

The Students at Risk Programme

Brussels, June 2023



Student at Risk in brief

- Initiative by student organisations 2013
- Started as a pilot programme 2014, funded by development aid envelope, MFA
- Objective: Promoting human rights and democracy by capacity building of human rights defenders through access to formal education
- Max 20 scholarships per year, bachelor and master level studies
- Candidates from OECD/DAC countries are nominated as candidates
- 8 rounds of nominations and admissions + extraordinary calls (Belarus, Russia)
- More than 400 students nominated and around 120 students accepted



Dilemmas and challenges



How to **verify** and **measure** the “at risk” and “activism” criteria?

How to **balance** academic requirements with the candidate’s “at risk” and “activism” situation?

Can the StAR programme lead to **increased** risk?

How can we best safeguard students’ **psychosocial needs**?

What happens afterwards – will the students be able to **return home** and continue their political work?

Practical obstacles

Lack of English taught bachelor degree programmes

Poor English language skills prevent many activists from qualifying

Visa application process is complicated, costly and may expose students to increased risk





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Thank you!

Questions?

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