

EUROPEAN  
REFUGEE/ES:

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CULTIVATING  
DIVERSITY  
TOGETHER

## ERASMUS+ VIRTUAL EXCHANGE EUROPEAN REFUGEE/ES: *Cultivating Diversity Together*

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### OVERVIEW

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This programme brings refugees and non-refugees together to explore how to create truly integrated societies in diverse countries where migration is part and parcel of economic and social life.

Increased diversity in Europe is a problem for some, a cause for celebration for others, and a lived reality for many. But while we hear all the time from politicians and media that successful integration is the solution, we have a hunch that we may not all be talking about the same thing. In this 10-week programme, we'll be tackling some controversial topics and big ideas related to integration such as identity, diversity and belonging from the perspectives of research, grassroots and personal experience.

All participants engage in 3 pillars: 1) online video **lectures** by European experts 2) live, facilitated **seminars** between participants from refugees and non-refugee backgrounds 3) **community engagement** through short video interviews.

## PROGRAMME

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The programme will follow these 10 weekly themes.

### **WEEK 1: Setting the scene**

This opening week sets the context for the recent migration into Europe, giving an historical perspective of migration in and out of Europe and an introduction to the terms: migrant, asylum seeker and refugee.

### **WEEK 2: Open identities**

How are identities shaped in pluralised societies? In this week we unpack notions of identity and explore how the movement across borders affects our own understandings of belonging.

### **WEEK 3: Who can come in?**

Here we look at the rules that restrict migration. Including how the movement of people across borders is politically framed and physically contained.

### **WEEK 4: Challenging the narratives of migration**

How does the language we use, the stories we tell and the political narratives we are exposed to shape our understanding of the movement of people into Europe? In this week we take a critical eye to the narratives surrounding migration.

### **WEEK 5: European values and the 'outsider'**

In this week we take a hard look at the social norms and values that can lead to discrimination of minority groups in European societies. We tackle questions of institutional racism and marginalization.

### **WEEK 6: Learning to live with diversity**

Do Europeans need to learn how to live in diverse societies? In this week we explore different ways of belonging to a society and the best practices for cultivating diverse societies.

### **WEEK 7: Meanings of integration**

How can we know if integration is working? This week analyses some of the political and grassroots strategies for successful integration.

### **WEEK 8: To be, or not to be, a citizen?**

What impact does citizenship have in the integration process? Here we look at different ways of defining citizenship and whether being a citizen helps integration, or not...

### WEEK 9: Civil society and grassroots movements

All over Europe civil society movements have sprung up to provide creative solutions to local challenges. Speakers in this week share their experiences of initiating change in their locality - what has been happening in yours?

### WEEK 10: Future outlook

In our closing week we turn the platform over to you. What ideas do you have for cultivating integration together?

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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- **Knowledge:** Students gain a multi-disciplinary understanding of the European refugee situation. A particular focus will be the issues faced by refugees and newcomers when integrating as well as how European host societies deal with diversity.
- **Community engagement:** Opportunity not only to learn and explore the subject matter from experts across Europe, but also to conduct primary research in the form of interviews to contribute to the European-wide video narrative project. Together these dialogues present the diversity of voices from communities around Europe.
- **Cross-cultural:** Students build confidence in speaking honestly and respectfully on controversial and complex issues in a cross-cultural environment. Equally they learn how to listen receptively and value contrasting perspectives.
- **Interpersonal:** Develop bonds of trust, understanding and support for their fellow peers through a process of getting to know each others' views and experiences as individuals.
- **Technology:** Gain experience in virtual communication and essential technical capabilities.
- **Transversal skills:** Our evaluation indicates that students who participate in our programme develop a set of skills that are considered highly valuable to employment, academic achievement and personal growth. These competencies include increased self-esteem, curiosity, tolerance of ambiguity, decisiveness and resilience.

## ASSIGNMENTS

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- **Watch and give feedback on the video lectures:** The video lectures on the 10 themes are designed to provide participants with food for thought for their seminars. These stimulating videos are presented by academics, practitioners and the public. Participants watch the video lectures on the weekly theme and then fill out a short form with their comments and thoughts.
- **Active participation in and preparation for weekly seminars:** Seminars will be held at the same time and day each week for the 10-week programme and last 2 hours. The seminars are in small groups that balance a diversity of nationalities and backgrounds. Members of the groups will stay together throughout the programme and will be hosted by the same facilitator. All participants are expected to have watched and reflected on the video presentations prior to their seminars so that they can share their ideas and perspectives with each other.
- **Conduct short video interviews to contribute to European-wide video narrative:** In seminar groups, participants will think up questions that they deem important to ask the wider public. They will take these questions out to their communities and invite neighbours, friends, family or a member of public to give a 1-minute answer. Collectively, participants can expect to collect 100s video interviews that are designed to present a broad spectrum of European perspectives to the refugee situation.
- **Individual reflection diary:** After each seminar participants are encouraged to reflect on the issues, ideas and feelings that arose during the week by filling in a short online form/diary. Over the 10-weeks this will create a record of their development on both the issues and the virtual exchange process.
- **Final reflection piece:** Using their personal reflection diaries as a starting point, participants can then choose from a number of creative options to express their learning experience.
  - Option 1 is a reflection essay of 1500-2000 words.
  - Option 2 is a creative output such as a photo essay, piece of music, drama script, comic strip, sculpture, dance performance, 'infographic', or self-interview. Along with a short reflection piece of 500-1000 words.

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

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- **Assessment** is based on the satisfactory participation in, and completion of, the above assignments. The detailed criteria of assessment is outlined in the [Assignments Manual](#).
- **Grading:** Pass/Fail grading system is used unless otherwise specified by your institution.
- **Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange Badges:** Students successfully completing the programme will receive Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange badges for their *Participation*, *Video Dialogue* project and *Assignments*. There is also the opportunity to be awarded a *Milestone Badge* for achieving all three badges.

## 130 HOURS, 5 ECTS

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- **Teaching:** video-lectures and seminars (4hrs/week).
- **Preparation and assignments:** preparation for seminars; presentation; survey contribution; video narrative assignment; final reflection piece (9hrs/week)
- The hours are not reflective of the weekly workload but an average over the 10-week programme which allows longer preparation time for the assignments.

## PARTICIPANTS

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Participants in this programme come from across Europe and the Southern Mediterranean, from refugee and non-refugee backgrounds. We value this high level of diversity in our programmes and see this as a strength. We are also proud to be collaborating with higher education institutions all over Europe including: Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain and the UK.

## CONTACT

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For questions, please email: [student@sharingperspectivesfoundation.com](mailto:student@sharingperspectivesfoundation.com)

## ERASMUS+ VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

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Erasmus + virtual exchange is a groundbreaking project that enables youth in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to engage in meaningful intercultural experiences as part of their formal or non-formal education with the aim to expand the reach and scope of the Erasmus+ programme through virtual exchanges, that are technology-enabled, sustained, people-to-people education programmes.

Erasmus + virtual exchange offers young people in Europe and South Mediterranean countries the opportunity to engage in a safe online community and participate in facilitated discussions, increasing their intercultural awareness and extending their competences through Virtual Exchange. Erasmus + virtual exchange encourages intercultural dialogue through online people-to-people interactions, enhancing critical thinking and media literacy; fostering soft skills and employability, promoting citizenship; and strengthening the youth dimension of the EU neighbourhood policy.

Erasmus + virtual exchange is a flagship programme established and funded by the European Union and it is implemented by a consortium composed of: Search for Common Ground, Anna Lindh Foundation, UNIMED and Sharing Perspectives Foundation, in association with Soliya, UNICollaboration, Kiron Open Higher Education, and Migration Matters.