

**Volume 3  
Case Studies**

**CHAPTER 1**

**At-Risk and  
Displaced Arts  
Workers: Analysing  
On the Move's  
Database of  
International Open  
Calls for Participation**



**On the Move** is the international information network dedicated to artistic and cultural mobility, gathering 86 members from 32 countries. Since 2002, On the Move provides regular, up-to-date and free information on mobility opportunities, conditions and funding, and advocates for the value of cross-border cultural mobility. Co-funded by the European Union and the French Ministry of Culture, On the Move is implementing an ambitious multi-annual programme to build the capacities of local, regional, national, European and international stakeholders for the sustainable development of our cultural ecosystems.

On the Move regularly commissions researchers to investigate different themes closely related to the network's activities and the work carried out by its members. Reflecting on transversal concerns and key areas of artistic and cultural mobility, the network tries to establish a clearer picture of the current movements and trends while formulating policy recommendations.

**<http://on-the-move.org>**

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# CHAPTER 1

## At-Risk and Displaced Arts Workers: Analysing On the Move's Database of International Open Calls for Participation

By Claire Rosslyn Wilson

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## **This chapter presents an analysis of calls for cultural mobility opportunities posted to the On the Move website during a period of more than four years from 1 January 2020 to 27 May 2025.**

The data analysed here reflects the website's editorial policy and focus, which is on funded programmes that cover at least some of the costs of travel (or that offer remuneration in the case of online/remote programmes). On the Move does not include any calls that have application fees. The calls that are posted to the website are also generally one-off calls or relate to temporary or shifting programmes rather than permanent ones (which are separately listed in the mobility funding guides). Additionally, the calls are generally open to applicants of more than two nationalities (for example, there are not many bilateral calls published).

It is worth noting, that since this data is analysing open calls that are not for long-term projects it is possible that it does not capture ongoing initiatives or funding that does not have a system of open calls with specific deadlines. For example, the [Artist at Risk Connection](#) (based in the USA) provides a last-resort grant programme to address the immediate needs of artists and their families in crisis (for which there is no open call as such, given the emergency nature of the support) or the [Martin Roth-Initiative](#)'s temporary relocation stays for at-risk artists and cultural actors in their region of origin, either with the support of host organisations or through direct funding (which is accepted on an on-going basis). There may well be many such initiatives that are not represented in the figures here (although some may be present in On the Move's Mobility Funding Guides).

Artists at risk are not listed as a separate category on the website, nor is there a category that specifically covers the costs related to issues faced by artists at risk. Additionally, On the Move records information on the organisers of the call and the destination, and not the beneficiaries

(as it lies outside On the Move's organisational capacity to follow up the 500–600+ calls that are published on the website every year). Therefore, it can be challenging to trace the ways in which calls may target at-risk artists.

A key approach to mitigate these challenges was to conduct extensive keyword searches to gather together calls that are related to artists at risk. The terms used were the following: at risk, refugee, displaced, exile, freedom, rights, Ukraine/Ukrainian, Palestine/Palestinian, Syria/Syrian, censorship, Sudan/Sudanese, Lebanon/Lebanese, Afghanistan/Afghan, UNESCO (related to some of their programmes), forced, relocation, emergency, crisis, human rights, protection, solidarity, safe, and political issues. This search collected calls which contained these terms in the title and in the body of the call, as it was reproduced on the news section of the On the Move website.

Some of these terms were less relevant for artists at risk; for example, 'solidarity' produced many calls that evolved around ideas of democracy or an abstract and very wide reflection on what solidarity might mean, while 'protection' returned many calls related to environmental sustainability. The chosen terms were purposefully broad in an effort to capture as many relevant calls as possible, after which the calls were reviewed individually to assess their relevance for artists at risk.

In this process it could be observed that there are calls that are challenging to categorise due to the open or vague nature of the description of the call. Some of the opportunities called for artists who address socio-political issues, which could include those who address issues related to artists at risk, but the call might not provide the curatorial support, or financial or logistical

support for someone coming from a situation of risk. Therefore, these very open calls were not included here.

In spite of the extensive research, it must be highlighted that this keyword search of the On the Move database is a less precise way of analysing the calls and it is possible that some calls we missed in this filtering process.

Of the over 3,300 calls published on the On the Move news section of the website

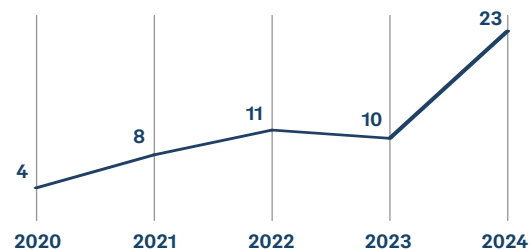
between 1 January 2020 and 27 May 2025, there were 99 calls identified as being relevant to the topic of arts workers at risk (2.9% of the total calls). In general, these fell into three main areas: calls that were targeted to artists at risk, calls that address the theme of artists at risk or that worked with communities who might be at risk, and calls which were on unrelated themes but were open to artist workers who might be coming from countries which are experiencing war. Since these categories are of quite different natures, they will be analysed per group.

## Published opportunities open to artists at risk

Of the 99 calls identified, there were 60 that targeted arts workers at risk. This included 45 calls that were principally for arts workers at risk, with another 15 that mentioned arts workers at risk within a wider call. An example of the latter includes calls that are open to anyone but that state ‘special consideration given to those who have faced political hardship’<sup>1</sup> or calls in which artists at risk might be included in a wider group, for example a programme that ‘prioritises artists facing fewer opportunities, including migrants, refugees, and [those] living in rural or remote areas, as well as young artists from disadvantaged or marginalised backgrounds, who face economic and social barriers.’<sup>2</sup> There are also a number of these calls that explicitly reference Ukrainian (and to a lesser extent Belarussian) artists, in the context of the Russian full scale invasion of Ukraine; some of these calls included [ISSP: Call for Photographers for FUTURES Baltic Talents 2024](#) (Online / Croatia), [Nida Art Colony: Residency for Cultural Practitioners Researching the Baltic States](#) (Lithuania), [ERSTE Foundation: Artist in Residence Programme at Q21/MuseumsQuartier](#) (Austria), and [Meeting Point: Residencies for Performing and Visual Artists 2024](#) (Denmark, Greece, Poland).

It can be seen that the number of calls recorded on On the Move open (partially or exclusively) to at-risk arts workers has increased over the period from 2020 to 2024, with a sharp rise for the number of calls in 2024 (to a total of 23 calls over the year, up from 10 in 2023).

### Number of calls for at-risk arts workers per year



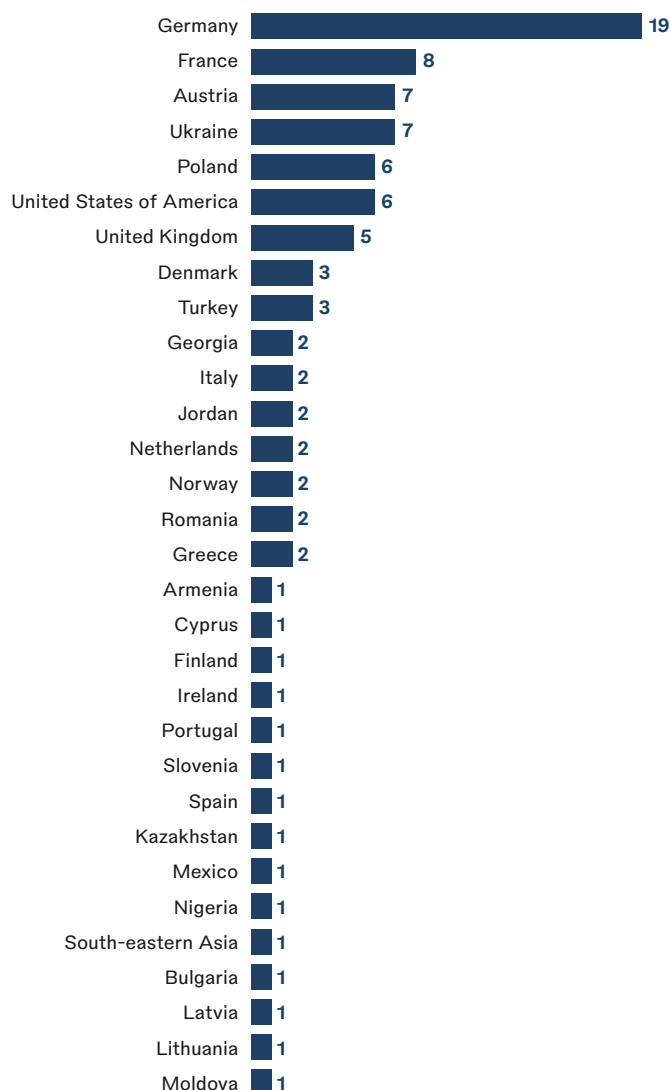
### The organisers

Of these 60 calls that targeted (or at least partially targeted) arts workers at risk, the majority had organisers based in Germany (19), followed by France (8), Austria (7), Ukraine (7), Poland (6), USA (6), UK (5), Denmark (3), and Turkey (3), with more countries having one or two organisers with calls (see the graph below for the full list).

1 For example, the call [The Vera List Center for Art and Politics > 'As for Protocols' Fellowship Open Call](#).

2 Such as the call [CastCeramics: Residency and Workshops in Ceramics 2025 \(Austria, Poland, Italy\)](#).

## Countries of organisers of calls for at-risk arts workers



*(Note: There are slightly more organisations than calls, as there are sometimes two organisers per call.)*

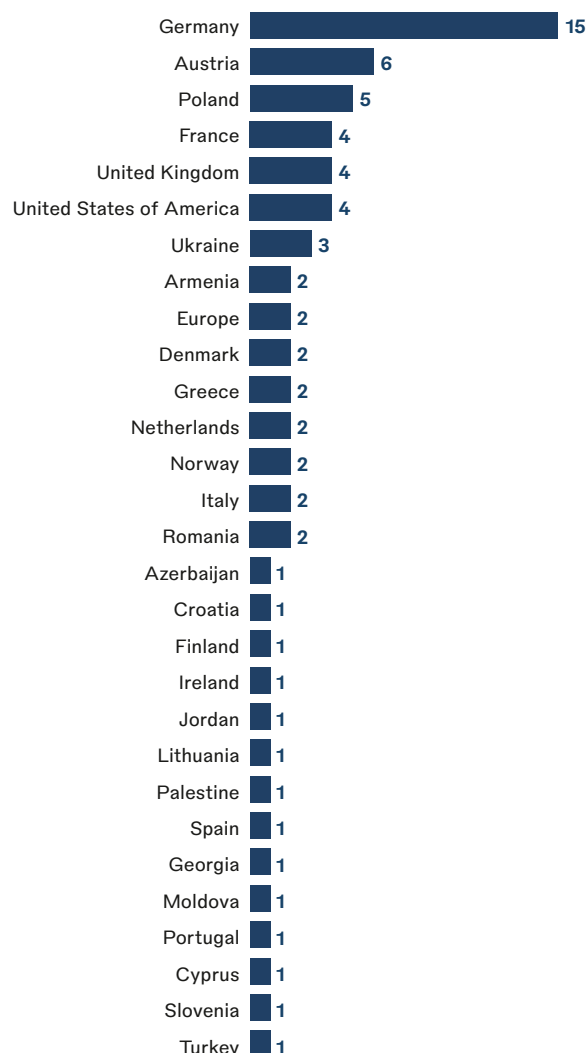
Of these calls, 15 were identified as being funded by the European Union (nine through Creative Europe and six through other programmes) and 43 calls had other sources of funding.

The majority of the organisations had just one call recorded in On the Move's database. Exceptions to this were the Martin Roth-Initiative (with five calls), zusa (with four calls), The Vera List Center for Art and Politics (three calls), Ars Electronica (two calls), Institut français (two calls), Safemuse (two calls) and the partnership of D6: Culture in Transit, MedeArts and Arthereistanbul (two calls).

## Typology of calls

With regards to destination of calls targeting (or at least partially targeting) at-risk arts workers, Germany is again the country with the greatest number of calls (at 15), followed by Austria (six), Poland (five), France (four), the United Kingdom (four), the United States of America (four), and Ukraine (three), as well as a number of countries with one or two calls (see the graph below for the full list).

## Countries of destination of calls accessible to at-risk arts workers



*(Note: There may be more destinations listed than calls, as several calls had more than one destination.)*

The majority of these calls were in-person or hybrid (51), with only four calls delivered solely online and five calls unspecified. In terms of the

type of opportunities offered, residencies were the most common mode (at 28 calls), followed by project funding (with 10 calls) and fellowships (with nine calls). With regards to artform, the most common one was by far for cross disciplinary practices at 35 calls (this is also the most common artform across all On the Move calls), followed by visual arts (with 14 calls), performing arts (with nine calls), music and sound (with six calls), and literature (with four calls).

In terms of who they targeted, a total of 43 calls were for individuals, 10 were for organisations and collectives, and seven calls were open to both individuals and organisations and collectives. In terms of target groups, the majority (39 calls) were open only to artists, while a further 14 calls were open to artists in conjunction with other roles (such as curators, producers and managers, or researchers and critics). There were 12 calls open to producers and managers (with six calls exclusively open to them), nine for curators, and six for researchers and critics.

It is worth noting that of the calls open (partially or exclusively) to at-risk arts workers, only three provided costs to obtain a visa (namely the [TEJA Emergency Residencies Programme for Artists and Cultural Practitioners Living in Palestine 2025](#) in Spain, the [French Institute: Sawa](#)

[Sawa Residency Programme for Palestinian Artists](#), and the [Institute of International Education Artist Protection Fund](#)). Where some artists coming from situations of risk can take advantage of structures such as the temporary protection status for Ukrainians in the European Union, there are many who need to go through complex visa applications process. If this is not supported, it can create a barrier for accessing some opportunities.

For example, the Mobility Information Points – organisations that help artists and culture professionals with the administrative issues of cross-border mobility<sup>3</sup> – provided 134 consultations for issues related to artists-at-risk in 2024 (6.1% of the total consultations). As reported in [Cultural Mobility Flows Report, Mobility Information Points at Work 2024](#), the most common nationalities of these artists-at-risk were Iranian, Russian, Belarussian, Ukrainian, Turkish and Palestinian. Their destination countries were mostly Germany (86.6%) followed by France (11.2%), Portugal (1.5%) and Austria (0.7%). This indicates that there is a need for more support on the complex issues related to artists at risk, even in cases where there are established schemes on a European level to support those coming from countries such as Ukraine.

## At risk as a research theme

The keyword search identified a number of calls that, although they were not necessarily targeted at artists at risk, they did address some relevant topics as a theme. There were 19 calls that were identified as being particularly relevant. (As mentioned above, there are calls that mentioned socio-political issues as a theme, but these were too general and broad and are therefore not included here.)

Some of these opportunities called for applicants that followed the legacy of certain individuals, such as the open call for artists and scholars for [residency on legacy of Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish](#), the [Carl Zuckmayer Scholarship](#) or the [Stanley Greene Legacy Prize and Fellowship](#) for early career visual storytellers.

3 Key issues include visas, social insurance, taxes, and customs. Read more about the Mobility Information Points' 2024 activities in the [Cultural Mobility Flows Report, Mobility Information Points at Work 2024](#).

Other calls were related to exile, freedom or conflict (without specifically calling for arts workers with direct experience in these areas), while others were targeted at academic research in these and related topics. One example of the latter is the [Europe-Asia Research Platform on Forced Migration ‘Ethics of Solidarity, Care, and Protection’ camp](#) in India. In this case the Institute for Human Sciences, in collaboration with the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, sought to decentre Europe-focused scholarship, debates, and policies on forced migration and invited scholars, activists, teachers, care workers including doctors, nurses, and other paramedical staff, journalists, photographers, filmmakers, media persons, writers, poets, theatre personalities, musicians, painters, and/or public functionaries engaged in care and protection work. In this example, the call not only focused on forced migration as a topic, but it also sought to gather together people who work with those experiencing forced migration. The UNESCO-Aschberg Programme<sup>4</sup> supporting policy reform in the cultural and creative industries is another example of a call that focuses on those working with artists at risk, in this case governments and public institutions of UNESCO Member States, as well as to civil society organisations, that develop initiatives aimed at protecting and promoting artistic freedom, including the status of the artist.

This example is interesting, as it touches upon an issue that was raised in the [‘Mobility Webinar: Mental Health, Well-Being and International Cultural Mobility’](#) report, which is that those who support artists at risk also need support in the form of additional funding and resources, training and/or mental health support in order to provide adequate assistance the people they are receiving. The Martin Roth-Initiative (MRI) in Germany is a relevant example here, as it provides financial support for additional personnel for the host organisation and counselling by the MRI and further training (for example on topics such as

safety, sensitive public relations, psycho-social support), in addition to support for the artists themselves. This initiative provides adequate resources not only for the artists, but also for the cultural workers, creating a supportive environment that might address challenges such as burnout or overwhelm due to the lack of skills in a specific area.

There were also calls identified that explored the ways in which Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has changed societies in Europe. Examples of this can be seen in countries at close proximity to Ukraine or Russia, such as the [Narva Art Residency](#) to create sculptural artworks in public space in the Estonian-Russian border town of Narva. Due to its location and the current geopolitical situation, the city has become a point of attention and as well a place where Ukrainian refugees enter Europe and the call sought to explore the issues this location raises through engagement with the community.

Another interesting example is the [Laboratory-residency ‘Performing Togetherness’](#) in Romania, which sought to address the crisis within the cultural sector following the pandemic period and the war in Ukraine, through a process of collective reflection and creation on the future of a (post)war Europe. The laboratory-residency was open to mid-career participants with experience in collaborative practices from Austria, Germany, Poland, Romania and Ukraine who were willing to think, reflect and connect with the nature, the city of Bucharest, people’s emotions as well as engaging in a critical thinking process about a greener future.

While all but two of the calls with a theme related to artists at risk were organised by organisations based in Europe<sup>5</sup>, there were two interesting examples of calls that brought together intercontinental experiences: the Europe-Asia Research Platform on Forced Migration mentioned above and the call [‘Beyond the Silence’](#), an

4 See for example the [2021](#) and [2023](#) call.

5 There was a [call organised by the Colombian Ministry of Culture and the National Museum of Colombia](#), for an exhibition project on the theme of conflict.



online collaborative project for photographers from Southeast Asia, Mexico, Nigeria, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Initiated by Magnum Photos in partnership with five organisations around the world, the call paired in tandem participants based on their proposals (one photographer from a partner country and one Ukrainian photographer) in an online collaboration that was aimed at sharing their experiences, to support and counsel each other, and to know more about their research topic from a different perspective. This call used the online space to facilitate an exchange between people from diverse regions but who might have knowledge and experiences in common.

It is worth noting that arts workers at risk can experience intersecting challenges related to their gender, sexuality, disability or more. Given the nature of On the Move's data collection structure, it is not possible to gain a full understanding of the ways in which these intersecting experiences might (or might not) be taken into consideration in open calls. However, there were a few calls that especially focused on gender, such as the [Elizabeth Kostova Foundation Women in the Mountains Residency in Bulgaria](#), the [Halaqat 2025 residency for photographers](#) from Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and EU in Egypt (which focused on gender and care as a theme), or the [‘Culture Utopias’ residency](#) call in Romania, Poland, and Ukraine, which offered additional financial support for those with a family member (to cover childcare, per diem or travel costs).

## A focus on some regions

The final area that was identified in this research were calls that might not have addressed artists at risk or related themes, but rather calls that involved countries that are undergoing conflict, especially Ukraine, Palestine, or Syria. In this case, the examples provided are only a small sample, given the challenge of identifying calls based on geographic eligibility. For example, a call that is open to applicants in/from Southeast Asia might attract an artist at risk fleeing conflict in Myanmar even if the call does not otherwise seem relevant; this is before taking into consideration those who move to avoid censorship, persecution, natural disasters, violations of human rights, extreme poverty, or other difficulties that necessitated their departure from home in a manner not purely voluntarily, which would require more in-depth analysis to trace from country to country.

When exploring the calls published by region, it can also be noted that there are many more calls available to those at risk based in Europe (including in many cases geographical Europe, which involved Ukraine), as opposed to other

regions. In 2024, 70.6% of the calls published on On the Move involved organisers or destinations in Europe. As mentioned, these figures do not necessarily reflect the beneficiaries, but those with access to European visas, agreements or specific protection status' have easier access to such opportunities.

That said, there were some interesting examples of exchange identified when exploring calls by regions. For example, there were several calls supporting exchange between Europe and Palestine, such as the Goethe-Institut's Mishkal art residency programme for Palestinian and European artists (the [first](#) and the [second](#) call), a 2023 [residency between young Catalan and Palestinian playwrights](#), and a 2022 [residency exchange on the topic of soil](#) with artists from UK, Palestine and Italy.

Other calls involved visits to Ukraine (after the Russian full-scale invasion), such as [Insha Osvita's visits](#) to Ukraine for Europe-based cultural workers and artists, [Vidnova's](#)

[placements](#) in Ukraine Civil society organisations or the [Jam Factory Art Center's call](#) for theatre and performance creators (as well as the online [two-day intensive course 'Artists Without Borders'](#) for artists from Ukraine and EU member states).

For artists from the SWANA region, there are some interesting examples of programmes, such as the [Rawabet programme](#) for artists from the Arab Region residing in Europe, or the [Halaqat supra-regional project](#) connecting and supporting artists and cultural practitioners from European and Arab countries through residencies, public events, grants and exchanges focused on care and gender.

## Some concluding questions

This chapter provides an overview of some of the calls related to arts workers at risk and the ways in which the diverse approaches are represented in the calls. The number of calls explicitly or partially targeting at-risk artists increased steadily, especially in 2024, with Germany emerging as one of the most active countries in both organising and hosting such opportunities. However, access barriers remain, particularly around visa support; only three calls offered direct assistance with visa costs, underscoring a significant gap in practical accessibility. The work of support organisations is therefore vital, especially in helping navigate the bureaucratic and logistical hurdles that many at-risk artists face.

The analysis also raised a number of questions, such as:

- Are all the stages of arts workers at risk covered in different funding programmes (such as support for emergency needs, initial resettlement or long-term adaptation)?
- Are the diverse needs at each stage taken into consideration at the point of programme design?
- Are the intersecting needs also taken into consideration?
- Is there enough additional support provided for administrative burdens faced by artists at risk (such as support for visa applications)?
- What are the support systems provided to both artists at risk and the cultural organisations developing these short-term opportunities (such as professional development, mental health or wellbeing, skills upgrade)?
- In what ways are these short-term opportunities supplemented by long-term and holistic approaches?
- What is needed to ensure that there are more such open calls present across diverse countries in Creative Europe and beyond?

From an analysis of open calls it is often not possible to gain a deep understanding of the complex needs and challenges facing artists at risk and organisations seeking to provide opportunities for them. However, it is a snapshot of different approaches, which can perhaps be further complemented with a deeper analysis on different approaches, such as those that can be found in the following chapters of this publication.

## About the Author

Claire Rosslyn Wilson is the Data Collector and Analyst for On the Move and she also works as the Editor for the Asia Europe Foundation culture platform ASEF culture360. Born in Naarm/Melbourne (Australia) and based in Barcelona (Spain), she has over 10 years of experience as a freelance cultural writer, researcher and editor working with non-profit and cultural organisations in the Asia-Pacific and Europe (such as the Committee on Culture of the United Cities and Local Governments, IN SITU, Østfold Internasjonale Teater, European Dance Development Network, City of Bilbao, and others). She also has a PhD focused on translocal creative practice.

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To fully appreciate the breadth of the research on The Situation of At-Risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals, please do consider reading the [other chapters](#) gathered in this third report, as well as the first two reports available for download: [Intersecting Temporalities: At-Risk and Displaced Artists in Transition – Volume 1 Scoping Review](#) and [Policy and Practice in the EU: Pathways, Impediments, and Patchwork Solutions – Volume 2 Cultural Policy Analysis](#).

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