and working at VUB. She used to work in the ICT for more than 10 years as a web developer and System Administrator. In addition, she taught ICT courses and gave training at different universities. In her current job she is responsible for PURE DATA ANALYTICS. PURE is an ICT platform used internally at VUB and connected to the Regional Higher Education government ICT tool. She is managing and

accountable for VUB research output deliverables and make sure that these are correctly defined, input and used for reporting and strategic business decisions.



Michalis Spourdalakis, Professor of Political Sociology, Dean of the School of Economics and Politics, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens

Michalis Spourdalakis has been teaching political sociology as Professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and since April 2014 he is also the Dean of the School of Economics and Politics and in recent past Chair of the Hellenic Political Science Association. Professor Spourdalakis holds an undergraduate Degree from the University of Athens; a B.A. (Honours) from Lakehead University, Canada; an M.A. from University of Manitoba; and Ph.D. from Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. He has also been a Post-Doctoral Fellow of the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC); and a Researcher at the National Center of Social Research, in Athens. Professor Spourdalakis has published in the field of political sociology in both English and Greek, while part of his work is also published in Spanish, French, Chinese and Korean. His work focuses on political representation with an emphasis on political parties' relation to society, culture and

the state; on local and regional administration and development; on the welfare state and collective consumption; and on Greek political institutions and policies since 1974.

ABSTRACT. After a very short reference to the way the National & Kapodistrian University for Athens (NKUA) has contributed to the refugee issue, the presentation will address the general challenges face by the EU. The main argument is that the Universities should not limit their contribution to the problems and side effects infused by the ever-increasing forced displacement, at their regional or even nation constituencies. As most of them have the theoretical and research capacities in a variety of fields that are necessary to produce a renewed policy agenda at the EU level, their efforts should be policy oriented. As forced displacement is the result of a variety and diverse causes its effects require the input of a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary inputs, which focus on policy proposals by the EU authorities.



Marit Egner is a senior adviser at the University of Oslo, where she works in support of research cooperation outside Europe and as the institutional contact person for Scholars at Risk. She was the coordinator of the Academic Refuge Erasmus+ strategic partnership and is currently UiO's main contact for the Inspireurope project. Before joining the University of Oslo in 2007, she worked 9 years as a credential evaluator for NOKUT, where she was responsible for the early development of recognition procedures for refugees' education in Norway. She is a Human Geographer by training.

ABSTRACT. The University of Oslo has been assisting students and researchers at risk in various ways. Emphasis will be on how the University of Oslo has been joining forces with other universities and networks to improve the services to refugees and particularly researchers at risk. The Academic Refuge Erasmus+ strategic partnership (2016-19) and the Inspireurope MSCA project (2019-22) will be the main examples, including how other UNICA members might join Inspireurope activities.



Muireann Ní Raghallaigh is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at UCD's School of Social Policy Social Work and Social Justice. Muireann teaches on UCD's Professional Masters in Social Work and is a qualitative researcher primarily researching the lived experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. She previously worked as a social worker with separated asylum seeking children. She has published on the experiences of unaccompanied minors living in foster care in Ireland, on the experiences of refugees transitioning from Ireland's 'direct provision' system, on refugee family reunification and on the needs of refugee children. Muireann represents UCD on the Steering Committees for Universities of Sanctuary Ireland and on the Advisory Board for Ireland's Community Sponsorship National Support Organisation. She is very interested to opening up higher education access to asylum seekers and refugees.

ABSTRACT. Muireann will talk about the role of University College Dublin in responding to forced displacement. She will discuss in particular the role of the university in policy relevant research, in awareness raising and advocacy, and in making the university more accessible to asylum seeking and refugee communities. She will highlight the work of many members of the UCD community whose work has contributed to the university obtaining the status of a University of Sanctuary in 2018, including student led initiatives. Muireann will also draw on her own experience of working both within and outside of UCD, discussing in particular initiatives related to the provision of scholarships to refugees and asylum seekers and in relation to refugee community sponsorship.



Achim Rohde, Academic Coordinator, Academy in Exile, Freie Universität Berlin

Dr. Achim Rohde is a Middle East historian focusing on the modern history of the MENA region. Among his recent publications is *National Politics and Sexuality in Transregional Perspective: The Homophobic Argument* (Routledge, 2018). Since 2019 he serves as academic coordinator of Academy in Exile's Critical Thinking Residency Program at Freie Universität Berlin.

ABSTRACT. Freie Universität Berlin is among the most research oriented and internationalized academic institutions in Germany. The presentation lays out FUB's principles of international cooperation and portrays two programs in support of scholars at risk operated in this context: the Academics in Solidarity Network, and Academy in Exile. It also introduces Off University, an initiative founded in Berlin to support scholars at risk and refugees.



Juhar Yasin Abamosa, PhD candidate, University of Bergen

Juhar Yasin Abamosa is a PhD candidate at Department of Education, University of Bergen in Norway. His PhD project tries to investigate the roles of different institutions in social inclusion and/or social exclusion of refugees into higher education in Norway. In addition to this, his research interest includes education policy, higher education, refugee higher education and social capital.

ABSTRACT. Even though there has been increasing focus on the integration of refugees in various host countries, refugee higher education remains marginal. Higher education institutions can play positive roles in social inclusion of refugees into higher education. However, I argue that, two public universities' roles in social inclusion of refugees in Norway are characterized by the lack of durable initiatives or by ad hoc and spontaneous initiatives which mainly focus on granting refugees access to higher education without taking into account the participation and empowerment dimension of social inclusion. Hence, it is suggested that the universities could and should have done more to genuinely include refugees through devising a comprehensive refugee social inclusion policy at institutional level, opening dedicated centers with durable initiatives, and activities such as

bridging programmes incorporating language courses, advice on time management and study skills, and acculturation programmes.



Ahmad Wali Ahmad Yar, PhD researcher, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Ahmad Wali Ahmad Yar is a PhD researcher at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) with the Interface Demography (ID) research group. He works on the Horizon 2020 project Enhanced Migration Measures from A Multidimensional Perspective (HumMingBird). His research focuses on international migration, the integration of migrants, migration data, theoretical and data gaps in migration research, EU policies on migration, and migrant integration policies at the local level. Previously, Ahmad Wali worked for almost three years at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in the economic policy and GRID units. Ahmad Wali

holds a master's degree in Political Science from Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and a bachelor's in International Relations from the al Farabi Kazakh National University. Ahmad Wali has also worked as an interpreter for the UNHCR and as a Public Relations Officer for Ariana Social Centre in Almaty, Kazakhstan. He has a keen personal interest in the history and current affairs of Central Asia.

ABSTRACT. Ahmad Wali's PhD research is a part of the Horizon 2020 project "Enhanced Migration from a Multidimensional Perspective" (HumMingBird). HumMingBird's overall objective is to improve the understanding of changing nature of migration flows and the drivers of migration, to analyse patterns, motivations and new geographies. Moreover, HumMingBird aims to calculate population estimates and determine emerging trends and future trends, and accordingly, to identify possible future implications of today's policy decisions. The project's ambitions are inter alia to identify the uncertainties, to reappraise and explore the reasons why migration predictions may not hold, and to assess non-traditional data sources for migration research. To draw empirically informed migration policies and prevent prejudice and stereotyping, there is a need for timely accessible, reliable and relevant data on migration. The existing data on international migration are inadequate, unreliable and incomparable across countries and regions. Inadequate data will challenge policymakers around the world to develop informed policies and decisions. Ahmad Wali's research focuses on detecting the gaps in international migration data and conveying advice on solutions for improving migration statistics. Ahmad Wali will discuss how complementary measures are used to close the gaps in data and how the HumMingBird researchers are going to bring in the perspectives of migrants that are not projected in quantitative data, from the qualitative perspective. He will further discuss about the 'hubs of migration' and the importance of listening to the migrants en route to understand the migratory trajectories, as well as the experiences of settled migrants in different European countries.