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BREAKING BARRIERS: YOUTH PERSPETIVES OF MIGRATION IN EUROPE

*Report of the study session held by
European Free Alliance Youth, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples
Organisation and the Left Youth of Finland*

*in co-operation with the
European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe*

*European Youth Centre Budapest
Dates: 22nd-25th August 2016*



This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Breaking Barriers: Young perspectives on migration in Europe” is an initiative born out of a partnership between the European Free Alliance, the Unrepresented Peoples and Nations Organisation and the Left Youth of Finland with the aim to provide with a genuine and face-to-face vision of the situation of refugees in the new waves of migration that we are witnessing in Europe.

This study session aimed to train and motivate young people who not necessarily have a career or experience in the field but that might be interested to be involved in this in the future. This training was accomplished by an exchange of views by experienced activists, scholars, young politicians and other experts, a thorough debate about the different subjects that are comprised in this topic and finally, a working process in which it is ensured that the participants could use what they have learned in the study session as an asset for their public lives or volunteering campaigns. It was the goal of the organisation that the materialisation of the conclusions of this session was the most precise and helpful that may be possible, in order to guarantee that the participants have a concrete result of what they learn. It is for this reason, that, distributed in different working groups, the participants have been able to channel the knowledge by producing different products (either a political manifesto, an article, a policy proposal, an audio-visual material etc.), the first step which will inspire the continuity of the project and its application in their daily lives. In order to better achieve this aim, the organisation has been also committed to implement a comprehensive follow-up programme, for the year following the session, that will speed up the work that has been carried out by the participants in the field, collect new suggestions from the challenges of the practical application and propose common campaigns.

Apart from stressing its applicability, the other major approach of this project has been to analyse the issue from a diverse scope by providing the more perspectives possible, which are sometimes disregarded or directly unknown when assessing such a complex topic. In this sense, we had had a Youth, Children and Education approach, in which through assessing this issue from local refugee camps in Hungary, the participants learned the main

challenges that very young refugees – notably unaccompanied minors – have to face while enduring the processes of asylum seeking. We also debated about the Gender and LGBT+ implications, the portrayal of refugees by social and conventional media, while confronting hate-speech, and the responsibilities of the cities and villages in sheltering refugees as opposed to the obstacles that the states have to face, expressed in the new movement of “shelter-cities”.

These innovative approaches have been complemented by an academic approach as well – in order to outline and organise the conceptual framework of the participants – and with testimonies of first-hand experiences expressed by some refugees among the participants, who contributed to humanize the concept and create empathy among them. Finally, the participants had also the opportunity to learn from experiences of activists in order to find a practical way to canalize their volunteer aspirations and the expertise acquired in the session.

EFAy, UNPO and the Finnish Left Youth received financial, institutional and educational support from the Youth Department of the Council of Europe in the framework of its yearly programme of study sessions. This cooperation reflects the principles of co-management and partnership with young people and their organisations that are in the focus of the youth policy of the Council of Europe - an investment in the empowerment of youth organisations and activists to take part in decision-making processes both locally in their own communities and internationally. The above organisations share with the Council of Europe as main priorities the need for protection of asylum-seekers, the promotion of inclusion in order to build multicultural societies and the battle against racism, xenophobia and hate-speech.

EFAy, UNPO, the Finnish Left Youth and the Youth Department of the Council of Europe co-organised this study session in order to build a society that respects human rights, promotes cultural diversity and aims for social inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Aims and Objectives

The study session was conceived with the premise that the phenomenon of shelter-seeking in Europe has been addressed until the moment with extremely short-termed policy strategies by the official institutions and by the media with an approach heavily influenced by an emotional framework. In addition, it is often only addressed from a perspective of the “receivers” – which has to manage the issue- and not by the first-hand perspective, the shelter-seekers or refugees themselves, a view that helps to frame the issue as a “problem” and a “crisis”.

This project was aimed to problematize these approaches, creating a broad consciousness among the young people of Europe while focusing on concrete aspects of their lives throughout the process of applying for refugee status, sharing and learning from first-hand experiences from the participants. This critical analysis was essential to design a long-term strategy proposal for young activists on the issue of the shelter-seeking. With this, we aimed to provide with useful tools for young activists to be used in their countries of origin. Likewise, this project proposed volunteering and engagement opportunities for people without an activist background but interested in the topic. Furthermore, the main priority that governed at all times the session has also been to foster the idea of integration among young people and to create an environment free of hate speech and discrimination.

We have tried, first of all, to give chance to a voice that is not usually taken in account, especially in the ordinary media: the refugees themselves. We have compared some first-hand testimonies with some samples of perceptions taken from the peoples of their countries of reception and the media, aiming to foster integration and to create a space free of hate speech and of discrimination and analysing how our societies react to this phenomenon in the media or through political statements.

In this way, we also assessed the main problems that these people could have faced especially the ones in particularly vulnerable transition ages as childhood and adolescence, focusing on gender, family and education. Finally, we visualised and proposed some

initiatives underlining the work of activists, the new drive of shelter cities and social urbanism and the responsibility of Europe and the international community in this topic.

The workshop was organised in different blocks, each block led by a recognised expert in the field or by the participants themselves. Through non-formal education, team work, group management, and the use of new technologies, such as social media, the participants, divided into groups, prepared their own conclusions, which were presented and discussed throughout the workshop. Taking into account vulnerable transition ages as childhood and adolescence, we also assessed issues as gender, family and education. Finally, we proposed some initiatives underlining the work of activists and the new phenomenon of shelter cities and social urbanism.

Profile of participants

The diversity within the participants, coming from 10 different countries, both from the states of origin of the refugees and their countries of arrival, has encouraged a broad view of the topic during the session. They were selected among young activists (members of NGOs, civic platforms, political parties etc.) but also young people committed with the cause. As this event was mainly conceived as training for young people on activism in the field of refugees, we have also targeted an audience that despite not being yet experienced is willing to begin a career or a voluntary endeavour about the issue. The goal of this activity consisted not only into training but also convincing young people to become more involved in refugee activism in their countries. The combination of such different profiles generated the added value that we expected.

The application procedure that this organisation team followed was to select the participants through an open call and a filter made by the organisation based on objective criteria of their civic or social involvement, previous experience, interest on the project and an added value profile.

Overall topic and list the main contents/issues discussed

The session was divided in different thematic blocks. We began with **first-hand testimonies** of refugees and an open exchange of experiences. We compared these first-hand testimonies with samples of perceptions taken from the general public and media of the countries of reception. In order to contextualise the topic, we also framed the migration flows and ex-

plained its main theories from an **academic perspective**. After this, we analysed how refugees are depicted in **mainstream and social media**, while learning how to counter hate-speech discourses.

We also assessed the main problems that refugees may encounter in their countries of reception, in particular during vulnerable transition periods, such as **youth and education**, focusing on childhood, adolescence and families. The **gender and LGBT+ block** brought light to many aspects usually disregarded when analysing a shelter-seeking process, such as the gender perspective and the treatment of LGBT+ rights in adverse social contexts. Finally, we visualised and proposed initiatives underlining the work of **activists on the field** and we have debated the possibilities that new drive of **shelter cities and social urbanism** opens to them, while discussing the responsibility of Europe and the international community in this topic.

Background to the theme of the study session

In Europe, a new drama occurs every day at its borders. Europe has to face the biggest migration wave of its history since the World War II. Many European leaders position themselves as “protectors” of their states against the newcomers, raising barriers and police controls in their borders while subverting the principle of free movement of the Schengen Convention.

Asylum is, according the [Convention](#) of Geneva¹, granted to peoples who fled from political chases or war. The right of asylum is a fundamental right, and the assessing of the asylum petitions constitute an international obligation which concern the states based on this Convention. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also states that "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."²

Every day, numerous people try to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe. Putting in danger their lives to run away from the horrors of armed conflicts, terrorism and authoritarianism, these women and men hope to find a prosperous future in Europe. The resolution to brave the seas and seek refuge in Europe, has already taken a toll. We have also seen how Syrians and the Afghan people struggle across the desert through highly militarised zones.

Different refugee camps have been built in many European countries in order to accommodate migrants, often in deplorable conditions. In these camps, refugees see their chances to apply for asylum status delayed, endlessly prolonging their permanency in a short-term con-

¹ Geneva Conventions: <https://www.icrc.org/en/war-and-law/treaties-customary-law/geneva-conventions>

² UDHR: Article 14 (<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>)

ceived facility.

This challenge has also raised the debate of integration. Europe has the capacity to absorb a great number of refugees, as migration represents a true chance to tackle the worrisome ageing of its populations and a positive resource for the labour market. Unfortunately, the terrorist attacks that many states have recently suffered, caused a generalised fear environment, which has also raised suspiciousness and xenophobia against refugees and migrants, increasing discrimination towards them in many aspects of the European society.

That is why, in order to counter these arguments, we felt the necessity to position migration as a chance and not as a threat for the European people. Both a chance for the ones living in the countries of reception and for the migrants, while culturally and economically enriching societies in all the European countries and ensuring a sustainable life conditions for everyone who lives there.

PROGRAMME-INPUTS AND DISCUSSIONS

“First-hand Experience”

1st day of the study session (Monday 22 August) 10.30-12.30h
Speakers (among the participants): Hanna-Marilla Zidan, Mona Shilagy

The First-Hand Experience Block is the first session that the participants will have to be involved in, and it acts as an initial exchange of different experiences and backgrounds.

This session was directed to exchange different experiences with the participants, raising awareness of some cases in which they may not be familiar with. In this way, we created a very tangible understanding between the participants, while interconnecting many stories during the session.

The session has been structured as the most free and open parts of the event, aiming to reinforce the concept of equality in the discussion. That is to say, the participants have shared their common experiences either as refugees themselves (first-hand experience), as activists in the field, or as people interested into becoming more involved in their future lives with this cause.

We began with some powerful testimony as an introduction and then the moderator gave the floor to the participants, who have given their views to some questions established by the organization. At the end of the session, we formed some groups to discuss in a reduced format some of the questions addressed during the session.

“Theories of Migration and Refugee-seeking in Europe”

1st day of the study session (Monday 22 August) 14 -16h

Speaker: *Núria Franco Guillen*

The academic block is the first “expert-supported” block in the event. It has been conceived as a way to frame a brief but solid theoretical basis to the participants before they assess the specific issues of each other block.

The aim of the academic session was to provide the participants with the necessary theoretical framework about the refugee phenomenon and migration in order to organise the theoretical concepts, to show a bigger picture of the issue around Europe and to assess the main trends of people’s movements. In the second part of the block, we have generated a debate while stimulating some more visual reactions projecting a documentary based on a practical case.

First part: The first part of the session has had the format of a course delivered by an expert who set the basic tools to analyse the phenomenon of migration, explore some different significant cases and explain the role of the European Institutions in tackling it. It assessed the main international migration theories (which try to answer to the question “why people move?”) that they have been given at the moment. From an scholar point of view, we also looked at the most common research questions that people make when studying migration, as well as to the mere definitions of the term “migrations” and “migrants” that they have been proposed all over the years.

The second part of the session discussed the external dimension of the migration policies, addressed the reactions and consequences that migration has from a third party perspective (example: other states, international institutions etc.). In this part, we have seen how other international players react to these trends and which kind of institutional tools can they use to intervene in the issue. For a better clarification of this point, the speaker presented some examples of institutional measures adopted in the Mediterreanean area.

Second part: Cineforum (Tarajal)

In this second part, we have projected part of [“Tarajal”](#), a documentary directed by Metro-muster (directors of the famous documentary “Barcelona Ciutat Morta”) and the DESC Ob-

servatory.³ It revolved around the use of illegal tools to reject refugees by some states in the border of Europe.

After finishing the documentary, the participants were invited to discuss their impressions about it in a debate.

Media Block (Media representation of the migration crisis: How media shapes public opinion and crisis response) and Thematic Group Work on Media

2nd day of the study session (Tuesday 23 August) 9.30-11h

Speaker: Dr. Erik Uszkiewicz

In a context where the increasing xenophobic attitudes and public debate about migration in Europe has been back dropped, the aim of the media block was to provide the participants a basis for a critical thought on how media is shaping public opinion and crisis response, using the practical example of the so-called migration 'crisis' in Hungary. The session was as well designed to foster the idea that a phenomenon cannot be fully understood when looked upon it when it remains isolated from its context. Therefore, we used the Hungarian context as an example which fits well the session objective, as well as with the objectives of the overall study session.

The block was structured into three parts that allowed for traditional lecture format learning, as well as some interactive exercises where the participants were the main protagonists in shaping the content and discussion. During the lecture part, the media expert and researcher Erik Uszkiewicz introduced the media representation of the mass migration 'crisis' in Hungary and the role of voluntary groups involved in relief work during the crisis. Following the lecture, the participants were divided in four groups: two of which were asked to develop a guideline for journalists, outlining how to portray questions surrounding refugees/migrants in a non-biased, objective manner. The other two groups were given the task to write a short text, using two different perspectives: one from the point of view of the government, and one from a non-partisan public broadcaster's perspective. The idea of the exercise was to apply and generalize the knowledge gained through the specific case used in the lecture on a more global scale. As a matter of fact, the participants succeeded well in applying the concepts discussed to their respective concrete tasks.

The last part of the session was dedicated to presentation and reflection of the group work through a discussion moderated by the expert and a preparatory team member.

³ Tarajal: <http://metromuster.cat/project/tarajal-desmontando-la-impunidad-en-la-frontera-sur/>

The main idea that the participants discussed was the power that media has – or rather the power of the terminology, concepts, settings and pictures used in various types of media – to evoke feelings and thus have an impact on how we perceive different phenomena, including migration. We also addressed the way numbers and figures are often depicted, eg. “350 000 migrants” vs. “nearly half a million migrants”, which was raised by a number of participants as an important factor influencing our perception on sensitive topics.

While perceived largely positively by the participants in general, the thematic group focusing on media was particularly pleased by the session overall as it gave them substantial ideas and input to the product they were working on over the course of the week. Based on the message of the session that “media is being framed appealing to one’s emotions” the group prepared – as their final product – a PowerPoint presentation, which aimed at providing a practical toolkit on how to be critical towards the media frames you see. More specifically, the objective was to analyse how any media narrative can be reframed from negative to positive or vice versa by using a simple equation of villain-victim-hero. The presentation of the group applied this equation on real case examples from both press and social media and also engaged the audience in analysing a number of examples. With their presentation, the group hoped that the other participants could use the toolkit provided within their own communities and networks on future occasions, separately from the study session.

One of the most decisively inspiring phenomena for group in their work was the chance to do something tangible in this issue that can be applied to their everyday lives, and that could have an influence in the way them and the people around them shape a response to the “refugee crisis”. This having been said, some others would have welcomed a bit more time to develop a bigger project and go deeper into the subject. The media group also appreciated that each team member contributed to the final product and had a task to be responsible for, as well as the fact that they were themselves responsible for the final product and the planning process, while still getting information about daily goals and help if needed.

The importance of dedicating one thematic block and a substantial part of the group work to the role of media in the so called refugee crisis became evident from the onset of the study session, as it was the thematic that received by far most attention when the thematic groups were being formed. The invited expert, Erik Uszkiewicz, also offered a vast amount of sources for additional reading/ learning on the matter, and invited participants to stay in touch for any potential follow-up questions.

Activist Block: #Overthefortress

2nd day of the study session (Tuesday 23 August) 14-16h

Speakers (among the participants): Marco Sirotti and Andrea Berta

The Activist Block was conceived as an activity with two main goals: to promote the exchange of views and good practices between activists and to encourage potential volunteers (people interested in the cause who still hasn't had any experience and who request some guidance). This inspiration was made through a presentation and a workshop led by Andrea Berta and Marco Sirotti, both activists of Global Project. The two speakers described their experience over the campaign #[Overthefortress](#), a student and young volunteer initiative to support migrants in the process of refugee-seeking. Overthefortress, both a self-organised and self-funded activity, aims to support refugee and economic migrant's practical challenges that arise through their odyssey to Europe, and to monitor the state's policies towards them, denouncing, if necessary, their bad practices.⁴



The speakers exemplified their overall struggle in one particular action: the ensuring of a permanent structure with a stable internet connection in Idomeni to facilitate the communication of refugees and countering their isolation of information from the exterior. This very concrete action, however simple as might seem, it proved to be key for them to fulfill their most common necessities of communication, empowering them with more information and contact with other allies and the media.

In Greece #Overthefortress has also activated the “No Border, Radio”, which allowed to produce music and live poetry, collect interviews and material by which try to narrate the differ-

⁴ Solidarity Campaign #Overthefortress: <http://www.meltingpot.org/Solidarity-Campaign-Overthefortress.html#.WJsvyfJZjYY>

ent stories of the persons blocked in the informal camps, thanks to a mixed redacting staff formed of migrants and activists.

The results of the debate generated by this exchange of experiences have been indeed useful to the participants in order to propose new activities that they could potentially do in their countries of origin and especially in local environments. The participants have been very imaginative and pro-active in this latter debate and they successfully envisaged some feasible actions to do in that respect, as a policy proposal for facilitating the school exchanges between camps and local schools, or a media campaign to visualise the challenges that refugees encounter in their refugee-seeking process.

“Women and LGBT Refugees: Challenges and Reactions”

3rd day of the study session (Wednesday 24 August) 9.30-11h

Speaker: Francisca de Haan

The Gender and LGBT block, entitled Women and LGBT Refugees: Challenges and Reactions was designed to stimulate the participants to expand their understanding of the contemporary migration phenomena by taking into account the gender and LGBT dimension.

The aim of the session Women and LGBT Refugees: Challenges and Reactions was to give participants a proper understanding of gender and of the complexities of LGBT issues and rights in general. More specifically, the session looked into the interconnections between gender and migration and how the debate is framed politically. The objective of the session was to address the prejudices related to the topic and inspire participants to develop a critical but, at the same time, constructive approach to the topic.

The session was structured as follows:

- 1) Gender and Sexuality: Basic Issues
- 2) Gender and Migration: How do they shape each other?
- 3) Some Experiences of LGBT Migrants
- 4) Work in Small Groups about the New Year's Eve's sexual harassment and the subsequent reactions to it.
- 5) Group discussion

The block was conducted by Professor Francisca de Haan. Initially, in the form of a lecture. Subsequently, through interactive exercises, participants analysed an interview with the mayor of Cologne and discussed in smaller groups before opening to debate with the rest of the participants.

Questions raised by the participants revolved around the notion that the world we live in and our everyday lives are deeply shaped by gender. Furthermore, there were many inputs about transgender as a matter of identity, as opposed to sexuality, love, romantic inclinations.

Some participants further inquired about those who are not able to identify with one of gender categories.

The group discussion triggered heated debates about the topic. Some participants already had background on gender studies and therefore built on their previous knowledge.

A major point of reflection was the discussion about the countries in which homosexuality is a crime. The most tangible outcome of the block was the presentation of the Gender and LGBT working Group, which was a proposed called Traffic Jam Pub Role Play. The aim was to play with the stereotypes and to explore the prejudices present in daily dialogues in informal settings. The role play worked very well and engaged all the participants with a very rich discussion which laid the ground in the participants in this context.



The session was generally very well assessed, as well as by the preparatory team. Participants really appreciated the lecture on gender and sexuality, since it was a new topic for most of them. The speaker was also successful in linking gender with migration and refugees, showing the perspectives that the team expected from her.

Reading the evaluation forms that participants filled in, we could see that the Gender and LGBT block was probably the most popular. Professor de Haan's approach really piqued their curiosity and clarified several important topics.

“Youth Children and Education”

3rd day of the study session (Wednesday 24 August) 14-16h

Speakers: László Milutinovits, Peter James and Zsófia Roszik

This block included a presentation of the mission of the Council of Europe, specially focusing on the work of the Youth Department on educating young people in Human Rights through non-formal education and on the No Hate Speech Movement. Though this block was initially foreseen to be complemented by a visit to Fót, a refugee camp for unaccompanied minors, due to some practical reasons, this was not possible at the end. Nevertheless, the educational advisor and the Youth Department team provided with an alternative proposal: a dia-

logue with Ms. Zsófia Roszik, a representative from the same refugee camp, Fót, and Peter James, civil society activist representing MIGHELP, an institution offering language courses for young newcomers, as refugees or migrants. The working group was an interactive exercise in which the participants had to choose between different sides symbolising answers to controversial questions. Which such an activity, the participants have been able to self-analyse their preconceptions when talking about refugees and migrants, specifically about



their accommodation and the reaction from the local citizens.

The debate raised from those apparently confronted positions was derived to the difficulties of the young refugees, families and accompanied minors when applying for shelter

while facing added necessities and particular challenges throughout the process.

This debate resulted in conclusions defining the role of education as pivotal to counter intolerance, radical extremism and violence among the neighbours of the migrants in the countries of reception, while promoting the values of an inclusive society, through a multicultural approach.

“Bringing Human Rights to Municipality Level: the Shelter Cities”

4th day of the study session (Thursday 25 August) 9.30-11h

Speaker: Sophie Schellens

Human rights, migration and refugees are often discussed on European and national levels. However, reality often plays out within local cities. Why cities are stakeholders in these issues and what can they do in practice?

The block was divided into two parts: A presentation developed by Sophie Schellens, and a workshop, conducted by the speaker and developed by all the participants.

The speaker presented Justice and Peace was initially a Dutch organisation that advised the Church in Human rights issues and develops humanitarian projects mainly inside the Netherlands. This organisation is nowadays lead by a dynamic group of young workers and volun-

teers that actively fight for civil and political rights. One of the projects that this organisation develops is called “Shelter City”. This project aims to provide a “safe heaven” to political activist who face prosecution and life threats because they activities. Together with the Dutch state, Shelter City provides a temporary home and a safe environment to this activist in order to rest and wait until they can return to their countries without risk.

After the explanation of Justice and Peace and Shelter Cities activities, Sophie addressed migration and asylum seeking from the perspective of the sheltering communities. Using real cases, she tried to explain the complex relation between sheltered and sheltering. To analyse it, Sophia described how societies could be divided into three positions regarding migration and asylum seekers:

Firstly, 20% of them totally agree with the arrival of newcomers. Secondly, a 20% of them totally disagree. Finally, a 60% of the society can swing to one position or the other. Sophia explained how important is for the activist to focus on convincing this 60% and not the 20% who totally rejects newcomers. This explanation was totally linked with the media block and the role of mass media in creation opinion and hegemonies. After this conceptualisation the speaker and the assistants started a short debate analysing how the opinion of this 60% of the population has changed in their respective countries: Hungary, Finland, the UK, etc.

Then Sophie moved forward on her presentation to analyse how a Shelter City should look like. In other words, the discussion evolved from a theoretical to a normative background. The aim was to provide tools for the participants to act in their hometowns and communities and achieve a positive social and institutional change towards the welcoming of migrants and refugees. Briefly, she described four dimensions where the participants, as activists, decision makers, journalists or just neighbours, may act: society, media and institutions. This three dimensions were specifically divided into four fields of action: integration of the newcomers, reception of the sheltering society, perspectives of the local media regarding the situation, and services & facilities that political institutions should provide.

Once Sophia described these dimensions and fields of action, it was the turn of the public to participate. The participants had around half an hour to fill those whiteboards with ideas or experiences that they already had. The contributions can be summarised as follows:

- development of joint activities with migrants/refugees and the sheltering societies to break stereotypes and promote cohabitation, based in mutual learning activities from an intercultural perspective (food, arts, popular culture, etc.);

- the creation of a sheltering network of individuals, companies, NGO's and public administration;
- the provision of adequate services and facilities from the public administration to enhance the development of those activities;
- the active participation in the local press (opinion articles, letters to the director, etc.) and in social media.

Together with Professor De Haan, Sophia's session was the most praised by the team but also by the assistants. Her evaluation is highly positive not only because of her exposition, but also because of her participation during the whole week. She was able to give the perspective in all the blocks and successfully help the Shelter Cities working group. As a result, her exposition used other blocks in order to explain and frame what she understood by a "shelter city".

MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY SESSION

The study session brought mainly successful outcomes. First of all, it managed to create a dynamic space of understanding and exchange of views between people with different backgrounds. Although a solid interaction among youngsters from difference cultures can take time that was not the case within the *Breaking Barriers!* group. Since the beginning, it was possible to observe their interaction flowing naturally. In this context, the role of the Educational Advisor in facilitating the communication was pivotal.

The study session aimed at training and proposing new tools to young activists in order to allow them to engage more actively with refugee issues. It was as well evident that some of the participants had previous knowledge on the area, whereas others were simply interested but had no former expertise. This gap was bridged by the session blocks, which aimed at inviting those more acquainted with the topic to contribute and to share their experiences, at the same time as inviting newcomers to ask questions without feeling belittled. By bringing together different levels of experiences, the thematic groups that were formed on the first day offered the most important outcomes of the entire study session.

The group responsible for the Media prepared a presentation which aimed at providing a practical toolkit on how to be critical towards media. More specifically, the objective was to analyse how the mainstream resorts to narratives whose framing triggers emotions in the

readers/watchers. The presentation of the group (which can be found in the annexes) used real case examples of stories that depicted a certain character as the “villain”, another character as the “victim” and the last one as the “hero”. The triangular theory of analysis, which had been introduced during the presentation: “Refugee Crisis and the Media: Representation and its Role in Shaping Public Opinion”, on the 2nd day of the study session by Mr Erik Uszkiewicz was the framework that inspired the thematic group.

The thematic group responsible for Gender and LGBT+ prepared an interactive presentation, in the format of a role play. Once divided into six groups, each of them had 5 minutes to talk about the character’s role and to plan the strategy in the role play. One member of each group sat in one of the six chairs and represented that character. They were encouraged to change the representative whenever they wished to. The background of the role play was a “liberal European country that had received many refugees but were still in the middle of a major public debate about introducing a quota for refugees”.



The thematic group responsible for Activism went beyond the expectations and created their own organisation. Drawing on the expertise of some of the group members and inspired by the overall environment of the study session, the group created an organisation entitled Safe Haven. The idea was to create a solidarity campaign in which people would understand the reason why refugees seek a safe haven in Europe. The group then elaborated the point that facilities used to house refugees – such as detention and processing centres or their homes – are under increasing scrutiny due to revelations of inhumane conditions. These facilities can be run by governments, NGOs or outsourced to private contractors profiting from human misery. In light of the situation, *Safe Haven* was launched as a campaign to “highlight those reneging on their human right responsibilities to refugees and to campaign for improved conditions and treatment.” The Facebook page created for the newly established network aimed at connecting different supports and provider of accommodation for asylum seekers in order to guarantee that essential amenities, such as a bed; three meals a day and clean water; hy-

gienic sanitation; enough space for living and social activities; habitable housing and cultural stimulation could be offered to them. The main purpose of the working group was to make sure that those still awaiting their decision were not left in an environment prone to xenophobic attitudes from local populations and face a very limited support network. They concluded that while organising locally, volunteers can contribute to their database to highlight the issues asylum seekers and refugees face.

The most creative outcome, however, came from the thematic group that worked on the concept of shelter-cities. Based on the goal of improving access to social, economic and environmental justice by supporting the work of NGO's and providing protection for Human Rights defenders, participants created a board game that represented a city and cards that a player could buy in order to provide to the city with facilities for migrants' reception. The proposed material lacked the time and the resources to be concluded but was successful in triggering important discussions. Above all, it brought through a non-formal approach the importance of political leadership amidst humanitarian crisis, especially when leading with urban development challenges. All in all, the group managed to bring the debate of resettlement of refugees into the context of the participants' lives.

These working group presentations revealed to be fundamental to the overall success of the study session. First of all, it enhanced the commitment of each participant with the project. Since the application process, potential candidates were informed that the study session had a clear goal of training and producing a tangible outcome. The thematic work groups enabled, thus, the combination of theory and action, allowing each participant to shape his or her idea and expertise into something for the common benefit. Furthermore, in a very short period of time, they were able to learn, create, discuss and present high-quality materials.

The participants were as well able to look at the phenomenon of refugees from varied points of view and to assess different aspects. They learned both from a practical-empirical level (First-hand experience block) in first person to an external and theoretical perspective as in the Academic Block. Once having started from this basis, then they had the opportunity to see more precise cases that might be overlooked, such as gender, LGBT+ and youth issues. Moreover, the perspective of the countries of arrival analysing the "shelter-city" movement reflected on the logistic and social challenges that may arise in the accommodation of refugees. Overall, the participants were able to have an agenda as inclusive as possible in order to produce their own critical opinion.

The evaluation was organised in different groups (different from their working groups) which, at the end of each day, they would evaluate the diverse aspects of the day. Every preparatory team member would collect their thoughts and share them during evening evaluation meetings, together with the educational advisor. With this method, the team was able to assess in a very immediate way the daily outcomes and see what could be improved for the next day. At the end of the session, the preparatory team got together once again to discuss the outcomes of the study session and to fill in the final evaluation report.

Based on these evaluations, it was possible to confirm that the majority of the participants appreciated highly the knowledge that they gained in such a short period of time. While long-standing activists were enthusiastic to learn about the concept of shelter-city, students coming from cities with high occurrences of xenophobia particularly welcomed the media training on how to analyse narratives that lead to racist discourses.

It is important to highlight that each thematic group was asked to think about ways to follow-up on their projects so that their ideas had continuity after the study session. That instruction triggered, in multiple times, a discussion of how to create ideas that would not fade away after the session ended. More than concrete projects, the concern was to find ways to keep the enthusiasm and the network alive. Some participants shared their frustration with past experiences in which a group of interesting people had come up with a good working idea, but eventually the project ended up dying. The challenge was taken seriously not only by the participants but also by the preparatory team, that works to keep the team united and its ideas running.

One follow-up meeting is already being proposed for early January 2017 in Brussels. Although reuniting all of the participants would not be possible, a great number have already confirmed. This will be an opportunity to strengthen ties created during the week in Budapest and it will also offer the chance to discuss the next steps. It seems clear now that the commitment of the participants with the cause is genuine and therefore has good prospects to achieve concrete results.

Based on the experience of this study session, the preparatory team recommends the Youth Department to make sure that the presentation about the Council of Europe takes up a much longer time slot in the programme. Although it was made clear that the Council of Europe would be able to share any report or more information about its activities at request, it would be more beneficial for the very brand of the Council of Europe to ensure that one entire day is dedicated to the exploring its missions, framework and campaigns. Especially in regard to

countering discrimination, intolerance and social exclusion, the work of the Council of Europe offers rich ideas on how the practical implementation of these principles. All participants surely understood the importance of the Council of Europe in these campaigns, but more real examples and exercises could bring even better results.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

In order to consider the possibilities of the follow-up of this study session, the organising team has to be aware of their possibilities and limitations. That is why at the beginning of the first preparatory meeting before the session, we found interesting to carry out a SWOT analysis regarding our backgrounds, the activities (specifically workshops) developed during the study session, and the outcomes of it:

Strengths:

- Participants came from different nations and had different educational and professional backgrounds.
- Most of the participants actively participate in political organisations or NGOs at local and European levels.

Weakness:

- Despite the outcome of the working groups was positive, few follow-up could be produced on the projects. The main underlying reason is that four days could not be enough to create mature projects.
- Lack of time (during and after the study session) of the preparatory team to reflect about the follow-up because of the reduced size of the group and the daily workload.

Opportunities:

- The study session succeed at creating a sense of group among the participants. One indicator of this is the fact that the participants are willing to meet in the Benelux area.
- The asylum seekers sheltering crisis is not temporary and will probably worsen. This means that our “field of action” and the “necessity to act” will grow.

Threats:

- The loss of relevance of this follow-up for the preparatory team and the participants because of other projects and issues.
- The lack of funding or the ability to articulate a project at European level.

It also worth taking into account the projects created from the working groups:

- **Shelter cities:** Creation of a board game regarding how a shelter city should be.
- **Gender issues and LGTB+:** Creation of a role game about gender issues
- **Activism:** Creation of an on-line platform called Safe Heaven (present on social networks) with the aim to increase awareness on the subject.
- **Media:** Creation of a methodology based in the trilogy hero/villain/victim to analyse and understand how media address the shelter crisis.
- **Youth, Children and Education:** A policy strategy to increase the contact between young refugees and local people through recurrent exchanges between schools and the schools in the refugee camps.

We conclude that even if any workshop was able to produce at the moment something feasible and to be directly applied, the success relies on the combination of the positive points of each activity. For instance, While the shelter-cities workshop succeed on normatively define what a shelter city should be, the workshop regarding gender issues, succeed on providing a tool to make players reflect on the trans-sectional and multi-dimension of gender issues and migration or asylum-seeking.

Assuming these considerations and reflections, a roadmap has to be drawn in order to capitalise all the potentialities of this group. Logically this roadmap has to be created involving the entire group, specially the participants, who were the real protagonists of the study session.

That's why, considering, as stated above, the willingness of the participants to organise a follow-up meeting in the Benelux area, we propose a two days meeting in Brussels to reflect about further cooperation and activities. This meeting needs to have continuity with the proposals issued from the working groups, analysing their feasibility taking into account the circumstances. Thus, EFAy and UNPO (organisations based in Brussels) could provide the venue and organise all the logistics necessary. This meeting could be organised in winter considering that it is low season so flights and hostels are cheaper, and taking into account the necessity of not to delay even more a follow-up meeting.

These meetings should assess the feasibility of the new coming actions and common campaigns and the openness of this network to other partners and activists. Given that most of the participants are already involved in different projects regarding asylum seeking and migration, they could consider that they might focus on their projects currently going on.

Participants need to reflect as well about what they can produce in common, regarding asylum seeking and migration. This project can serve to one or multiple purposes, can have a determinate or an indeterminate duration, and can involve the whole group or not. The important is to plan something according to the group's capacity.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study session achieved all its initial goals. It built a broad awareness of the issue of shelter-seeking, while focusing on overlooked aspects of the lives of refugees throughout the process of applying for refugee status. This was achieved by connecting topics that are not regularly seen combined. For instance, the discussion on LGBT with refugees, or the vulnerabilities of being a women while fleeing a home country.

In regard to designing an alternative proposal for a long-term European strategy on the issue of shelter-seeking, the study session brought an expert on the issue to introduce the concept before debating alternatives to cities. With the presentation of "Local justice on a global scale: human rights and refugees at your doorstep", participants learned from the examples of Dutch cities, such as Amsterdam, The Hague, Groningen and Tilburg. The importance of the block was to share with participants why cities are stakeholders in the refugee debate. It is important to remark that the debate was pragmatic, taking into account that if there is severe resistance from the local population, and cities should refrain from housing refugees. Underpinned by this discussion, participants debated as well the wider context, that is, globalization, individualism, neo-liberal economics/economic crisis/ austerity and the threats, such as identity (threat to public values and norms), crime and security and as the main reasons behind the aversion to refugees.

One of the objectives of the study session was to bring together participants from diverse backgrounds to share first-hand experiences. This was achieved due to the presence of two participants who are refugees from Iran, one of them being the daughter of a refugee from

Palestine as well as several participants who are not refugees themselves but have worked or lived with them. The exchange of ideas, stories and expertise was one of the assets of the entire session. It shall be fundamental to incorporate as many refugees as possible in next activities, to ensure that the theoretical aspects of the study do not alienate the discussion from the reality.

Following, the goal of analysing how our societies react to the phenomenon in the media and in the political narrative was achieved in many ways. The clearest tool was offered by the Media block. Having as background the year of 2015, when thousands of asylum seekers entered to Hungary, the expert explored how the representation of the media strengthened the xenophobic attitudes and triggered public debates. Participants understood how the media in general and the online press in particular had a strong impact in shaping both public opinion and the activities of the aid-providing organisations. It was clear how the framing of mainstream communication can twist the roles and numbers and, with that, fostered an environment prone to extreme manifestation anti-immigration.

To provide useful tools for young activists to be used in their countries of origin and to propose volunteering and engagement opportunities for people without an activist background was another well achieved goal of the project. Many participants didn't have previous knowledge or experience about many of the topics addressed in the study session. However, the structure of the study session enabled participants to learn from each other. The long-standing activists were a clear source of inspiration. The ones with a more political background, in turn, offered their views on how to build change from top-down approach.

Finally, concerning the goal to foster integration among young people and to create an environment free of hate speech and discrimination, the study session obtained outstanding results. In such a short period of time, several nationalities came together and agreed on a common point: societies are becoming less tolerant in light of the new refugee crisis. The study session offered a platform for them to meet and share ideas, problems, experiences and concerns. Drawing on the strong political background of many of them, several new alliances between young political parties came up in the aftermath of the session.

All in all, through an intensive programme, the study session debated capital topics for such as tolerance, human rights, solidarity, gender and LGBT, how to counter hate speech and how to free narratives from bias on tolerance and understanding how our societies react to this phenomenon based on media and political narratives. Above all, the study session was successful for having inspired young people from all over Europe to take action. Beyond the-

ories and political debates, the driving element of the group was towards real action. Based on that lies the next challenge: that of keeping the ideas alive and the project, especially the Safe Haven, working a thriving.



Appendices

List of participants

Family name	First name	Country of residence
Silavi	Mona	Belgium
Kannass	Ahmad	Turkey
Aljalloud	Elisabeth	Germany
Zambon	Stefano	Italy
Tredinnick-Rowe	John	United Kingdom
Lynn Montes	Gareth	Spain
Koikkalainen	Satu	Czech Republic
Botan	Mote	United Kingdom
Schibelle	Anna	Germany
Heinason Eysturoy	Magnus	Faroe Islands
Zidan	Hanna-Marilla	Finland
Kettunen	Antti	Finland
Dorca Tomas	Guillem	Spain
Arwel Glyn Hughes	Owain	United Kingdom
Capocasale	Vincenzo	Italy
Bodo	Michele	Italy
Matamoros Pava	Lucia	Spain
Rosique i Saltor	Marta	Spain
Cordioli	Andrea	Italy
Christin Wutz	Isabell	The Netherlands
Kekkonen	Tahvo	Finland
Parrucci	Lucia	Belgium
Calveras Casanovas	Judit	Spain
James Webb	Christian	United Kingdom
Tapio	Noora	Finland
Gomez Barrenetxea	Asier	Spain
Nurminen	Asko	Finland
Garcia Andrés	Xavier	Spain
Silavi	Shima	Belgium
Kolter	Lena	Austria
Sirotti	Marco	Italy
Berta	Andrea	Italy
Sjödin	Elisa	Belgium
Spear	Rhiannon	United Kingdom
Steel	Rory	United Kingdom

Preparatory team

Burgés	Fernando	Belgium
Bona	Gerard	Belgium
Zañartu Plaza	Max	The Netherlands
Green	Johanna	Belgium
Preiss	Daniel	Finland
Milutinovits	László	Hungary (Educational Advisor, Council of Europe)
Zahariev	Atanas	Bulgaria (TRAYCE participant (job shadowing))

Programme overview

		Monday 22 August	Tuesday 23 August	Wednesday 24 August	Thursday 25 August
9	:30	Introduction Bálint Molnar , Deputy Executive Director, EYCB Ana Miranda , Former EFA MEP Gerard Bona , Course Director and EFAy Secretary General Johanna Green , Programme Manager, UNPO Hanna-Marilla Zidane , Young Left of Finland	Media block: <i>Media representation of the migration crisis; how media shapes public opinion and crisis response</i> Erik Uszkiewicz , MER-TEC Exercise: interactive small group activities and moderated discussions	Youth, children and education block: <i>Inclusion of refugees at schools and youth environments</i> László Milutinovits , Youth Department of the Council of Europe Exercises: practical part – Human rights and the No Hate Speech Campaign	Shelter-city block: <i>Bringing Human Rights to Municipality Level: Shelter City</i> Sophia Schellens , Representative of Justice and Peace
	:45				
10	am	Expectations First-hand experience block: Mona Silavi , refugee from Iran living in Brussels Hanna-Marilla Zidane , second generation refugee family			
	:15				
	:30				
	:45				
11	am	COFFEE BREAK	COFFEE BREAK	COFFEE BREAK	Continuation thematic group work
	:30	Stefano Zambon , young political activist living in Palestine and Turkey Exercise: Discussion about each participant's experience	Continuation media block exercise	Interviews: Peter James, MIGHELP and Zsófia Roszik, representative of Fót, Refugee Centre for Unaccompanied Minors	
	:45				Follow-up action. What's next?
12	pm				
	:30	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK
2	pm	Academic block: <i>Migrations in Europe: why people move?</i> Núria Franco Guillen , UPF lecturer on migration and refugees Exercise: Group discussion on practical cases	Activist block: <i>Share good practices from activists</i> Andrea Berta , No Border Exercise: Groups reflect on what they could do in their countries and regions of origin	Gender and LGBT block: <i>Women and LGBT Refugees: Challenges and Reactions</i> Dr. Francisca de Haan , Co-director of Erasmus + MATILDA programme	Continuation thematic group work
	:15				
	:30				
	:45				

4	pm	COFFEE BREAK	COFFEE BREAK	COFFEE BREAK	COFFEE BREAK
	:30	Thematic groups formation + thematic group work: Media: Johanna Green (Mediator) Activism: Yoonis Osman Nuur (Trainer), Daneil Preiss (Mediator) Gender and LGBT: Francisca de Haan (Trainer), Fernando Burgés (Mediator) Youth, Children and Education: László Milutinovits (Trainer), Gerard Bona (Mediator) Shelter cities: Sophia Schellens (Trainer), Max Zañartu (Mediator)	Continuation thematic group work	Continuation gender and LGBT block	Presentation of thematic group work
	:45				
5	pm				
	:15				
	:30				Evaluation & final conclusions
	:45				
6	pm	Plenary closing of the day: sharing briefly what each group is doing	Plenary closing of the day	Continuation thematic group work	
	:15	Evaluation & reflection: in newly formed thematic groups	Evaluation & reflection	Evaluation & reflection	
7	pm	DINNER	DINNER		GOODBYE DINNER AT RESTAURANT
8	:30	FREE TIME	MOVIE NIGHT		