



Sveriges förenade studentkårers doktorandkommitté

Dear doctoral student,

As many of you probably know, the Swedish migration legislation, the Aliens Act, was changed in July. The new changes have made it practically impossible for doctoral students from outside EU/EEA to obtain permanent residency after four years of doctoral studies.

With this letter we would like to 1) explain the essence of the problem with the new Aliens Act as there still seems to be some confusion, 2) to tell you a bit about what we SFS and SFS-DK, and others - in particular with SULF, SULF-DCA, and Fackförbundet ST, have done and intend to do, 3) we have included information about how you can help and finally 4) we have also included some links for more information.

1) What is the problem for doctoral students?

In order to apply for permanent residency the applicant has to have had temporary residency in Sweden for four years. This was also the case before the changes to the Aliens Act. However, with the changes, the applicant has to have an employment that lasts for a duration of at least 18 months from the date the Migration agency makes their decision.

For a doctoral student from outside of EU/EEA this means that, when they have been enrolled for four years as doctoral students they can still apply for permanent residency, however they will only be granted permanent residency if they have 18 months or more left of their employment.

The changes not only affect doctoral students, but also other early career researchers such as postdocs as long contracts for temporary research positions can be quite uncommon. Many of such positions are also financed by external grants. This intrinsically ensures that it is not the universities alone that decide the length of contracts for temporary research positions.

This leaves doctoral students and other researchers in a situation where the precariousness of an academic career path becomes an obstacle for obtaining a permanent residency. When SFS-DK and others are asking for an exception in the Aliens Act for doctoral students and other researchers, we are not asking for preferential treatment of academics, we are simply asking for a fair treatment that gives doctoral students and other early career researchers a similar chance to obtain a permanent residency - as if they were employed outside of academia.

2) What have SFS-DK (and others done).

SFS and SFS-DK have worked closely together with SULF, SULF-DCA and Fackförbundet ST through - We and SULF-DCA also meet regularly with representatives of the grassroots and discuss how we as doctoral students can put further focus on the topic and bring new light to it. The grassroots, SFS-DK, SULF and Fackförbundet ST stood behind a [petition](#). In collaboration with

SACO, SULF, SULF-DCA, TCO , Fackförbundet ST, SFS and SFS-DK we have written a letter to the government where we ask that an exception is introduced in the Aliens Act. Together with the organizations listed above we are working hard on continuing to keep a focus on the issue.

It is likely that it will be a long process, and that is hard especially for those who are personally affected. Some weeks are a waiting game and we do not have much to share. But please remember, that organizations such as SFS, SULF and Fackförbundet ST are large organizations that have a long history of advocating for the rights and conditions of doctoral students - and they will continue to do so.

What can you do!

You can raise awareness on the topic - initiate a discussion about the issue at lunch in your research group. Clear up the misconception that we are asking for preferential treatment of doctoral students or postdocs, or that the universities can solve the problem alone.

The grassroots also regularly have asked for help to run their initiatives - They ask for personal stories to share, help with conducting surveys, creating media content among other things, so join the facebook group and contact the admins if you wish to help: [Intl. PhD students in Sweden call for change in permanent residency law](#)

Where to find more information

The problem of course has more aspects to it than the ones we described above. If you wish to understand it better- we from SFS-DK recommend our two blog posts on the topic. The first one takes you through more details of how the Aliens Act is structured and the general problems with it, while the second focuses on why a political solution in the form of an exception in the Aliens Act is needed. You find the first one [here](#) and the second one [here](#).

If you are personally affected by the changes to the Aliens Act, and have specific questions about your own situation: We recommend that you look at [SULF's FAQ](#). Also many local university branches of SULF/ SACO and Fackförbundet ST have started organizing seminars so look out for information about such seminars.

If you wish to follow the development and get news regularly on the topic of the Aliens Act- the grassroots runs a very good and informative facebook group: [Join here!](#)

You can also follow [SFS-DK](#), [SULF-DCA](#), [SULF](#) and [Fackförbundet ST](#) on facebook: We all post regularly about issues that concern doctoral students both on the topic of “the Aliens Act” but also on other topics. You can also join the facebook group “[Doktorand i Sverige](#)” which is run by SFS-DK. In fact we think you should follow and join all of the facebook pages and groups listed above.

Kind regards,