

Protocol “Students and staff from acute crisis areas”

1. Rationale

Since 2022, students and staff from crisis areas have increasingly reported that they feel insufficiently recognised and heard by EUR. In view of this, a protocol on students from crisis areas was drawn up in 2023 at the request of the Executive Board. In the course of the process, it was decided in consultation with HR also to make the protocol applicable to staff from crisis areas. In 2023, some issues were unfortunately encountered when working with the protocol. While it has certainly proved its practical worth, it has also become clear that some additions (including the Assessment Framework and organising walk-ins) and adjustments are needed. These are included in Table 1 and in the annexes to the protocol.

2. Definition of students and staff from acute crisis areas

By students and staff from acute crisis areas, we mean EUR students and staff *from* or present *in* areas where an acute crisis has developed. This may be in the political, medical, natural, social or economic sphere, where students and staff can be reasonably assumed to expect direct action or support from EUR. Examples of such situations are the war in Ukraine and the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.

For regular support, students can always be referred to EUR.nl, the student welfare platform, the IO website and the HR website. In the specific case of individual students or academics being threatened or imprisoned, we refer to the Integrated Security Team, and UNL and/or the Scholars at Risk international network can be involved as well.

3. What the target group asks for

Experience shows that students and staff dealing with crisis situations have the following needs:

- *solidarity*: students and staff want to feel solidarity and see understanding for their situation from EUR at a central as well as a faculty level. This involves EUR as an organisation, but also sympathy from colleagues or fellow students;
- *practical support*: students ask for clear information on special arrangements around examinations, study completion delays and support services, and for support with specific events or actions, such as fundraisers or goods collections. Members of staff ask to be put in touch with other members of staff (e.g. through a mailing list) and ask for help returning to the Netherlands or advice on travelling to the affected area;
- *mental support*: students (and staff) want contact with people in the same situation, a psychologist, a spiritual counsellor and/or referral to other types of help;
- *financial support*: this applies especially to students: think living allowance, emergency fund, tuition fee waiver, deferred payment (e.g. due to international payment sanctions);¹
- *timing and timeliness*: for all of the above points, there is a need for good timing, with speedy action and communication. Table 1 below gives concrete times for each action, based on experience around the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.

4. Considerations

- *political sensitivity*: expressing solidarity by publicly sharing political views may be sensitive for EUR. This requires a considered decision from the Executive Board. EUR can,

¹ EUR cannot always provide this support, but these are wishes expressed by the target group of students. Consequently, it was decided to set up an Emergency Fund in collaboration with the Trust Fund for the financial support of students. Students can submit an application to a counsellor by email.

however, express emphatic solidarity with affected students and staff through the protocol (Table 1). This consideration does not apply in case of natural disasters or other crisis situations where there are no sensitivities;

- *customisation*: the situations and needs of students and staff from different crisis areas are not standard situations. Within the general protocol, it is desirable to have a customised approach. A customised approach takes into account the number of students and staff affected, the severity and urgency of the situation, whether there is representation from student associations and whether there is a national policy. However, there do seem to be consistent elements in the wishes of students and staff (see 3);
- *national guidelines and discussions*: it is recommended that, in responding to a crisis, we verify whether UNL or the government has a guideline that can be followed (such as tuition fee rates for Ukrainian students);
- *Students and staff from areas with protracted crises*: although the protocol does not apply to this group, they also have a need for loyalty and support. EUR.nl, the IO website, the Student Wellbeing platform and the HR website (for staff) can indicate in more general terms where they can turn for support.

5. Protocol: Actions and the distribution of responsibilities

Table 1 shows the actions and distribution of responsibilities in the “Students and staff from acute crisis areas” protocol. The protocol has been made to be more in line with the method of mandating used by the CTO/CMT.

In case of a crisis that affects teaching, research and/or operational management, the chair of the CTO activates the CTO instead of this protocol. The CTO may of course initiate similar actions if these are mentioned in the protocol.

E&S and HR, the owners of the protocol, are responsible for raising awareness of it at EUR.

Table 1: “Students and staff from acute crisis areas” protocol: actions and distribution of responsibilities
(updated version)

Component:	Action:	Deployment of:	Responsibility:	Notes:
A. Responsibility and coordination	<p><u>No later than day 3 of the crisis</u>²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the number of potentially affected students and staff.³ Decision to initiate protocol by the chair of the Core Team (CT) on acute crisis areas, following consultation with the Integrated Security adviser. Communicate the decision (negative or positive) and the size of the target group to the Crisis Area Core Team, consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> head of E&S/SA – chair; head of E&S/IO – deputy chair; HR International policy adviser; IV adviser; SW programme manager; manager of the IDEA Center; head of M&C; plotter (E&S). CT informs the EB, deans, vice-deans and faculty and unit directors of the positive or negative decision. In case of a positive decision: CT asks deans and M&C to place a notice on the websites 	<p>E&S and HR</p> <p>E&S and IV</p> <p>CT</p> <p>CT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> head of IO and HR INT policy adviser; chair of CT; chair of TC; chair of CT; chair of CT. 	<p>Information on crisis areas is collected primarily from IO, but also from other channels such as IV, IDEA and SW. The information is passed on to the chair of CT. An assessment framework (Annex 2) has been drawn up for deciding whether to launch the protocol.</p> <p>CT initiates the necessary actions and, where needed, takes care of administrative coordination (particularly with regard to communication).</p> <p>CT uses the WhatsApp group for internal communication and stores information in the Teams folder. All other communication is sent out from the email account Kernteamcrisisgebieden@eur.nl.</p> <p>The notice on EUR.nl must be copied immediately to the faculty websites, and faculty information officers must be informed of it.</p>

² For the entire protocol, these are weekdays and not working days.

³ Using the nationality of students and staff from affected areas, an initial estimate can be made of the size of the affected EUR target group and of whether any student associations are involved. The actual target population linked in some way to the affected area may be much larger.

	immediately stating that further communication on the situation will follow ASAP.			
Component:	Action:	Deployment of:	Responsibility:	Notes:
B. Selection of protocol components	<p><u>No later than day 2 of the decision to activate the protocol</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chair of CT plans an initial emergency meeting with CT within one day of the decision. CT decides which protocol actions to take, whether student organisations will be involved and if so, which, and distributes tasks in accordance with the protocol. CT decides whether to make the EUR Emergency Fund available to students. The chair of CT plans a follow-up meeting with CT and creates a Teams group for the exchange of information. 	CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> chair of CT. 	<p><i>When selecting components, a distinction can be made between "need-to-haves" and "nice-to-haves".</i></p> <p><i>As soon as the core team is activated, the E&S Studentlife liaison is requested to contact any student organisations involved immediately and to consult the Student engagement officer at IDEA.</i></p>
C. Statement from the Executive Board and Deans	<p><u>No later than day 2 of the decision to activate the protocol</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M&C drafts a line of reasoning. Statement from the Executive Board on EUR.nl. Statement from the deans on the faculty websites. <p>The statements will remain pinned on the websites.</p>	M&C in consultation with the chair of CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> director of M&C in consultation with the Executive Board and deans. 	<p><i>The statement includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>an expression of sympathy and solidarity;</i> <i>a call for everyone to be mindful of those affected;</i> <i>an offer of support (the study advisor is the central person for students; the manager is the central person for staff);</i> <i>arrangements regarding examinations and study completion delays (in general terms);</i> <i>walk-in meeting.</i> ³⁾ <p><i>Also see Sections 3 and 4.</i></p>

Component:	Action:	Deployment of:	Responsibility:	Notes:
D. "All students email" and "All staff email" Study advisors email	<u>No later than day 2 of the decision to activate the protocol</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text for email notification for all students and staff (or managers). (CT drafts text.) Explain that the email also applies to EUC, EMC and ISS. In addition, study advisors email their own students (CT provides a sample text). 	CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> chair of CT; E&S ("all students email") via the director of E&S; E&S (email to study advisors) via the head of E&S/SV; HR (via the director of HR). 	<i>See Annex 3 for further explanation of the emails.</i>
E. Student support staff, examining boards and supervisors	<u>No later than day 2 of the decision to activate the protocol</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study advisors, examining boards, counsellors, student psychologists and supervisors are informed about EUR policy regarding the crisis situation. Create an overview of questions received from students and staff and how they are being responded to. 	E&S/SV HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of E&S/SV HR International policy adviser. 	<i>Agree with study advisors that they are the first point of contact for students and coordinate what guidance (on-site or off-site) is desirable.</i>
F. Page at EUR.co.uk/MyEur *)	<u>No later than day 3 of the decision to activate the protocol</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a <u>temporary page</u> at EUR.nl or MyEur and, based on it, on the faculty websites and the online student wellbeing platform with current, relevant information and links for affected students/staff. 	M&C After consultation with CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> director of M&C. 	<i>For the content of the web pages, see Section 4: Areas for attention. M&C tracks developments regarding crisis areas, keeps the web page up to date and informs CT in case of changes.</i>

*) There will be a structural landing page at EUR.nl/MyEur and, based on it, on the faculty websites and the wellbeing platform with information for students/staff from crisis areas.

Component:	Action:	Deployment of:	Responsibility:	Notes:
G. Walk-in meeting for students and staff	<p><u>No later than day 5 of the decision to activate the protocol</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-threshold free walk-in meeting for students and staff to share experiences and provide support and information.⁴ • The meeting also offers further insight into issues at hand. Based on this, CT will elaborate a customised approach. 	CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chair of CT. 	<i>The protocol for organising walk-in meetings is used for this purpose (Annex 4).</i>
H. Exit strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide how to phase out the actions from the protocol and decide on the communication around this. 	CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chair of CT. 	
I. Deactivation of the protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statement by the Executive Board and the faculties and the page at EUR.nl are removed from the home pages. • The file is archived on the crisis areas landing page. The situation may flare up again and/or turn into a more protracted crisis. 	M&C (after consultation with CT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • director of M&C. 	<i>Archiving because the situation may flare up again and/or turn into a more protracted crisis.</i>

⁴ Depending on the situation, it is recommended that directors of operations be advised also to organise a walk-in or other meeting at the ISS, EUC and/or EMC locations.

Annex 1: Glossary

ABD	= General Management Directorate (<i>Algemene Bestuursdienst</i>)
AZ	= Academic Affairs (<i>Algemene Zaken</i>)
CMT	= Crisis Management Team
CvB	= Executive Board (<i>College van Bestuur</i>)
CTO	= Crisis Team Operational
E&S	= Education and Student affairs
EUR	= Erasmus University Rotterdam
HR	= Human Resources
IO	= International Office
IDEA	= Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access Center
IV	= Integrated Security Team (<i>Integrale Veiligheid</i>)
CT	= Crisis Areas Core Team (<i>Kernteam Crisisgebieden</i>)
M&C	= Marketing and Communication
RM	= Rector Magnificus
SA	= Student Affairs
SW	= Student Wellbeing
UNL	= Universities of the Netherlands

Annex 2: Assessment framework for the activation of the Acute Crisis Areas Protocol

In the past period, the EUR community has been affected to varying degrees by disasters and crises originating elsewhere in the world. To deal with this appropriately and adequately as an institution of higher education, the Executive Board adopted the 'Students and staff from acute crisis areas' Protocol on 15 May 2023.

However, in the course of 2023, it became clear that there was a need for guidance, in the event of an acute crisis occurring anywhere in the world, on how to determine better and more unambiguously whether and to what extent the protocol should be activated (see Section A of the protocol).

The following aspects are considered first:

1. Is it a (natural) disaster or a (political) conflict?
2. Are there EUR students and/or staff from and/or in the crisis area?¹ This concerns a factual determination/assessment of the possible number of persons *directly* affected.
3. What is the likely *indirect* impact of the acute crisis on our EUR community? This assessment is ultimately made by the chair of the acute crisis areas Core Team, based in part on the advice from the Integrated Security Team.

Next, the scale is considered:

4. Estimating the number of persons potentially affected directly (see 2) is relevant in relation to the *feasibility* of approaching and supporting students and staff (individually or collectively). When fewer than 50 persons are involved directly, we speak of a limited scale. In case of 50 or more directly involved persons, we speak of an acute crisis that is large-scale in EUR terms.

This assessment of the nature and scale of the acute crisis situation results in the following activation of the Protocol (the chair of the Core Team in consultation with the Integrated Security Team can always decide to scale up to the CMT as needed):

(Natural) disaster	Limited scale (< 50 students and staff)	Large scale (≥ 50 students and staff)
Limited impact on the EUR community	Start up and <u>partially</u> implement the protocol. <i>Approach students and staff individually (via study advisors). Refer to the general landing page on Acute crisis areas. No statement from the Executive Board.</i>	Start up and <u>fully</u> implement the protocol. <i>Including a <u>public</u> statement from the Executive Board.</i>
Major impact on the EUR community	Start up and fully implement the protocol. <i>Including an <u>internal</u> statement from the Executive Board.</i>	Start up and fully implement the protocol. <i>Including a <u>public</u> statement from the Executive Board.</i>
(Political) conflict	Limited scale (< 50 students and staff)	Large scale (≥ 50 students and staff)

Limited impact on the EUR community	Start up and <u>partially</u> implement the protocol. <i>Approach students and staff individually (via study advisors). Refer to the general landing page on Acute crisis areas. No statement from the Executive Board.</i>	Start up and <u>fully</u> implement the protocol. Advise on scaling up to CMT. <i>Including a <u>public</u> statement and line of reasoning from the Executive Board.</i>
Major impact on the EUR community	Start up and fully implement the protocol. <i>Including an <u>internal</u> statement from the Executive Board.</i>	Start up and fully implement the protocol. <i>Including a <u>public</u> statement and line of reasoning from the Executive Board.</i>

Annex 3: Principles behind the emails (section D)

At a minimum, the email includes:

- an expression of sympathy and solidarity;
- a call for everyone to be mindful of those affected;
- an offer of support to students and staff (the study advisor is central for students);
- the RE&F contact for questions on practical support with actions on campus (such as fundraising);
- arrangements regarding examinations and study completion delays (in general terms);
- walk-in meeting.

See also Sections 3 and 4 of this protocol

Discuss who will send emails. Send an email to employees (the sender determines the mailbox from which to send):

- if the Executive Board, then cvb@eur.nl, in which case support from M&C is desirable;
- if HR, then office.hr@eur.nl. Notify the HR secretariat in advance.

To send an email to supervisors, a mailing list must be created based on the email addresses received from HR systems (ask Yvonne de Groot or Nanda van Meerbeek).

Annex 4: Protocol for walk-in meetings

This protocol aims to provide clarity on the process of organising a crisis walk-in.

A walk-in is an open gathering on one of the campuses for all EUR students and staff who feel affected by a specific crisis situation.

The goal of such a walk-in is simply to offer the opportunity to come together and talk to each other about emotions and practicalities that come with such an event.

1) Decision-making

- a) The decision to organise a EUR walk-in is made by the Crisis Area Core Team (CACT).ⁱ This decision also includes issues like:
 - date, time and location of the walk-in;
 - audience and guests/stakeholders;ⁱⁱ
 - the necessary supporters and their required expertise/instructions;
 - whether it is desirable to have Campus Security present at the walk-in;
 - the CACT member responsible for organising the walk-in.

2) Communication

- a) The walk-in event will be communicated through the channels determined by the CACT team. The CACT decides on the content of the communication and the target audience.
- b) All communications will include clear instructions for attendees on how to ensure an open and safe environment. This includes guidance on political and/or psychosocial issues and the target group. This means it must be made clear who is welcome and who is not.

3) Location

- a) If the walk-in is organised in the Living Room on Woudestein:
 - The LR is not open for regular activities and visitors during the walk-in.
 - The SW member of CACT informs the SW Project Leads of the Living Room and puts one of them in touch with the responsible CACT member. The project leads decide together which Living Room team members will be involved in the walk-in. The SW Team is always in charge of the practical on-site organisation. Final responsibility remains with the CACT.
 - The CACT decides whether the LR Hosts should be part of the necessary support team (1.a).
 - The SW Project Lead instructs the SW Communication Officer and the SW Living Room Team. In case of media requests, such as requests for interviews, always contact press@eur.nl and cc the SW Communication Officer. One of the EUR Press Officers will be in the lead.
 - If it is decided that the LR Hosts are part of the necessary support team (1.a), approximately 30 minutes before the start of the walk-in session, there will be a briefing with Living Room hosts to prepare them for expected difficult topics like (geo)political aspects, psycho-emotional challenges and instructions for attendees on how to ensure an open and safe environment. The briefing will be led by the SW project lead together with one of the student psychologists.
 - Directly after the walk-in event, there will be a short debriefing for the LR Hosts, led by the SW project lead together with one of the student psychologists.

- b) If the walk-in is organised at a location other than the Living Room (at EUR or elsewhere):
- It should always be a location without fixed lecture benches.
 - If it is decided that the LR Hosts are part of the necessary support team (1.a), approximately 30 minutes before the start of the walk-in session, there will be a briefing with Living Room hosts to prepare them for expected difficult topics like (geo)political aspects, psycho-emotional challenges and instructions for attendees on how to ensure an open and safe environment. The briefing will be led by the SW project lead together with one of the student psychologists.
 - Directly after the walk-in event, there will be a short debriefing for the LR Hosts, led by the SW project lead together with one of the student psychologists.
 - E&S will provide the necessary budget.

ⁱ A walk-in related to any other crises and involving one or more CACT members will follow this protocol as much as possible.

ⁱⁱ A member of the Executive Board should always be present.