

# Career-Boosting Scholarships

2<sup>nd</sup> ESKAS Alumni Survey 2023



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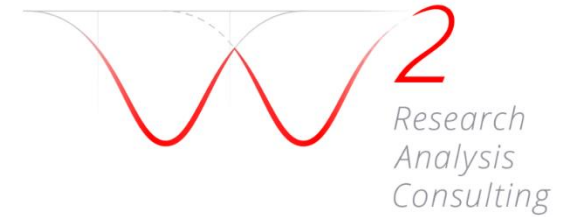
[www.w-hoch2.ch](http://www.w-hoch2.ch)

# Background

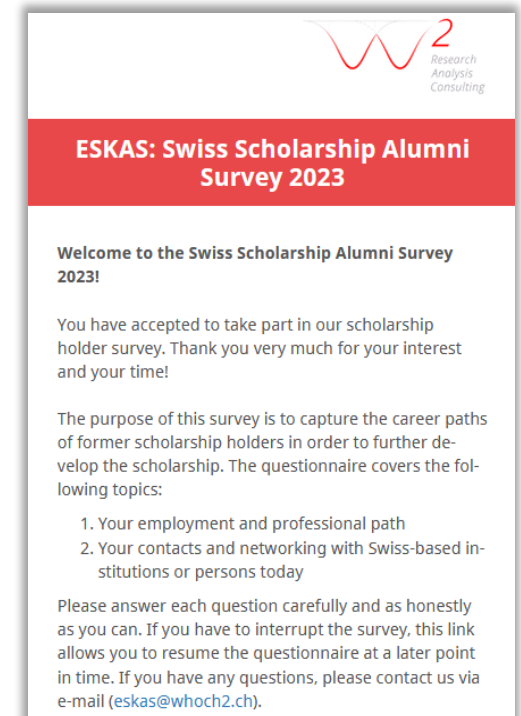
- In 2016, w hoch 2 GmbH conducted an online ESKAS alumni survey to examine the impact of the scholarship program and track the career paths of ESKAS alumni
- The present survey – the 2<sup>nd</sup> ESKAS alumni survey 2023 – is a follow-up and builds on the first survey in terms of methodology and content
- The primary aim of the survey was to determine the intermediate and long-term impact of the scholarship program. In addition, the long-term career paths of ESKAS alumni were investigated
- The 2016-2021 scholarship holders were questioned for the first time. Furthermore, the 1996-2015 scholarship holders who had already taken part in the survey in 2016 were surveyed again.



# Subjects & thematic focus



- The subjects of this study were two cohorts of former ESKAS/FCS scholarship holders
  - (1) ESKAS scholarship holders 2016 – 2021 (Cohort 2016 – 2021)
  - (2) ESKAS scholarship holders 1996 – 2015 who took part in the 1<sup>st</sup> ESKAS Alumni Survey 2016 (Cohort 1996 – 2015)
- Duration of the online-survey (field phase): May to June 2023
- The survey looked in particular at
  - (1) professional career (**occupation**),
  - (2) geographical **mobility**,
  - (3) the relationship with Switzerland and the **networks** developed during the scholarship year, and
  - (4) overall **ESKAS experience** (benefits and difficulties).



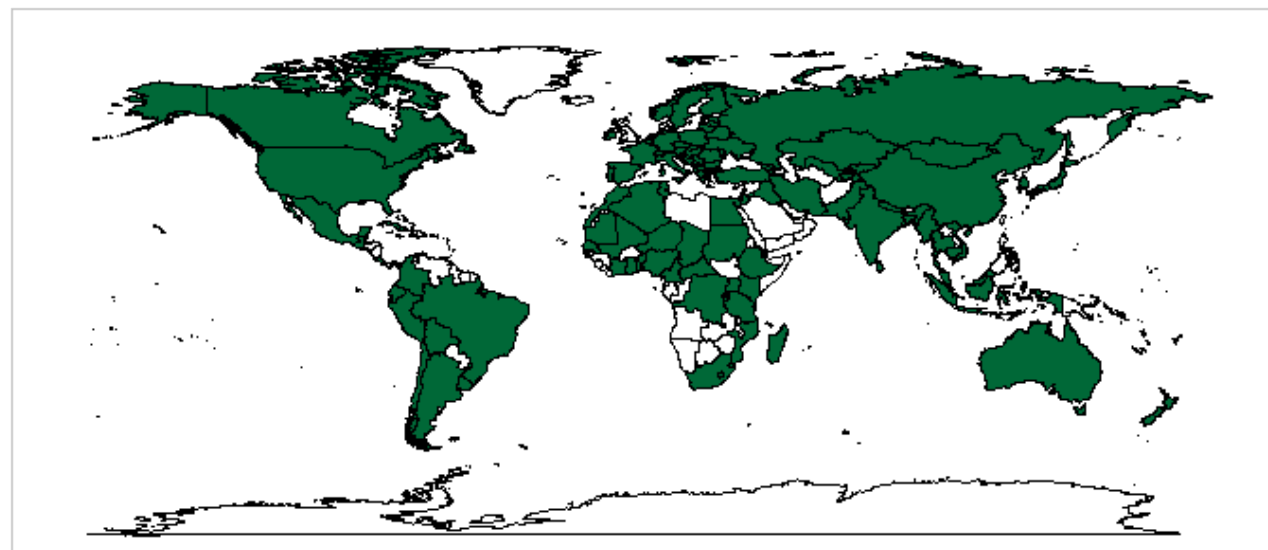
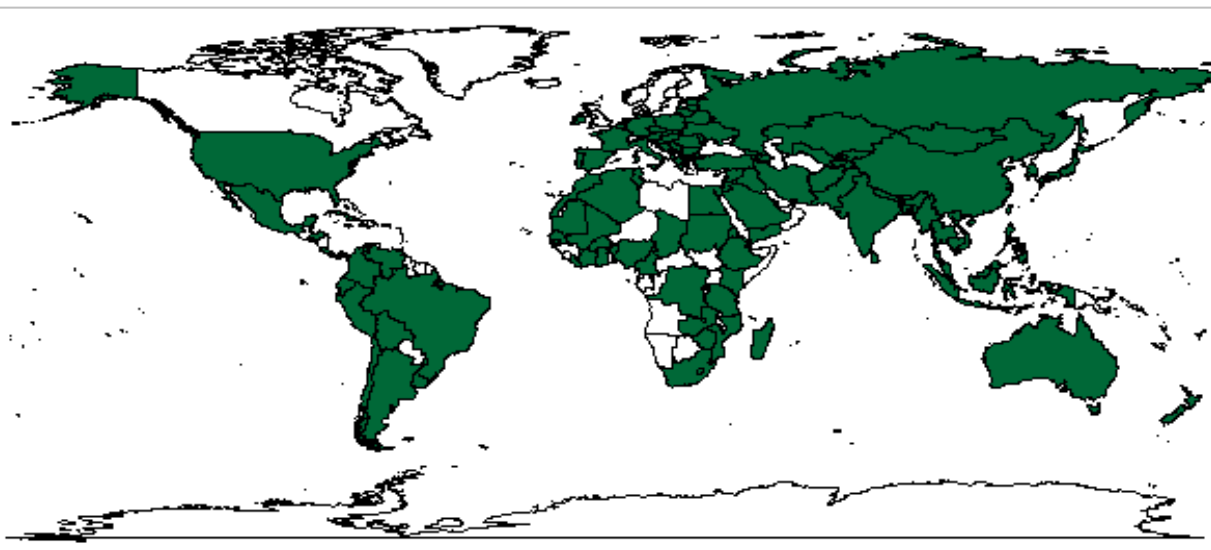
# Description of participants

## *Cohort 2016 – 2021*

- n = 642 (response rate: 67.4%)
- Sex: 52.6% female, 47.4% male
- Age: M = 35 years (SD = 4.7); 23 to 55 years
- Participants from 109 countries

## *Cohort 1996 – 2015*

- n = 681 (response rate: 65.2%)
- Sex: 48.8% female, 51.2% male
- Age: M = 41 years (SD = 4.9); 30 to 56 years
- Participants from 105 countries



# General feedback

## What did the scholarship-holders say?

- The scholarship is experienced as a very positive and important part of the academic career. Many alumni of both cohorts are very appreciative

"A **fantastic program** - it started my R+D career!"

"Word is not enough to express my thankfulness to Swiss Government and SERI.  
**ESKAS is love**, ESKAS is energy, and ESKAS is a green path in my life span"

"ESKAS was important in every possible way. **From the professional and personal point of view, it meant growth.** The opportunity to be selected made me a better professional and person."

"According to my past experiences, the scholarship [...] played a **significant role in my academic journey.** The opportunity to study in Switzerland has been a pivotal milestone in my scholarly pursuits, and I am deeply grateful for the invaluable experience."

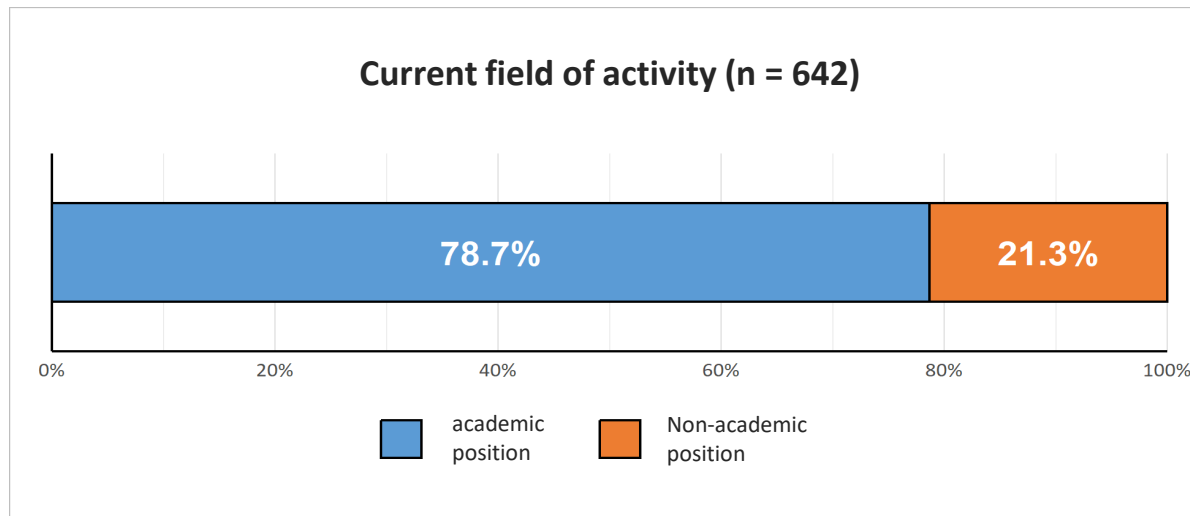
"The scholarship allowed me to start my scientific career and **establish a wide professional network** with scientists from all around the world."

"Everything was **perfect!**" "Many, many thanks! **Super organization!**"

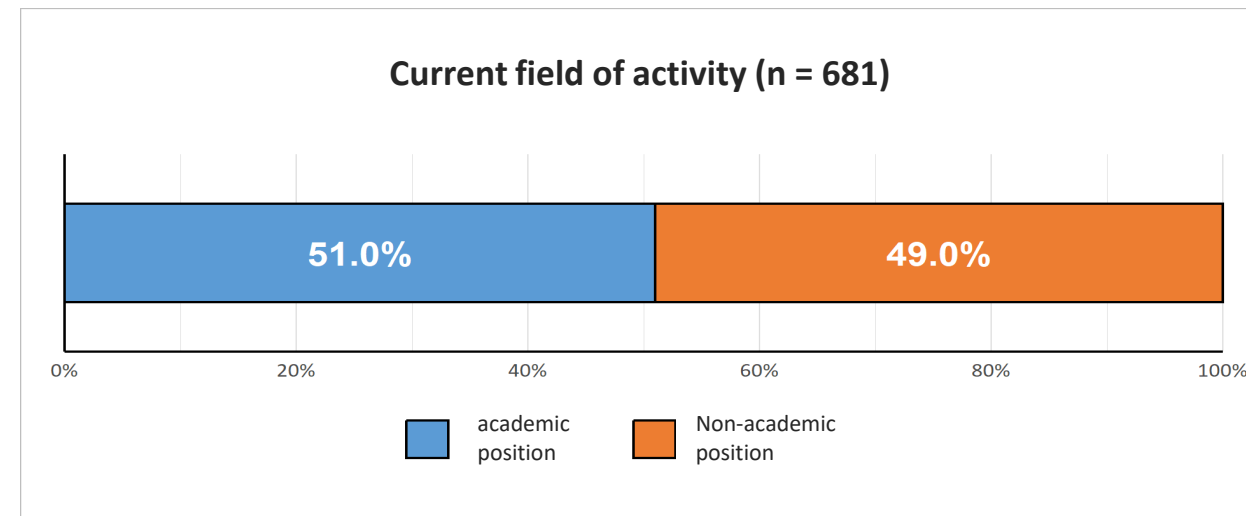
# Occupation

## What are ESKAS alumni doing today?

### Cohort 2016 – 2021



### Cohort 1996 – 2015



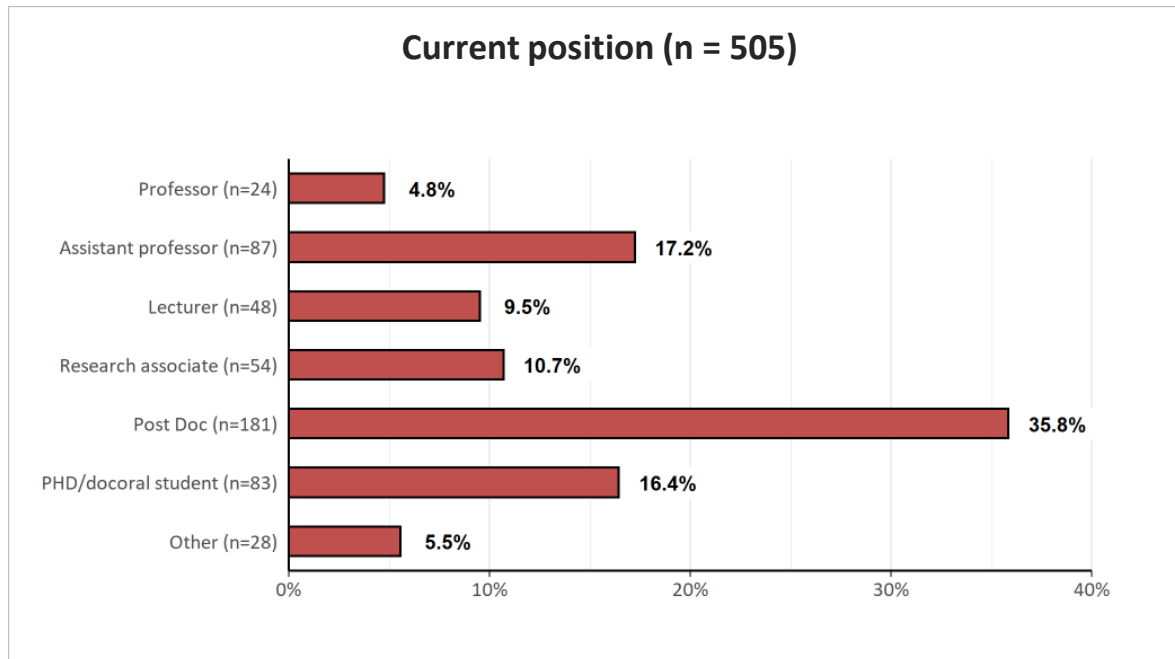
### Additional findings:

- 75% of the cohort 2016-2021 reported that their career goal is an academic career
- 71% of the people who reported holding an academic position in the 1<sup>st</sup> ESKAS Alumni Survey 2016 are still working in academia

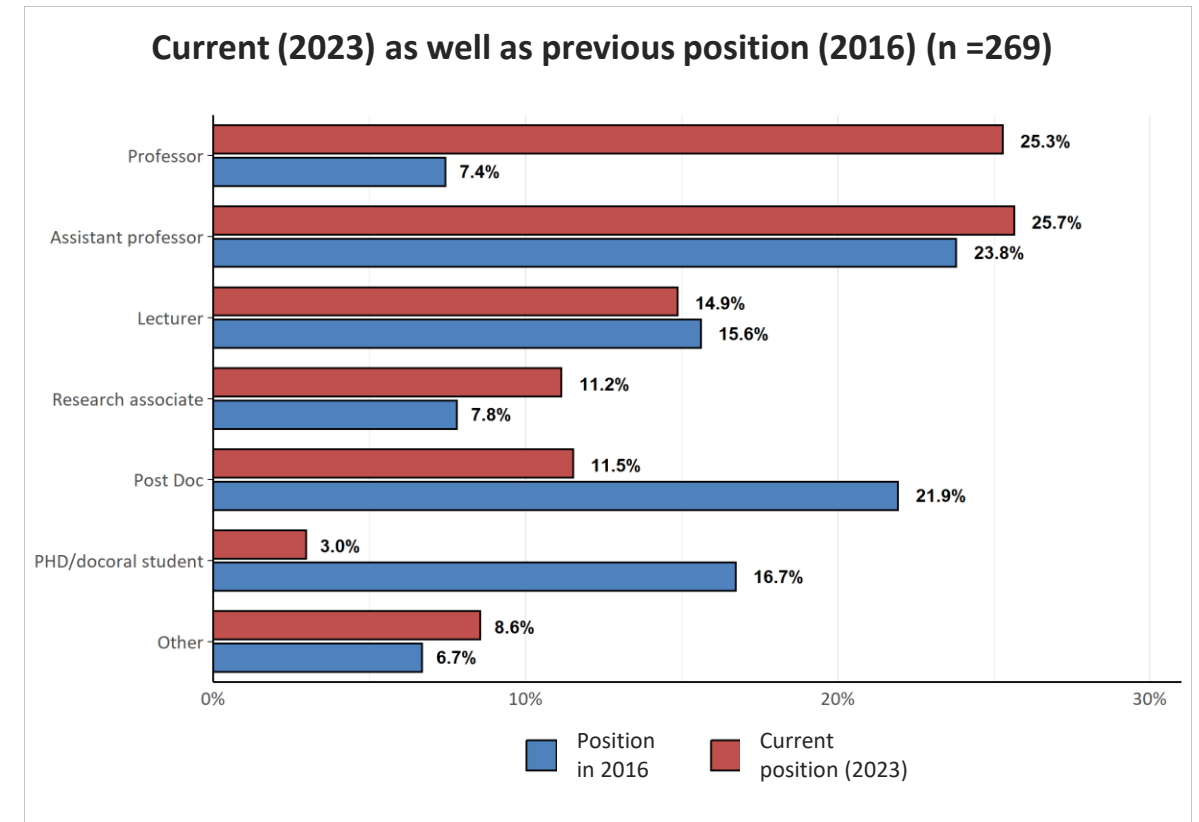
# Occupation

## What are ESKAS alumni doing today?

### Cohort 2016 – 2021



### Cohort 1996 – 2015



# Occupation

## What are ESKAS alumni doing today?

The majority of ESKAS alumni pursue an academic career

ESKAS is successful in supporting researchers and boosting their careers

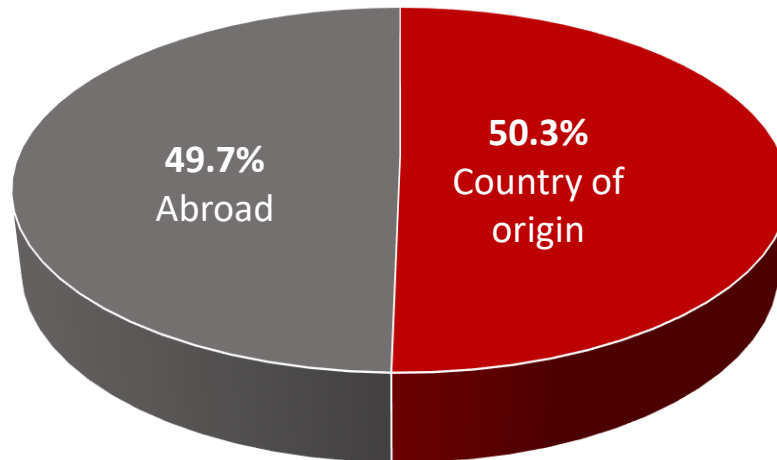
Scholarship holders who remain in an academic environment succeed in advancing their careers in the long term



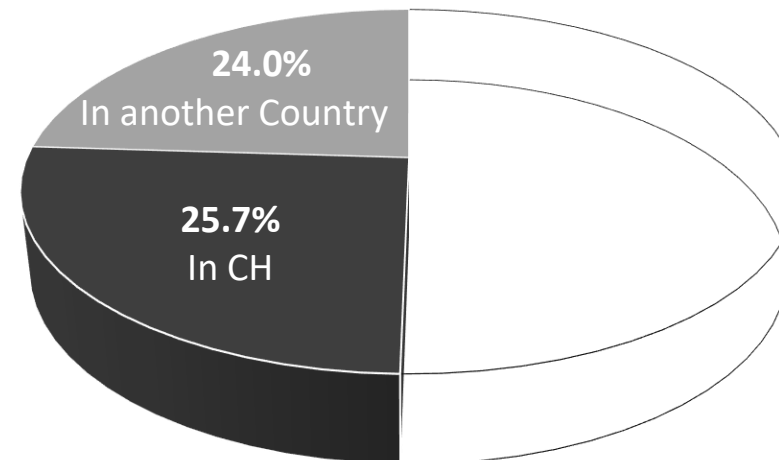
## Where are ESKAS alumni today?

*Cohort 2016 – 2021*

Current location (n = 642)



Current location abroad (n = 319)



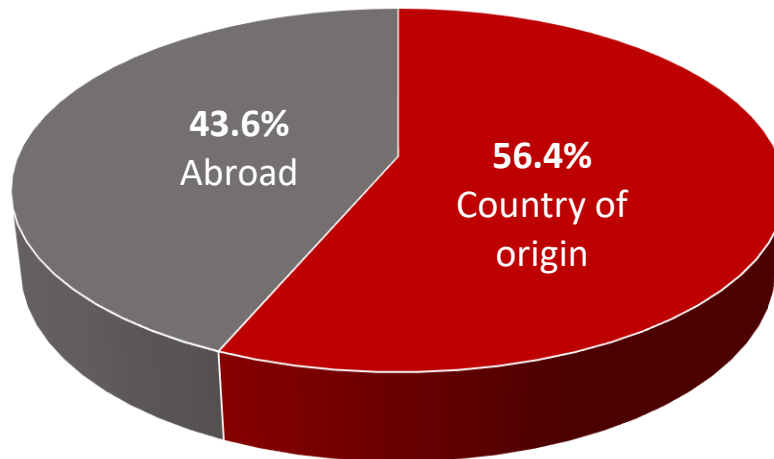
Additional finding:

- The proportion of participants with a PhD scholarship who return to their country of origin is 30.8%, which is lower than for other types of scholarship (FA/SR: 63.1%; PostDoc: 52.2%)

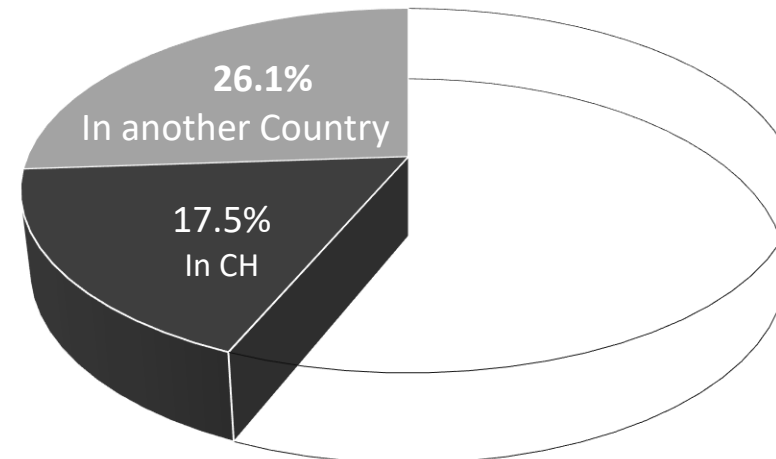
## Where are ESKAS alumni today?

*Cohort 1996 – 2015*

Current location (n = 681)



Current location abroad (n = 297)



Additional findings:

- A vast majority of 78.5% of those who were already in their country of origin in 2016 are still living there
- 16.3% of those who were abroad in 2016 are now living in their country of origin

## Where are ESKAS alumni today?

A minority stays in Switzerland for the long term

26% of the 2016-2021 cohort and  
18% of the 1996-2015 cohort

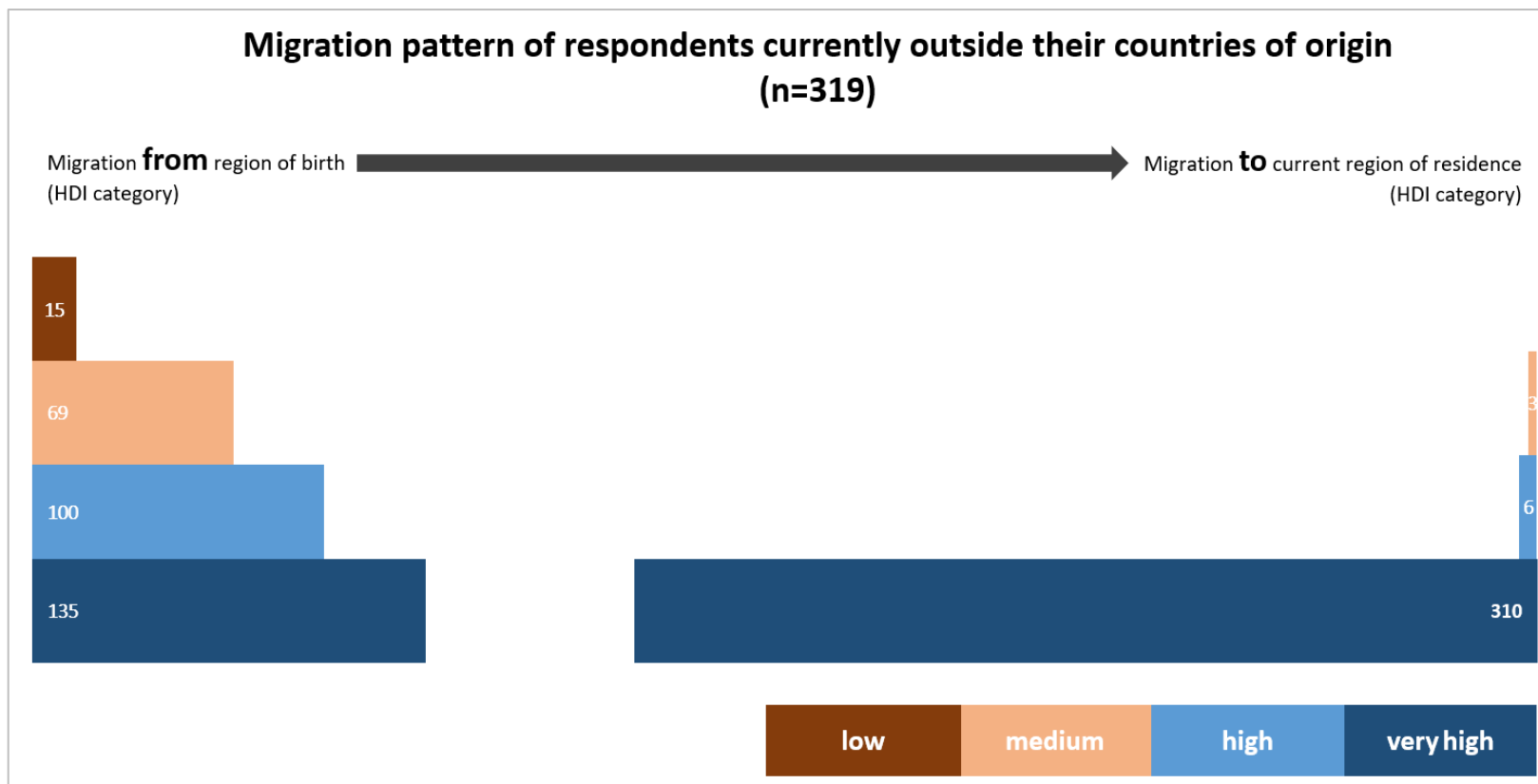
live in CH at the time of the survey

Scholarship holders who return to their country of origin after the scholarship, mostly remain in their country of origin

# Mobility (2)

## Different trends in different countries?

Cohort 2016 – 2021



# Mobility (2)

## Where do ESKAS alumni choose to go?

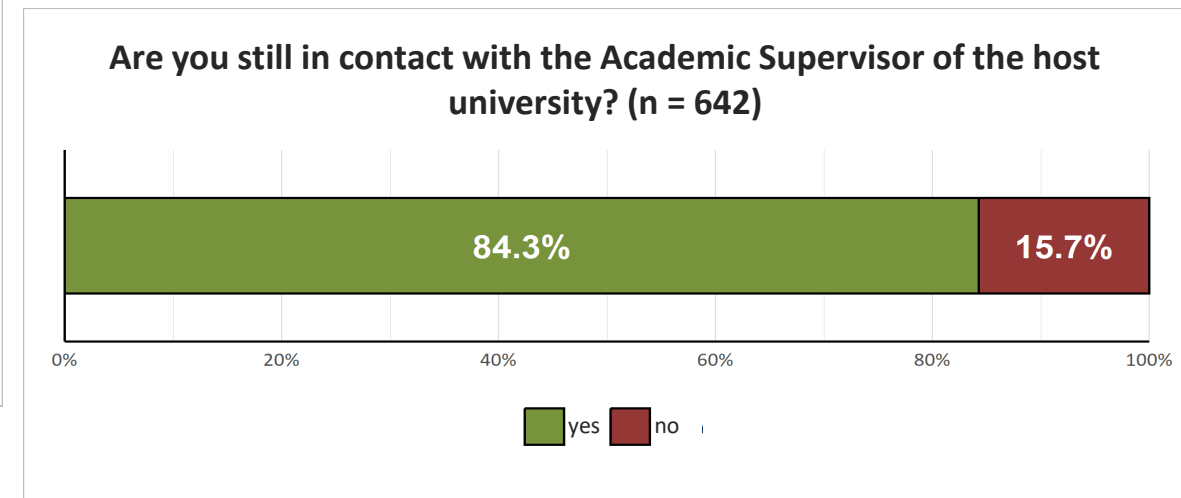
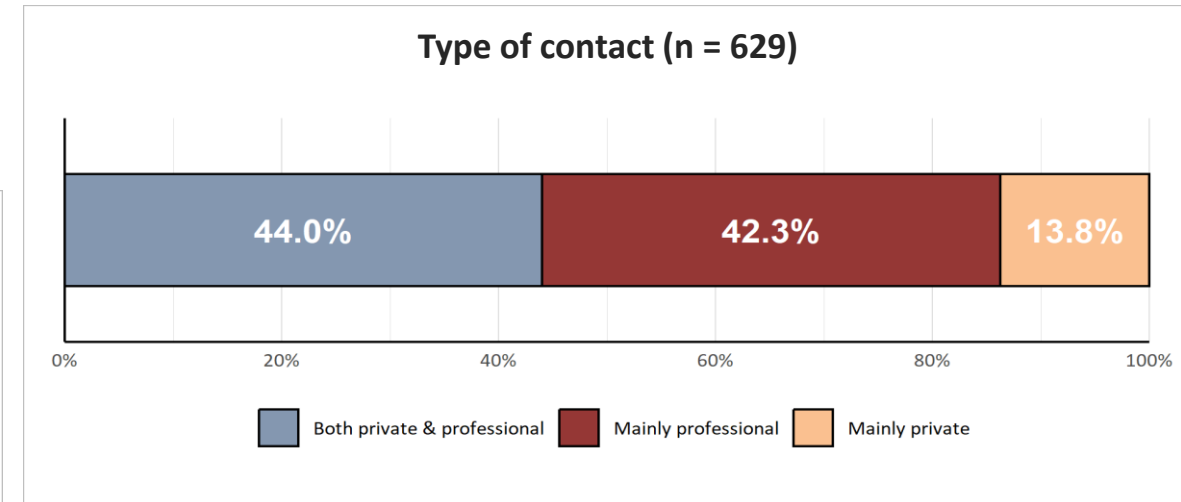
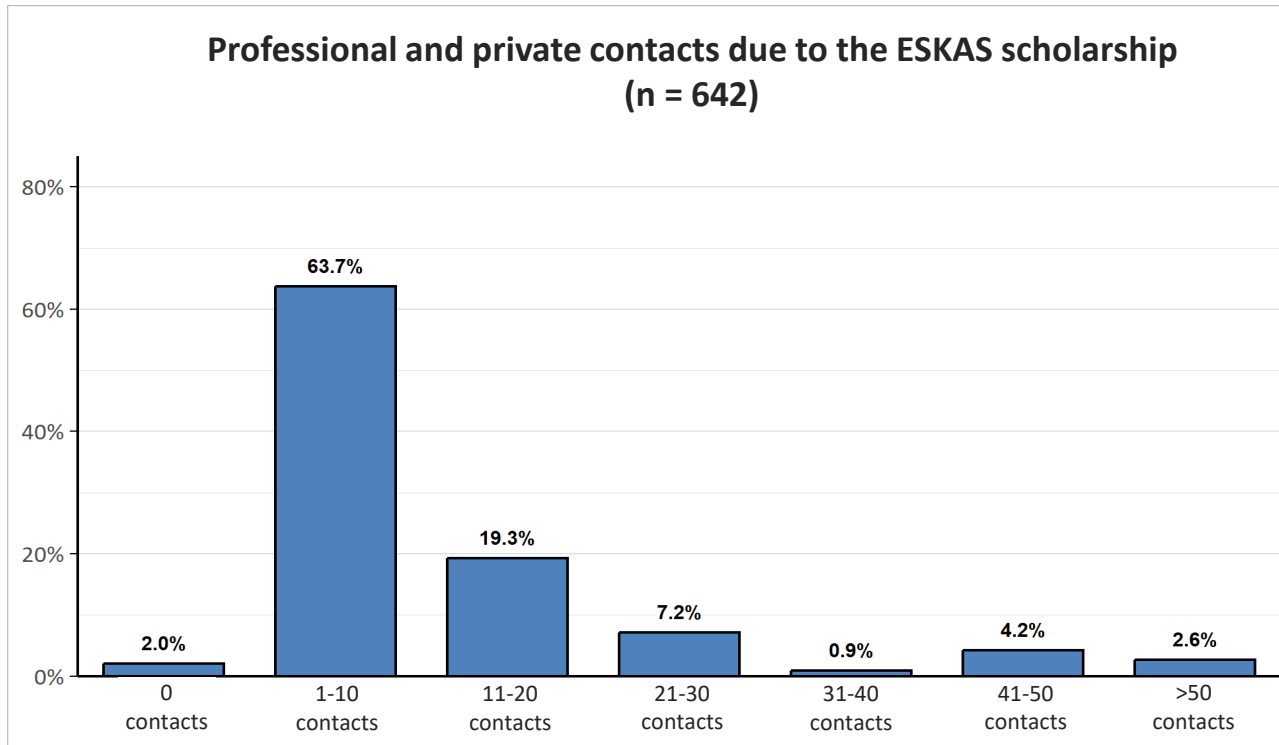
There is a pattern of migration to countries with a very high HDI

Countries with the highest emigration ratio: IND, BRA, IRAN, TUR, RUS

Countries of destination: CH, D, UK, USA, ESP

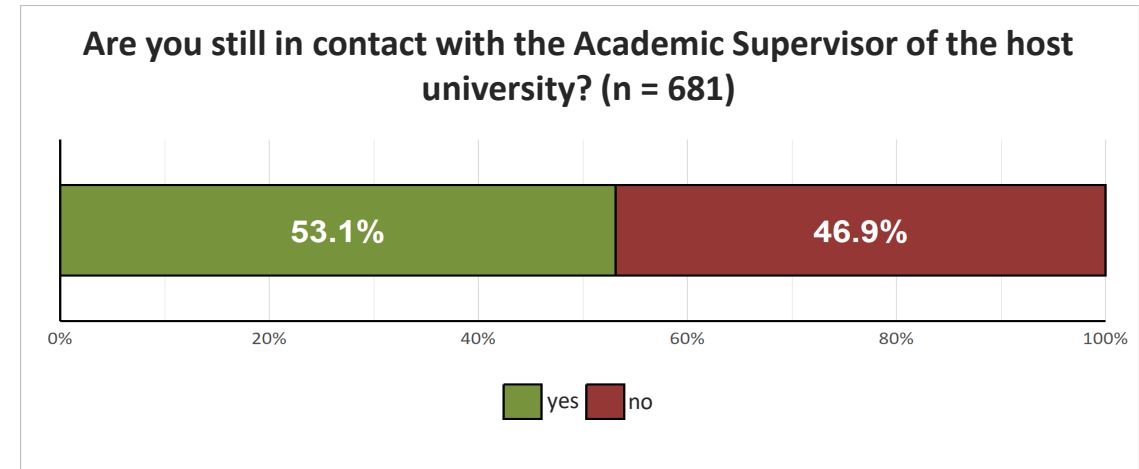
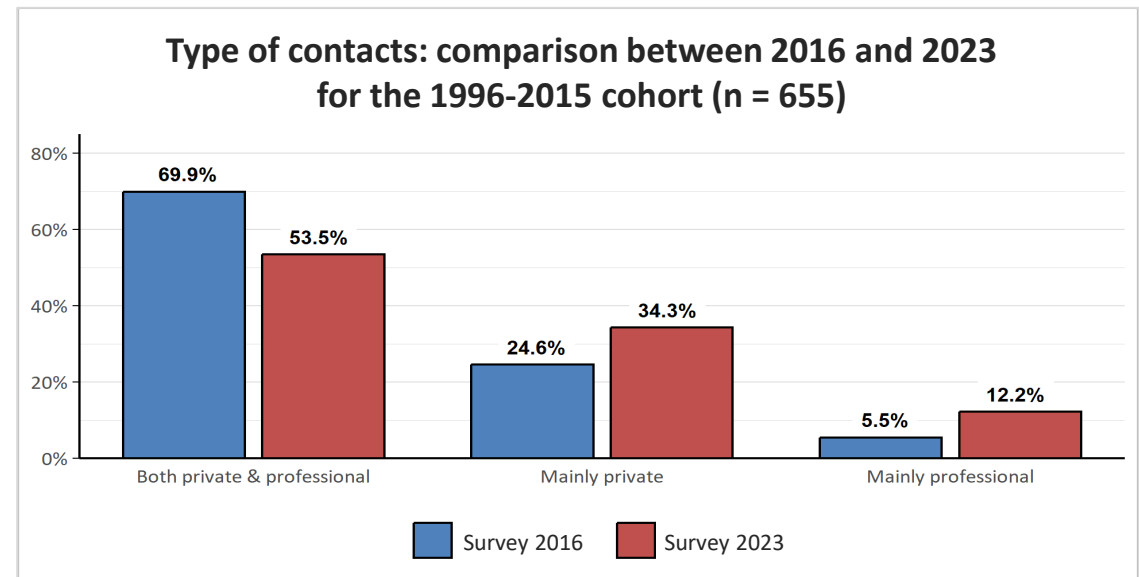
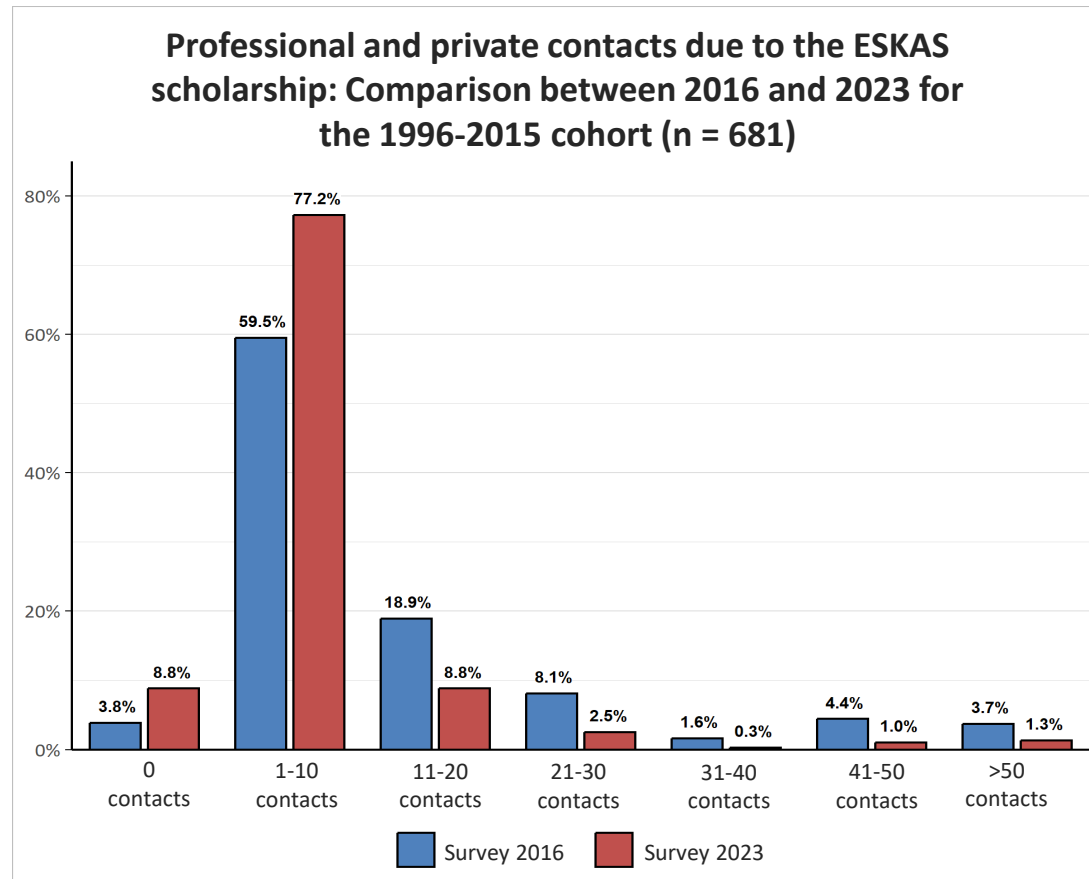
# Networks

## Do ESKAS alumni maintain their contacts? Cohort 2016 – 2021



# Networks

## Do ESKAS alumni maintain their contacts? Cohort 1996 – 2015



## Do ESKAS alumni maintain their contacts?

ESKAS alumni are building sustainable professional and transnational networks

Private, professional and institutional contacts are maintained in the medium and the long term

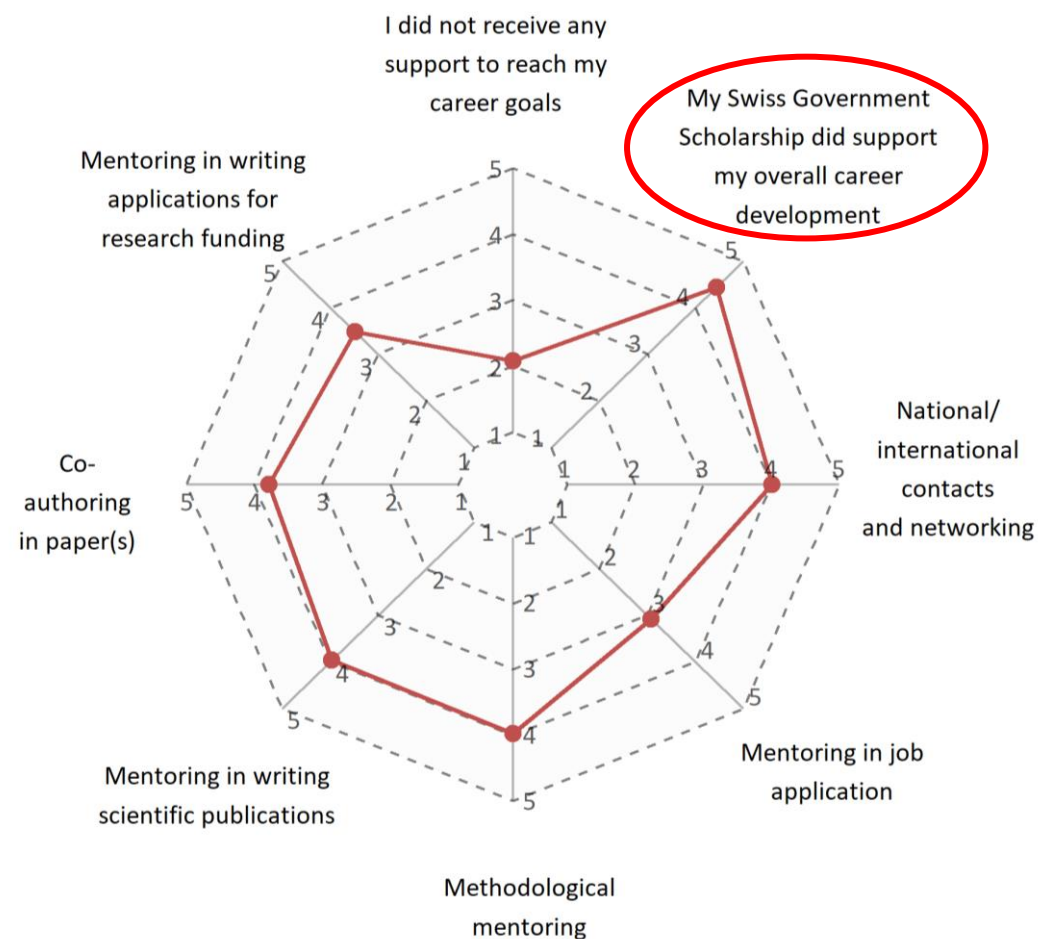
More than half of the 1996-2015 cohort is still in contact with the academic supervisor



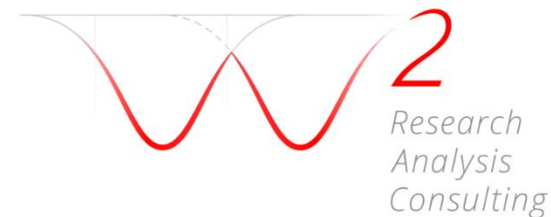
# Experiences with ESKAS

## What are the benefits of an ESKAS scholarship?

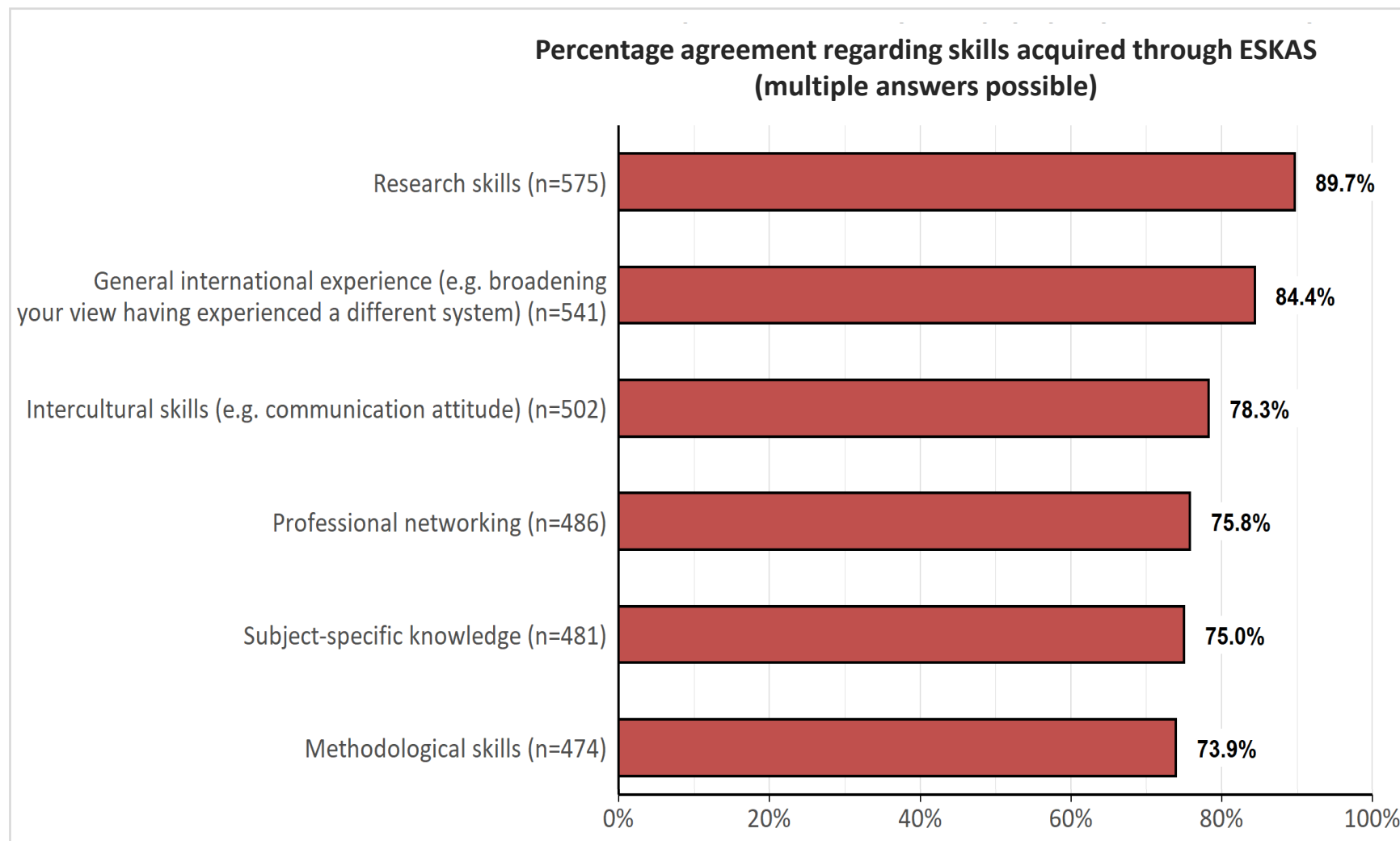
*Cohort 2016 – 2021*



# Experiences with ESKAS



## What are the benefits of an ESKAS scholarship? *Cohort 2016 – 2021*



# Experiences with ESKAS

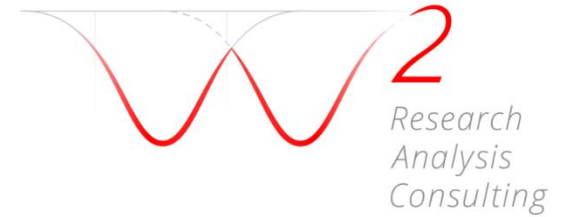
**What are the benefits of an ESKAS scholarship?**

ESKAS alumni are well supported by the academic supervisors, the reception services, and the scholarship commission

The ESKAS scholarship contributes to the career development

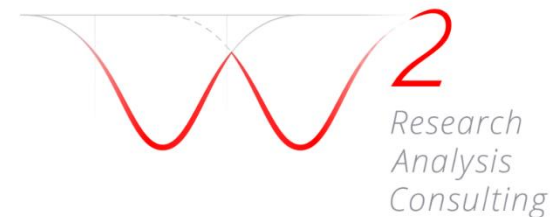
Students receive both academic and social/administrative mentoring

# Comparison between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> ESKAS Alumni Survey



- In both surveys, a sample was obtained consisting of participants from **a large number of countries of origin**: Thus, SERI has successfully promoted international exchange with all parts of the world through the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships
- **Most previous findings were replicated** in the 2023 survey:
  - Like the ESKAS alumni in the 1<sup>st</sup> survey, the 2016-2021 cohort confirmed that they had very good experiences with the ESKAS scholarship
  - In both surveys, the ESKAS alumni reported that they still have strong connections to Switzerland
  - There are also similar patterns in terms of geographical mobility in both studies. The high international mobility of alumni shows that they are able to connect to international networks and take advantage of the resulting career opportunities.
- **Differences can be seen in the professional positions** of the alumni:
  - In the 2016-2021 cohort, the proportion of alumni working in academia is higher compared to the 1996-2015 scholarship cohort surveyed in the 1<sup>st</sup> ESKAS alumni survey.

# Conclusions

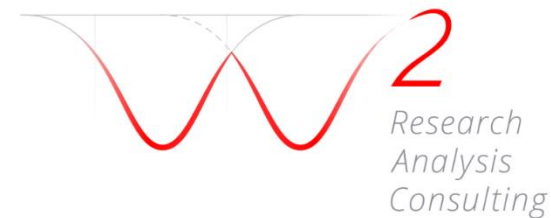


- Overall, the ESKAS alumni of both cohorts express **very positive view of the scholarship**; this applies to university mentoring as well as to ESKAS as a program
- Most ESKAS alumni aim to **pursue an academic career**. They see the scholarship as **an important milestone** in achieving this goal, as it establishes their personal network and expands their professional skills
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> survey of the 1996-2015 cohort show that ESKAS alumni succeed in **advancing their academic careers** and have improved their position since the first survey
- At the time of the survey, about **half of the cohort 2016-2021 are in their country of origin**; 26% indicated being in Switzerland
- **18% of the cohort 1996-2015 is still living in Switzerland**; a vast majority of those who were already in their country of origin in 2016 are still living there
- **Professional and private long-term contacts** with Swiss university institutions as well as with individuals remain even after the scholarship has ended: The aim of the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships to promote international exchange and research cooperation between Switzerland and other countries is thus being achieved!

# Questions



# Contact



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