

SGROUP EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES' NETWORK

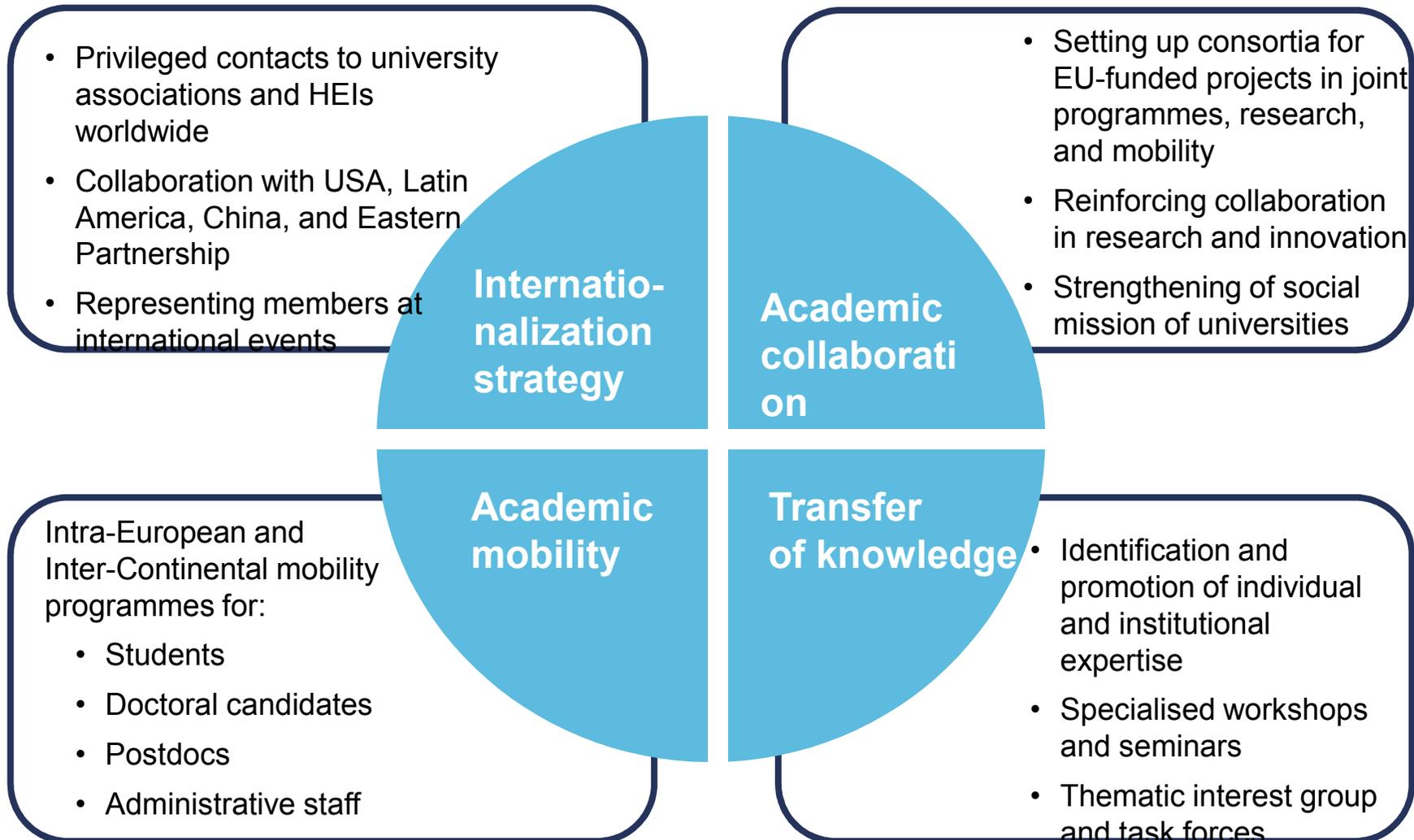
***SGROUP NETWORK FOR  
REFUGEES***

*Selection of good practices in  
addressing the refugees crisis from  
SGroup members*





## SGROUP - WHAT WE DO





## SGROUP EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES' NETWORK

- **The SGroup European Universities' Network (SGroup)** is a non-for-profit organisation founded in 1989 composed of over 30 higher education institutions from 15 European countries.
- The SGroup is a dynamic platform for **modern, internationally orientated universities** with the aim of expanding collaboration opportunities in education and research through the transfer of knowledge and **development of strategic alliances**.
- Its mission is based on four core areas of co-operation – **internationalisation strategy, academic collaboration, academic mobility, and transfer of knowledge**.

SGroup members



**The SGroup is a network with 27 years of experience in university collaboration within Europe and beyond**



### **Theme A: Integration in society**

- Lack of knowledge of the host country/university; need of integration activities
- Lack of knowledge of the host country language/instruction language for academic purposes
- Lack of coordination of initiatives and lack of data on the number and education level of refugees

### **Theme B: Academic integration**

- Lack of documents justifying diplomas/credits/level of prior learning and competences
- Lengthy procedures for academic recognition of skills, prior learning and qualifications
- Financial inability of refugees to pay course fees, restrictions due to residency status
- Need of specific integration courses in HEIs, with specific upskilling and bridging courses
- Need of individual guidance and advice in HEIs
- Necessity of funds for coordination of activities

### **Theme C: Changing mentalities/opening minds**

- Face fear and racism/radicalisation: need for better knowledge
- General lack of knowledge of refugees' culture and their specific needs
- Integration of refugees from scholarly background into HEIs



## SELECTED EU ACTIONS FOR HEIS PROPOSED BY UNIVERSITY NETWORKS

- Share at EU level inspiring practices taking place in different countries - collected via EU Survey and during the workshop (see 'inspiring practices') – as well as EU funded projects addressing the issue. This can be done through EU web, HEI networks and through social media.
- Develop an EU interactive platform for networking and peer learning between HEIs on the integration of newly arrived refugees (or by adapting existing collaborative platforms)
- Publish a list of HEIs across EU offering fee waivers/specific support/scholarships to refugees
- Open up Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support (OLS) to refugees
- Reinforce the priorities in the Erasmus+ programme guide to mention specifically the objective of integrating newly arrived refugees
- Use Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships to:
  - Develop MOOCs and distance learning to integrate newly arrived refugees
  - Scale-up national best practices to more countries, including closer cooperation with civil society
  - Train teachers, develop targeted modules/courses with companies and NGOs for public officials
- Use Erasmus+ KA3 to:
  - Facilitate and quicken the recognition of refugees' qualifications and prior learning (via ENIC/NARICs for example)
  - Promote recognition of volunteering work in the HE curriculum
  - Use Erasmus+ KA1 to:
    - Promote staff mobility in camps (in and outside Europe) or in HEIs in EU to share best practices on the integration of newly arrived refugees and for teacher training
    - Make the international credit mobility action more flexible to offer more opportunities to students and staff from the countries concerned (Syria, Iraq etc)



- **Collaboration with other university networks** and preparation of a joint workshop on the refugee crisis for 2017,
- Promotion of **Scholars at Risk** association among the SGroup's members e.g. free of charge access to workshop and training sessions organised by SGroup Network or academics affiliated with Scholars at Risk,
- **Selection of experts** in refugee and migration issues for ad hoc experts groups of the European Commission and for internal SGroup's consultations,
- **Exchange of good practices** in solving the refugee crises by European universities,
- **Promotion of summer school programmes** dedicated to the refugee crisis.



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## SELECTED GOOD PRACTICES FROM SGROUP MEMBERS

### France (*University of Rouen and University of Grenoble Alpes*):

- **French courses and mentoring** by students in French as a Foreign Language degree,
- a simplified enrolment procedure for refugee students and a fee waiver procedure,
- set up of a special degree programme to train students to acquire a B2 level in French to ensure that refugee students have the required level for all courses,
- creation of a **refugee task force** at the university that continues looking for funds and ways to help students and scholars.



### UK (*University of Kent*):

- Establishment of **Kent Refuge Fund** supported by a 'Give as you Earn' scheme for staff -specific fund to assist students and academics who are displaced <https://www.kent.ac.uk/global/krf.html> and engagement of researchers in topics relating to the refugee crisis.
- The University also supports the Helena Kennedy Foundation 'Article 26 Project and the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA).





### Belgium (*Ghent University*):

- **Preparatory year** for newcomers and refugees, including language classes, study counselling, refreshing modules, etc. see also: <https://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/diversity-and-gender/preparatory-higher-education-programme>
- **Central contact point for asylum seekers** and refugees interested in studying or working at the university, see also [www.ugent.be/refugee](http://www.ugent.be/refugee) - on World Refugee Day (20th of June) UGhent welcomed refugees at the university and gave them information about studying (in 4 languages).
- **The university language centre** is providing intensive language courses (Dutch) for refugees and newcomers.
- launch of CESSMIR, the **Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees**, an interdisciplinary research centre investigating the social impact of migration and asylum crisis.
- **Mentoring programme** for refugee students which is a part of the curriculum of the mentors so they obtain credits for. *it.*





### Germany (*Justus Liebig University of Giessen*)

In 2015, Hessen received 79,788 asylum requests. It's important to note that Giessen has a population of approx. 83,000.

- The approach JLU Giessen is following is a holistic one integrating trying the refugees as good as possible into every-day classes, courses and life along with the other international students. Only through integrating and not separating the “regular” international students from the refugees can we prevent the stigma of being a “refugee” and the feeling of not belonging.
- **Information events for refugees** interested in studying - Training programmes and **orientation courses for volunteers** in their function as multipliers.
- **Refugee Law Clinic** (consultancy work on refugee law and protection, from law students to refugees)  
[https://www.unigiessen.de/fbz/fb01/studium/rlc?set\\_language=en](https://www.unigiessen.de/fbz/fb01/studium/rlc?set_language=en)
- Refugee events at the university's international **meeting point “Lokal International”**. Lokal International brings together students and refugees (World Refugee Day, German classes, etc.) For further information on the projects and initiatives described above and beyond, please see: [http://www.uni-giessen.de/target-groups/refugees?set\\_language=en](http://www.uni-giessen.de/target-groups/refugees?set_language=en)





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## SELECTED GOOD PRACTICES FROM SGROUP MEMBERS

### SWEDEN (*Malmö University*)

- Initiative “**Malmö University for Refugees**” started a year ago by students and staff to engage in activities related to the refugee situation.
- **Longterm sustainable solutions**, ex: chair of national working group on refugees and HE, recognition of prior experiences (education and professional), regional working groups on admission, adjustment of educational offerings, new post doc positions focusing on migration and refugees, fast track for arabic speaking teachers etc.
- **Short term and quick fix** – project initiatives by students and staff (ex Language café, distributions of 50 000 toothbrushes, internships etc.).
- Challenge based learning in many programmes.
- Fundraiser for the Red Cross.
- Submitted a project proposal together with 3 SGroup’s universities and other partners for KA3 **Building Sustainable Bridges** – Systematic work and collaboration between universities and communities to improve participation in higher education for young disadvantaged learners, including those with a migrant background.





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## SELECTED GOOD PRACTICES FROM SGROUP MEMBERS

### SWEDEN (*University of Gothenburg*)

- **Information for refugees** on how to gain access to higher studies and how to conduct research in Sweden.
- **Internships to newly arrived academics.** Currently we offer 100 positions for internship. The positions can be found within a range of fields, for example: within natural sciences such as physics, chemistry and biology, but also within pedagogy, social sciences, behavioural science, fine arts, music, design as well as within administration and communication. Regarding the internships, the University **cooperates with the Employment Office** and the Swedish Migration Board.
- The university works internationally in order to provide access to higher education. One example is the **Jamiya project**, a project run and organised through Great Britain. The idea is to provide relevant and accessible higher education for Syrian refugees by reconnecting them with Syrian academics, European universities and the latest education technology. With the University of Gothenburg, the Jamiya project is running a **pilot “Small Private Online Course” (SPOC)** in Jordan, developed by Syrian and Swedish academics, delivered using a blended learning method. The course is in Applied IT, delivered in Arabic and certified by the University of Gothenburg.





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### SWEDEN (*University of Gothenburg*)

- The University participate in the network **Scholars at Risk**. The University since 2013. SAR is dedicated to promoting academic freedom around the world, for example by giving sanctuary to scholars who are unable to work in their home countries. Scholars at Risk is an international network of about 380 higher education institutions in 38 countries.

In the autumn of 2015, the University of Gothenburg became the first Swedish higher education institution to host two SAR scholars. The scholars are employed by the departments that match their respective research fields, for a period of one year, and are engaged in the regular research activities at their host departments. The University is welcoming two new SAR scholars in spring 2016.



- **Joint workshop** of university networks dedicated to the topic of refugee and migration crisis in 2017 in Brussels,
- Promotion of language and teachers' training initiatives through virtual classes and online training,
- Response to a call for **to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism**,
- Further **exchange of good practices** among HEIs.



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