

Press Release

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RSE Young Academy of Scotland to launch At-Risk Academic and Refugee Member Initiative

Scotland's top young researchers and practitioners come together to recognise the outstanding talent in its refugee communities and challenge Europe's other young academies to follow their lead.

A ground-breaking initiative will be launched this week by the RSE Young Academy of Scotland (YAS) to reserve four membership spaces in each of its next three recruitment rounds for at-risk academics and refugees living in Scotland.

In 2015 well over one million refugees arrived in Europe and the numbers for 2016 are headed in the same direction. One of the biggest challenges facing all European nations is integration. YAS, established in 2011 by the Royal Society of Edinburgh to bring together Scotland's top young thinkers to achieve transformative change, is reserving four spaces, in each of its next three recruitment rounds, for at-risk academics and refugees in recognition of many talented young professionals from these communities who have the potential to make outstanding contributions to the nation's future prosperity.

This initiative was inspired by the 'Fresh Eyes on the Refugee Crisis' meeting held in Amsterdam in December 2015 that was organised by the Global Young Academy, the Dutch Young Academy and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. Academic experts and practitioners from a range of disciplines came together to discuss research-led integration strategies. YAS had two representatives at this meeting.

Attendee and YAS co-chair, Dr S. Karly Kehoe, who studies migrant communities and religious minorities, said: "We are the first Young Academy in the world to launch such an initiative and we're incredibly proud of this. Our current members and the Royal Society of Edinburgh have been tremendously supportive in helping to get this off the ground. To us, real leadership means being able to recognise talent and giving those, who possess it, the opportunity to make the most of it. At YAS we're all about bringing people together to find ways of moving our societies forward."

On Monday YAS sent a letter out to all of the European young academies challenging them to follow their lead. Turkey has been an early supporter and has vowed to do the same thing as they set up their own young academy. Both the German and Global young academies are also talking about our challenge.

A dedicated application form has been developed for at-risk academic and refugee applicants, which is available to prospective applicants via the YAS website and several partner organisations that work with refugees in Scotland. Applications are welcomed from at-risk academics and refugee professionals from all academic disciplines and sectors. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview in May 2016.

The At-risk academic and refugee application form is available on 22 March 2016; all other application forms will be available from 28th March. Anyone wishing to apply to become a member of the Young Academy of Scotland may do so via www.youngacademyofscotland.org.uk

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Notes for Editors

The RSE Young Academy of Scotland (YAS) fosters interdisciplinary activities among emerging leaders from the disciplines of science and humanities, the professions, the arts, business and civil society. Established by the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2011, the Young Academy of Scotland provides a platform for able and innovative young entrepreneurs, professionals and academics to develop a coherent and influential voice, and to address the most challenging issues facing society in Scotland and beyond.

YAS was the first such academy to be established in the UK and is part of a growing network across Europe and beyond. Now with 150 members, YAS has already benefited society with a range of projects including the following: the *Research the Headlines* blog, which shares members' expertise to inform the public; *Numeracy Counts*, which supports the school curriculum; *FIRST LEGO League*, which helps school children develop engineering and robotics skills; and *Arts and Humanities at the Parliament*, which fosters public discussion of the contribution of the Humanities and Arts in relation to major societal challenges.

For more information about YAS, including details of the above projects, please visit www.youngacademyofscotland.org.uk