



The Utrecht Network Task Force

“Responsible Internationalisation and Global Engagement”

Promoting Academic Freedom and Responsibility in Academia

Mobilising international university networks to improve institutional support for researchers at risk –

15 November 2024, 14.00 CET | WEBINAR

ROLE - MEMBERSHIP

RIGE was established in 2022 to promote **university internationalization, global engagement and science diplomacy practices** that are consistent with and actively **support the protection and promotion of core academic values**, especially **academic freedom** and **academic responsibility** across the Utrecht Network, European University Networks, and beyond. This includes **support for at-risk students, scholars, European Institutions and the world**.

The current situation in which universities find themselves is characterized by global societal challenges coupled with increasing geopolitical tensions, multiple crises, rapidly evolving nationalism, populism and autocratization.

This is accompanied by threats to **academic freedom, institutional autonomy** and the **human rights of students and scholars**. As a result, the internationalization and global engagement of universities is becoming increasingly important – if not indispensable – but also more complex, challenging and risky.

- **Ruhr University Bochum**, Iris Vernekohl, Chair, Monika Sprung, Co-Chair
- **Aristotle University Thessaloniki**, Prof. A Triantafyllidis, Prof I Papageorgiou, K Mantasavili
- **University of Bologna**, Prof. Marco Borraccetti
- **University College Cork**, Dr. Claire Dorrity
- **Jagiellonian University Krakow**, Prof. Beata Kowalska
- **University of Strasbourg**, Prof. Mathieu Schneider



Mobilising international university networks to improve institutional support for researchers at risk –

15 November 2024, 14.00 CET | WEBINAR

Activities

since 1987

- **RIGE Survey & Interactive Virtual Map (in progress)**

In order to identify potential areas for joint/UN-wide RIGE-related activities and programs, we designed, distributed and started analyzing an online survey/questionnaire on RIGE-related policies/strategies, structures and programs at UN Member Institutions.

- Half of the Universities have a University Policy/Codex/Statement on Academic Freedom. The majority of Universities have a Magna Charta Universitatum.
- 2/3 of the Universities have or are in the process of creating University guidelines/codes of conduct on international academic/research collaborations and university partnerships with partners from autocratic regimes/difficult human rights' contexts
- The majority of Universities, do not have a designated academic freedom ombudsperson or Academic Freedom Committee
- The majority of Universities participate in the Scholars at Risk Network
- Half of the Universities have University scholarship schemes for hosting at-risk researchers/scholars on campus
- Almost all Universities are members of a European University Network of the European University Initiative. Most European Alliances however do not have work packages, initiatives or programmes related to the promotion of academic freedom and/or the support of at-risk scholars/institutions

Mobilising international university networks to improve institutional support for researchers at risk –

15 November 2024, 14.00 CET | WEBINAR

Activities

- **International Staff Training (10-14 March 2025)**

since 1987

Responsible Internationalization and Institutional Support for At-risk Scholars

Access to Higher Education, Training and Employment including 3rd *Inspireurope+*

Outreach Workshop “Supporting Researchers at Risk in SE Europe”

Aim

<https://eurep.auth.gr/el/staff/training/estw/utrecht-rige-2025>

- To raise awareness as well as critically discuss and reflect on different facets of responsible internationalization, especially vis a vis the current political and geopolitical developments and relevant European policies/guidelines/initiatives
- To facilitate sharing of experiences and good practices with setting up and successfully implementing responsible internationalization policies and practices at departmental and institutional/university level,
- to critically discuss, reflect upon and promote core academic values (especially academic freedom, academic integrity and academic responsibility) in European and global perspective across the UN
- to establish a community of practice of informed, responsible and globally engaged scholars, science/research managers as well as university policy/strategy advisors and administrators across the Utrecht Network and beyond.

Main topics - Workshops

- Presentation/mapping of Task Force RIGE activities & events and at UN member institutions
- How to implement the right to academic freedom and academic responsibility on campus and in internationalization of higher education
- How to successfully support researchers at risk before, during, after and beyond hosting
- How to comply with human rights and EU/ national research security regulations (e.g. dual use, export control) when engaging in international cooperations and partnerships with partners from “challenging contexts” while avoiding restrictions/encroachments on academic freedom.

Mobilising international university networks to improve institutional support for researchers at risk –

15 November 2024, 14.00 CET | WEBINAR

Activities

since 1987

- **International Summer School (Summer 2025)**
Protecting the Freedom and Courage to Think: Human Rights of Students and Scholars in Turbulent Times”
- Two-week course (5-10 working days, online and physical) for (Advanced Bachelor), Master students and PhD candidates
- Organised in collaboration with Bettina Nelemans, and the external participation of Prof. van der Wende, Prof Rienk and Dr Bart van de Laar (Utrecht U)

Expanding Support

since 1987

- Support for/Exchange of Utrecht Network Member Institutions/Staff
 - Sharing of Best Practice / Peer Advise (including SARs)
 - RiGE-related Staff Training (including SARs)
- RiGE Related Academic Activities (Teaching, Research, Talent Development)
 - Joint UN-wide and Blended SAR Advocacy Seminar/Module
- Developing/Grant Application of RiGE-related EU Project and Funding Proposal
- (Direct) Support to Scholars at Risk (SAR)
 - Joint UN Webinar Series and/or Certificate Programme/Microcredential and/or Traineeship Programme for SARs
- Responding Actively to RiGE-related European/Global Public Policy

thank you!