



Cooperation and Migration Studies: in Tunis the final conference of the Migrants Project

Tunis, 30.04.2023 - On May 2, the Cité des Sciences in Tunis will host the final conference of "Migrants", an Erasmus+ Capacity Building Project, funded by the European Commission. In the last four years "Migrants" has engaged partners throughout Europe and Tunisia with the aim of strengthening the capacity of the Tunisian university system in the field of migration.

More than 100 people, Tunisians and Europeans, academics, researchers, experts and representatives of the labour market and civil society, involved in the field of migration, will participate to the event, an opportunity to show the results of the project in view of its conclusion.

The conference will be opened by representatives of the Tunisian Ministries of Universities and Scientific Research, the Ambassador of the European Union, the Ambassador of Italy, the Rectors of Tunisian and European Universities and representatives of all project partners.

The main result of the project is the new international and interdisciplinary Master in "Migration Studies: Governance, Policies and Cultures", a joint master degree between the three Tunisian partner universities: Tunis El Manar, Tunis and La Manouba. Activated two years ago, the Master currently has 50 students enrolled in the first and second year who have been selected from more than 200 applications received from Tunisia and other countries of sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East.

The Master is animated by 25 professors, scholars and experts from the three Tunisian universities who worked, from September 2020 until May 2023, in training courses, co-teaching and job shadowing with the teachers of the University of Palermo, University of Westminster and University of Granada and experts and professionals in the field of migration selected by COSPE, CLEDU, UNIMED and other Tunisian and international NGOs.

"The Migrants Project started with an idea. It is like a baby that we nurtured together. It came out of friendship and solid cooperation between the partners. It started in the middle of COVID, but it could survive and thrive thanks to the commitment of the members of the consortium. Now it is bearing its fruit: a bunch of brilliant students equipped with skills for research and careers in the field of migration and a huge, prominent and promising network of Tunisian and European scholars, professors and experts aspiring for further collaboration", stated Samira Mechri, Project Scientific Coordinator at the University of Tunis El Manar.

Serena Marcenò, scientific responsible and Migrants Project scientific coordinator at the University of Palermo, said that *"the Migrants Project was a challenge for all of us. A challenge to put the right to study of young Tunisians at the heart of international cooperation between*

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universities and civil society. A challenge focused on training in the field of migration of young people who will work between Europe and Africa. A challenge to promote the idea and practice of community cooperation outside the traditional roles of donors and beneficiaries. A challenge to firmly affirm the role of the university as a space for the construction of democracy and rights. A challenge to hold together teaching, research and cooperation with civil society in a shared commitment against the emergency discourse and the security approach to migration. We have faced four difficult years, demonstrating how risk exposure can be addressed not through mere management solutions, but by keeping the bar straight on the goals we have set ourselves: taking care of people and communities. Today, at the end of this extraordinary experience, we can say that we have created the conditions for the future of the Migrants project: our students, their skills, their knowledge, their critical gaze on the world".

In order to have an impact on the labor market and society, the project has always been strongly committed to strengthen the skills of the teaching staff through a comprehensive training programme, job shadowing, coaching and mentoring activities.

During these years of activity, 23 co-teaching mobilities were created in order to share teaching approaches between Tunisian and European professors. Moreover, 17 weeks of training were organized from September 2020 to May 2021 with the participation of 25 Tunisian Professors and 17 European trainers for a total of 128 hours of training.

The project has supported six young Tunisian scholars for the acquisition of the PhD degree at the European universities partners of the project.

Project Partners have organized three Summer Schools, the first in Granada in July 2022, the second in London in September 2022, and they are preparing the third and final one in Palermo in July 2023.

In order to give the opportunity to teachers, researchers and students to work alongside migration experts, observing and participating in their field work, the NGOs involved in the project implemented 58 days of job shadowing in Tunisia, in Granada, in London and Palermo with the involvement of 25 Tunisian professors, 6 PhD candidates, and 50 students.

The activities of job shadowing were carried out with the valuable work of a wide range of associations in each country: Tunisian Asile Lands, Arab Institute of Human Rights, Avocats Sans Frontières, African Leadership and Development Association, PRODIVERSA, Spanish Red Cross, Agrupación para el Desarrollo en Norte, Migrant Voice, Counterpoints Arts and Bail for Immigrants Detainee. In addition to that, 3 seminars were organized with civil society organizations in Tunisia for the students.

There was also a strong commitment to the research of academic partners whose results are coming soon (September 2023) in two volumes entitled: "Migrations: Socio-Cultural Contexts and Constitution" and "Migrations: Governance, Policies and Rights".



The Project has also consolidated the ten-year collaboration between the three Tunisian universities and the University of Palermo so much so as to start a new program of Double degree between the Master in Migration Studies in Tunis and the Master in Cooperation, development and migration of Palermo.

From the intense work and the close collaboration among partners, another cooperation initiative was born: the British Academy Writing Workshop "Migrants in transit: a transdisciplinary writing programme for emerging scholars of migration in Tunisia" conducted by the University of Westminster (UK) in collaboration with the University of Middlesex (UK) and the University of Tunis El Manar (Tunisia).

The Migrants Project, which will officially end on 14 September 2023, was coordinated by the University of Palermo and gathered together Tunisian universities (University of Tunis El Manar, University of Tunis, University of La Manouba), European universities (University of Granada and University of Westminster) and non-academic partners (UNIMED – Mediterranean Universities Union, COSPE – Cooperation for the development of emerging countries and CLEDU – Legal Clinic for Human Rights).

Further information on the "Migrants" project and the Final Conference is available on the official website www.migrantsproject.eu.

Final conference venue: **Tunis Science City**

The event is reserved only to the institutions and the partners involved into the project and it will be streamed to the benefit of external participants based outside Tunisia, on the Facebook page of the [University of Tunis El Manar](http://www.univ-tunis-el-manar.tn).

Master Degree in Migration Studies: Governance, Policies, and Cultures
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