



**DENMARK'S  
STUDENTS AT  
RISK  
PROGRAMME**

A proposal by DSF

# PRELUDE

With this proposal we aim to create a joint project between Danske Studerendes Fællesråd and the Ministry of Higher Education and Science to work for a common goal: the one of the fight for academic freedom, free-speech and overall individual rights in higher education institutions.

We believe that Students' at Risk is an ideal project to follow that ambition.

A project that is currently implemented in Norway and, according to the Norwegian Government-led mid-term evaluation, is currently well functioning<sup>1</sup>. A project that when passed in the Norwegian Parliament in 2013, it was done with a unanimous vote, and that it was a conservative Government, which decided to renew it in 2015. A project that the Nordic Council has recently recommended the Nordic Council of Ministers to look into the possibilities of being implemented in all Nordic countries. A recommendation that, among others, was proposed by Marcus Knuth (V)<sup>2</sup>. A project that the European Liberal Youth (LYMEC), umbrella organization for Liberal youth organization in Europe (including Venstres Ungdom), called on "European countries and the European Union to adopt the students at risk programme from Norway"<sup>3</sup>.

Students at Risk is a programme that has a very low economic cost, but a great political value. It gives a new chance to all of those students around the world that fight for freer nations, and that, because of it, they are persecuted by oppressive Governments.

This paper aims to draft a first proposal on how such a project could be implemented in Denmark. A proposal deeply inspired on the well-functioning Norwegian Students at Risk model.

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluation of the Students at Risk Programme: [https://www.siu.no/publikasjoner/Alle-publikasjoner/\(view\)/71955](https://www.siu.no/publikasjoner/Alle-publikasjoner/(view)/71955)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.norden.org/sv/nordiska-raadet/aerenden/a-1712-kultur>

<sup>3</sup> See Annex 2

# INTRODUCTION

Students at Risk (StAR) is a programme that aims to provide protection and possibility of completion of education for students around the world who are persecuted or punished for their political or activist work. In other words, StAR aims to defend the right of free speech and academic freedom by providing a study place in Denmark to affected students.

Higher Education institutions have been historically spaces for the development of critical thinking, analytical skills and knowledge gathering. Because of this, higher education institutions have also been spaces where students have engaged in political activity and advocacy work for the promotion of human rights. Activities that have widely benefited our societies, into becoming fairer and freer.

Unfortunately, these characteristics have too many times lead student activists to be under a high level of risk, when countries or their institutions have decided to proactively silence their work. This risk has at times translated into denial of continuing their educations, as well as other forms of harassment or political persecution.

The aim of this programme is to identify students under these situations. Students who, given their activist activity or academic research, are at risk of being denied their educational or other rights in their countries. The programme goal is to provide these students with a possibility to continue their education in Denmark.

Students who will be accepted under this programme will receive a scholarship to be enrolled in a Bachelor or Master degree programme in Denmark. The scholarship will include a tuition waiver, as well as receiving a sufficient stipendium to cover their living expenses while studying.

# STRUCTURE OF IMPLEMENTATION

The programme runs through 5 key phases, which will in this document be explained with detail:

- 1) Nomination phase
- 2) Validation phase
- 3) Admission phase
- 4) Immigration phase
- 5) Relocation phase

The students that this programme targets are students who might be living under a high level of personal risk and surveillance. It is therefore crucial that all involved parties in this project work with maximum caution to identify and mitigate potential risks (e.g. through discretion/confidentiality, restricted access to documents, etc.)

The general administration and coordination of this project will be under the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science (UFM), who can contact, and be contacted by, all the involved stakeholders.

## 1. NOMINATION PHASE

### 1.1 Nominating institutions

Interested candidates cannot apply by themselves to be selected in the StAR programme, but must instead be nominated by third organizations or institutions. Below are listed potential types of institutions and organizations, which participation in the programme through the possibility of nominating participants could be taken into consideration (see annex 1).

- Governmental institutions: The Ministry Higher Education and Science, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Development, etc.
- Non-Governmental Organizations: Amnesty international, Oxfam IBIS, Globalt Fokus etc.
- Student Organizations: Danske Studerendes Fællesråd, European Students' Union, etc.
- Others: Norwegian Center for International Cooperation in Education (the organization coordinations StAR in Norway), The Scholars at Risk Network, Danske Universiteter, etc.

All nominations must be made according to the nomination criteria, explained in the following point (1.2)

### 1.2 Nomination criteria

The potential participants that can be nominated for the StAR programme must strictly comply with the following criteria

- Student status: candidates must have commenced their study programme at a Bachelor or Master level and not have discontinued it for more than 2 years from

the date of nomination

- Activism and risk: the candidates must be actively involved at promoting one, or more, human rights, at a level that entails personal risk. Examples of this can be physical violence, arrest, denial of civil rights, persecution, expulsion from higher education institution, etc.
- Travel documents: candidates must hold (or be able to get hold of) valid travel documents, such a passport or similar, allowing them to travel to/from their country of residence.

UFM reserves the right of retracting nominations, in case these do not meet the selection criteria. UFM can always be contacted in case of doubt of whether a potential candidate meets the selection criteria.

### 1.3 Contact with potential candidates

After identifying a potential candidate, the relevant Danish embassy will make contact with them. The potential candidate is informed that they are considered for nomination for the StAR programme. The potential candidate will have to as well clarify their wish to participate and which communication channel has to be used to send further information on how to proceed to in order to be selected. The potential candidate shall also confirm that they meet the criteria set in point 1.2. The requirement on activism and risk must not be confirmed, as this has to be assessed and concluded by the nominating organization or institution before establishing contact.

### 1.4 Information package to candidates

After confirmation from the Danish embassies that the candidates meet the criteria specified in 1.2 and that they wish to participate in the programme, the candidates' preferred contact information will be sent to UFM, which will send an information package. This package will contain relevant programme information for the candidates, and request them to submit scanned copies of their academic credentials, English proficiency documentation, migration related information, etc.

## 2. VALIDATION PHASE

Upon receiving the candidate's documentation, UFM will carry a general evaluation. This evaluation's objective is to ensure that the candidates satisfy the minimum requirements for one or more existing study programmes in Denmark and, if necessary, narrow the number of candidates down to the number of study places for which financing exist.

UFM will produce a report on the assessment of each candidate's educational background, language proficiency, credibility of sent documentation and, if any, need for further validation. Furthermore, UFM will, in base of the produced report, prepare a recommendation to the individual higher education institutions with regard to potential study programmes for which the candidates ought to be considered for admission. The recommendation shall enclose the report and any other supporting documentation that the higher education institutions might need to assess the candidate and recommendation.

In cases where UFM and/or a specific higher education institution consider it necessary to carry out further validation, UFM and the higher education institution will cooperate as necessary to design an individual validation procedure, through interviews, oral/written examinations or others. UFM will without delay contact the relevant Danish embassy to schedule and agree on an appropriate way to carry the validation. The Danish embassy concerned will be responsible to inform the candidate about the schedule for the individual validation procedure and assist UFM and the higher education institution as necessary in the process.

In case of the candidate found to not qualify for any study programme, UFM shall notify the candidate about it.

### **3. ADMISSION PHASE**

#### **3.1 Decisions and communication regarding admission**

Upon receiving UFM's report and recommendation, higher education institutions shall decide whether they wish to accept the individual candidates within their study programmes. It is the higher education institution responsibility to inform the candidates on their final decision. In case of being accepted in a study programme, a limited amount of time will be given to the candidates to accept or reject the offer. In case of having more than one study programme offer the candidate shall be allowed to choose their preferred programme.

Upon a candidate's acceptance of a study place, the higher education institution shall communicate UFM on the decision, in order to start preparing the necessary residence permit paperwork assistance.

In the case of a candidate being rejected by a higher education institution, it is the institution's responsibility to inform the candidate. The institution shall also inform UFM.

### 3.2 Admission letters and scholarships

In the case of acceptance of a study offer, the higher education institution shall send a letter of admission to the candidate in question. Furthermore UFM shall offer:

- A full tuition waiver until completion of education.
- A stipendium of an amount equivalent to, at least, SU + SU-lån, until completion of education.
- In case of being offered a Bachelor degree programme, it shall be also offered entitlement to direct access to a relevant Master degree (*retskrav*). The Master degree offered shall also include a full tuition waiver and a stipendium equivalent to, at least, SU + SU-lån, until completion of the Master degree.

UFM shall at the same time inform the necessary Danish embassies on the admissions and get in contact with the participants, to inform them to make an appointment with the aforementioned embassies to present the different identification papers necessary to issue a residence permit.

#### 4. THE IMMIGRATION PHASE

When the participants have been formally admitted, UFM shall send them information on how to apply for a residence permit through the Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration.

If necessary, UFM will cover the candidate's application fees necessary to receive the residence permit. They will also assist the participants as necessary during the application process. In case of rejection of the candidate during this process, UFM will inform the higher education institution on it.

#### 5. THE RELOCATION PHASE

The higher education institution in question is responsible for arranging an appropriate reception of the participant and making sure that the participant has the necessary tools to settle in and start their academic year. As well as, if possible, secure their accommodation prior to their arrival. In case of this not being possible, information on how to find housing in the city in question or on alternative housing solutions.

In case of need by the participant, transportation to Denmark, from the participant's residence country, shall be covered by UFM.

# ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

There are two possible models for involvement of higher education institutions in this programme:

- 1) Whenever a student is identified to be at risk and is selected to the programme. Then UFM will look into the different existing study programmes offered in Denmark and will make a set of recommendations to be sent to the respective institutions.
- 2) Higher education institutions volunteer to participate in the StAR programme. Whenever a student is selected to it, UFM looks into the different study programmes within the volunteer institutions and makes a recommendation based on their offer.

# SUPPORT FROM THE NORWEGIAN PROGRAMME

It is important to remark the possibility of conducting, at least in the initial phases, the Danish StAR programme in close cooperation with the Norwegian one. This would allow us to receive best practices and early-implementation assistance, in the necessary areas. As well, we have been contacted by a responsible of the Scholars at Risk programme for Copenhagen University, where he offered the possibility of assisting with developing the StAR project in Denmark.

# PROGRAMME TIMELINE

15th August

Deadline for candidate nominations to the Danish embassy (1.1).

1st September

Deadline for Danish embassies to send candidates' information to UFM (1.4).

15th September



Deadline for UFM to send the information package and ask for necessary documentation to candidates (1.4).

15th January

Deadline for UFM to assess candidates and send recommendations to higher education institutions (2).

Higher education institutions can decide the date to inform their acceptance to the candidate (3.1).

Higher education institutions can decide within what timeline they want students to accept or reject their offer (3.1).

## FUNDING

The programme is fully funded by UFM, which will designate an amount of funding for StAR. The amount depends on the number of students wished to accept in the programme.

The table below shows the average cost of the programme per student per year. The table excludes the cost of administration fees to be paid to complete the residence permit bureaucracy. It also excludes the potential cost of payment of transportation to Denmark.

	STÅ 2018	STÅ 2019 (new "bevillingsmodel")	Stipendium*	Total (2018 / 2019)
Takst 1	44.100	31.700	110.472	154.572 / 142.172
Takst 2	63.300	45.600	110.472	173.772 / 156.072
Takst 3	92.500	66.600	110.472	202.972 / 177.072

\* (SU + SU-lån) with 2018 satser (6.092 + 3.116 per month)

# CONTACT

In case of questions about this programme, you can put yourself in contact with DSF's Executive Committee Member,

Julian Lo Curlo  
P: 28 19 45 04  
@: [julian@dsfnet.dk](mailto:julian@dsfnet.dk)

Annex 1 - Norwegian Students' at Risk programme nomination form template

APPENDIX B



**NOMINATION FORM**

**PART A – CANDIDATE INFORMATION**  
(to be filled in by the institution nominating the candidate)

INFORMATION ON THE CANDIDATE	
First, middle and surname	
Country of residence	English proficiency (estimate) [HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW]
Gender [MALE/FEMALE]	Age [00]
Recommended level of discretion [HIGH/MEDIUM/LOW]	
Remarks regarding need for special considerations	
Contact details for the candidate	
E-mail	Telephone number

INFORMATION ON THE NOMINATING PARTY	
Name of nominating organisation	
Name of contact person(s) for the nominating party	
Contact details for the nominating party	
E-mail	Telephone number

**INFORMATION TO THE NOMINATING PARTY**

The nominating party is responsible for assessing whether the selection criteria are met for the candidate nominated. These criteria are found in the Programme Guidelines, section 2.2. The assessment regarding activism and risk is not to be disclosed to anyone.

The completed form shall be sent to the Norwegian Royal Embassy in charge of diplomatic relations in the candidate's country of residence latest within **4 November 2015**. Please consult SIU if you should be in doubt as to whether the selection criteria are met or to which embassy the form shall be sent ([star@siu.no](mailto:star@siu.no)).

**PART B – CONFIRMATION OF DETAILS AND INTEREST**  
(to be filled in by the relevant embassy)

<b>CONFIRMATION OF CANDIDATE DETAILS</b>	
The candidate confirmed his/her age to be between 18 and 35	[Yes/No]
The candidate confirmed studies / student status within last two years	[Yes/No]
The candidate confirmed that he/she has valid residence in his/her country of residence	[Yes/No]
The candidate confirmed that he/she has or is able to get hold of valid travel documents	[Yes/No]
The candidate holds citizenship in the following country/ies:	
The candidate presently reside in the following country:	
<b>Comments to the above confirmations (if any)</b>	

<b>Recommended level of discretion</b>
[COMMUNICATION ONLY VIA EMBASSY / COMMUNICATION MAY BE HELD ON THE CANDIDATE'S DESIGNATED E-MAIL ADDRESS]
<b>Remarks regarding need for special considerations</b>

<b>CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE EMBASSY</b>	
<b>Name of contact person(s)</b>	
<b>Contact details</b>	
<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Telephone number</b>
<b>Consular station involved (if any)</b>	

**INFORMATION TO THE EMBASSY**

Upon completion of the above form, please return both parts of the form to SIU via [star@siu.no](mailto:star@siu.no) latest within **21 November 2015**. SIU may be contacted at all times if there is need for assistance or clarifications.

## Annex 2 - LYMEC call of support for the Students at Risk programme

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### **Support student activism internationally - Adopt the Students at Risk program**

#### **Considering**

- In over 65 countries, students are exposed to threats, violence and other assaults when they engage themselves politically to promote democracy, human rights and academic freedom.

#### **Believing that**

- Young activists are the key to democratic reforms and social change.
- Europe as a wealthy continent have a moral obligation to promote human rights and academic freedom internationally

#### **LYMEC calls on**

- European countries and the European Union to adopt the students at risk program from Norway by giving a certain amount of international student activists the opportunity to finish their studies in Europe. The object of the program is to give young activists an opportunity to finish their studies, strengthen their academic and organizational skills and build an international network of other activists. Afterwards, the students are intended to return to their country of origin and continue their fight for social change with greater knowledge and experience.

#### **LYMEC Proposes**

- The selection of students, who will be offered a spot in the program should ideally follow the Norwegian approach. The candidates are appointed by different organizations and institutions who are given the right to nominate. Then candidates will then be judged by different criteria – how threatened they are in their homeland, the character of their political work as well as academic and language abilities. This is done to find the candidates with the largest potential and greatest need. The offer should naturally be targeted at activists who make use of nonviolent means in their political affairs and do not discriminate for reasons of race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability or gender.
- The students at risk program should ideally be implemented through the EU whereby a substantial number of student activists can come to various parts of Europe to embetter themselves. However, until this can be realized we urge able European countries to adopt the program nationally to support the fight for academic freedom and human rights.