

**Press Release**  
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Public Statement  
by the Network of European Institutes for Advanced Study

## **Institutes for Advanced Study and the current pandemic – Potentials and capacities for the European Research Area**

One of the areas most tangibly affected by the current Covid pandemic is international mobility and the circulation of academics and researchers. With national borders temporarily closed, travel warnings changing frequently, international flights severely reduced, and consular/visa services taking longer than normal, European and international fellowship programmes were and are subject to hitherto unknown levels of pressure and restriction. This is highly problematic since **international mobility and scientific exchange define a central part of today's research and scholarship, locally and globally.**

Institutes for Advanced Study (IAS) in Europe invite every year cohorts of outstanding international scholars for scientific residence and have been affected by recent developments, in some ways different to other academic institutions. Notwithstanding the fact that some IAS had to reduce fellowship programmes or in exceptional cases even temporarily close their doors, almost all institutes have continued to provide space, time and collegiality that is crucial for scholarship at all stages of academic careers. In short, **IAS provide a sustainable mode of international research mobility that is viable even during a pandemic.** As the typical IAS fellowships last several months or even years, the possible periods of self-isolation after the researchers' relocation do not create an unreasonable obstacle for mobility, in comparison to short term international research visits that have become impossible for the time being.

Three powerful lessons can be learned from recent IAS experience.

First, IAS have registered very few cancellations for the current academic year, and have received a significant increase in the number of applications for the forthcoming academic year. **The pandemic crisis has once more highlighted the internationally recognised roles of IAS as a model for scholarly safe havens and for stimulating scientific exchange, adopting workable alternatives for in-person meetings in variant formats.** Institutes for Advanced Study offer today the ever more needed conditions to concentrate fully on scientific work, to engage in discussions formally and informally with peers from various disciplines and intellectual traditions. The impact that IAS fellowships have on scientific advance and output is likely to increase in these difficult times.

Second, **IAS have proved themselves to be resilient, thanks to new ways of fostering scientific dialogue in times of pandemic.** They innovate with hybrid forms of meetings, mixing deftly online seminars with in-presence discussions. They have invented new schemes offering opportunities to involve former fellows and external associates and thus create a more integrative audience and achieve a greater outreach. Fellows have been keen to benefit from such an environment in this time of crisis.

Third, IAS have a long-standing in providing a strong academic infrastructure beyond national borders. This role of the institutes in contributing to internationalization has long been recognized. In times as these, **IAS play an ever more significant role in promoting an international academic community, integrity and freedom across national borders and cultural boundaries.**

All indicated factors forcefully demonstrate the important scientific role of the Institutes for Advanced Study. Their significance for scientific exchange and development remains unabated in times of pandemic and is more important than ever. Therefore, **the Network of European Institutes for Advanced Study, which gathers 25 institutes in 17 European countries, strongly encourages local and national governments, as well as international donors, to help the institutes pursue their scientific tasks.** Now more than ever, they are committed to providing much needed opportunities for innovative research and for intra- and interdisciplinary scientific exchange.

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