



# SIRIUS

Skills and Integration of Migrants,  
Refugees and Asylum Applicants  
in European Labour Markets



## SIRIUS International Academic Conference

"Integrating migrants, refugees and asylum seekers into European labour markets: enablers and barriers"

### Call for Papers

29-30 August 2019

Location: Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, UK

The SIRIUS project, funded by the European Commission Horizon 2020 programme, is pleased to announce its first International Conference entitled "**Integrating migrants, refugees and asylum seekers into European labour markets: enablers and barriers**". The conference will take place on 29-30 August, at Glasgow Caledonian University, in Scotland, (UK). The conference aims to offer scholars from across disciplines and countries opportunities to exchange on issues related to the integration of migrants and refugees in different labour markets and communities. While the conference invites scholars with different levels of experience and seniority, a pre-conference workshop reserved to PhD students and early career researchers will be organised on 28 August with a focus on Research Methods and Ethics in Migration and Refugee Studies.

To encourage academic discussion across fields and disciplines, the conference will be structured along six main thematic lines, **keynote speakers** (Prof. Cristina Boswell, University of Edinburgh, Dr. Amparo Gonzalez-Ferrer, Spanish National Research Council, Prof. Barbara Oomen, University of Utrecht), and two plenary debates.

The six thematic lines are the following:

#### **Session 1: Labour Economics and Migration: Challenges in Global Markets**

**Session chair: Dr. Konstantinos Konstantakis, National Technical University of Athens**

The Session's aim is to bring together experts working on different research aspects of labour economics and migration with emphasis on refugees and asylum seekers. Papers should address the following issues: job creation, measures and employment conditions, flexible employment, unemployment, social protection, other specific issues concerning the employment conditions of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. We are interested in hosting papers drawing from different methods (e.g. econometrics, input-output analysis, quantitative techniques, experiments, etc) to assess the impacts of migration on labour markets and economies, for instance, on how migration affects trade, investments, technology and socio-cultural norms as well as on the impact of immigration on the receiving countries' labour markets.

## **Session 2: Legal barriers and enablers: critical perspectives on legal framework's challenges and opportunities for migrants, refugees and asylum applicants' integration in European labour markets and societies.**

**Session chair: Dr Veronica Federico, University of Florence**

During the last decade, a plethora of legal acts, and the spirit of border closure and securisation inspiring them, have created in the large majority of European countries a hierarchy among migration statuses in terms of rights and entitlements related to labour market (and not only). From a legal perspective at the 'top' of the hierarchy are refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, along with long-term migrants, who are endowed with the stronger sets of rights, including those related to accessing the labour market, workers' rights and benefits, but also services that are conducive to employment such as skills and educational attainment recognition, and access to vocational education and training. At the bottom of the hierarchy are asylum seekers, and below them are irregular migrants, who can count on a much stricter set of rights and entitlements.

Noticing the size of the migrant population to which each status applies adds more critical insights: in most of the European states, just a minority of people applying for protection are recognised a status conferring access to a broad set of rights, including those connected to labour market participation, and even a smaller number is recognised the Geneva convention status (asylum and subsidiary protection). Hence, most of the non-EU migrants that de facto stay in a given host country risk remaining at the 'bottom' of the rights' hierarchy.

The Session aims at bringing together scholars at different stages of their career interested in developing critical thinking on migration legal framework and statuses in relation to labour market, their implementation and the political discourses they are embedded in. The Session is open to both theoretical and empirical papers, case-study oriented and comparative research, as well as micro or macro levels of analysis. Interdisciplinary proposals are particularly encouraged, merging together different perspectives, analytical frameworks and methodologies from the field of sociology, political science, anthropology and law.

## **Session 3: Labour market integration policies for migrants**

**Session chair: Professor Nathan Lillie, University of Jyväskylä**

The recent rise in migration and asylum applications has raised the question: how are these new migrants to earn a living? While some employers have taken an interest in recruiting from this new labour force, in many cases adjusting to the demands of host country labour markets is not a straightforward issue. Labour market integration policies may have an important role to play. This is both from the perspective of helping employers access this new workforce, and easing the burden on public finances, as well as helping migrants to use their skills, realize career goals, and achieve economic self-sufficiency. In this session, we take a broad perspective on labour market related policies: there are also general policies regarding regulating labour markets, welfare, and inequality that affect migrants and we are interested in these too. How do these policies affect labour market integration, and the welfare of migrants? Do some countries have best practices, which could be transferred or replicated to benefit other countries? A general hardening in migration policies can be detected across Europe. What are the goals of these new policies and do they present obstacles to better labour market integration?

We welcome paper proposals on topics related to migrant labour market integration policies. They may be qualitative, or quantitative, and focused on debates, policy processes, implementation, outcomes, or migrant experiences of policies.

**Session 4: The role of the third sector in promoting the integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in European societies and labour markets.**

**Session chair: Dr Dino Numerato, Charles University Prague**

This session aims to discuss the role of civil society organizations (service providers, advocacy organizations, community organizations, churches, etc.) and social movements in the labour market integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. We welcome papers examining how national and transnational civil society organizations influence the labour market integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. In particular, we are interested in contributions that analyze the role played by civil society organizations and social movements promoting integration, but also in those that pursue an anti-migration agenda. Moreover, we are inviting papers that discuss the interplay between a range of civil society organizations and social movements, as well as between civil society organizations and social movements on the one hand, and national and international institutions, corporate actors or the mass media on the other hand.

**Session 5: Companies, trade unions and social partners: what roles do they play in enhancing the integration of migrants, refugees and asylum applicants into European labour markets?**

**Session chair: Professor Simone Baglioni, Glasgow Caledonian University**

Forced migrations have become a field of highly disputed policy solutions and connected debates in Europe and beyond. Such polarized and polarizing discourses and policy preferences have peaked since the mid-2010s when the number of people fleeing their countries significantly increased due to the war in Syria as well as protracted political, social and economic instability in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. While mainstreaming media and political entrepreneurs tended to focus on the potential security issues raised by increased fluxes of refugees and migrants, civil society activists and local authorities (and in some cases private organisations) have been at the forefront of the provision of humanitarian help as well as in the promotion of integration programs.

The most effective way to integrate migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (MRAs) in their host countries, and to enable them to contribute to the economic and social development of these societies, is through employment. Jobs that reflect skills provide MRAs with an income as well as with opportunities to be independent from public support and welfare. This session aims to gather contributions shedding light on innovative forms of support and integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers into employment. It invites papers discussing practices of trade unions, companies and social partners having occurred in favouring (or not) the inclusion of MRAs into labour markets.

**Session 6: Biographies of labour-market Integration**

**Session chair: Professor Anna Triandafyllidou, European University Institute**

The labour-market integration is a long-term process, and if we are interested to understand its subtle nuances, this should be evaluated through individual life-stories. To what extent is the everyday culture a barrier or an enabler to integration? Who helps the migrant to adjust to the country and to the job market? How do social networks function on the daily level (or on the micro-sociological level of analysis)? What meaning do people assign to their experiences of searching for employment and adjusting to it? How should we examine challenging issues such as harassment, under-payment, humiliation in the sphere of employment? Traditional structured or semi-structured interviews do not provide adequate support for such analysis, given that such perspectives and answers may change over time.

The narrative biographic method, with its attention to critical events that change the life course (turning points) and consequent thoughts about your own life (epiphanies), and also various details and nuances of lived experience and everyday culture, becomes especially meaningful when applied to studies of integration. We are interested in biographic studies of migrants' lives that look at lived experiences of adjusting to the job market in the host country in Europe or elsewhere in the world. We are particularly interested to see how the legal and socio-political markers of labour-market integration such as new law or a changing political situation (such as military conflict or economic crisis) may become migrants' turning points and affect their lives and employment. We are also interested to see how migrant biographies show to what extent such factors as family reunification, everyday culture and integration in general are important in labour-market integration. This section will bring together scholars who work with migrant biographies on the themes of integration. This would create an opportunity to generate new themes for upcoming research projects.

### **Workshop for early career and PhD - Research Methods and Ethics in Migration and Refugee Studies**

The workshop will focus on research methods (including conceptualisation and research design issues) and ethics in migration and refugee studies. Frontal sessions about different methodological approaches alongside exercises and discussions will be conducted and organised by Sirius team members/leaders and members of the project's ethics board and advisory board. An attendance certificate will be delivered to those attending.

### **Abstract Submission**

Papers and abstracts should be submitted in English. New researchers/PhD students in particular are invited to share work-in-progress papers and participate to the pre-conference day (please state in your application if you would like to attend the PhD pre-conference ethics and methods workshop). Abstracts should not exceed 400 words and they should include:

1. A title.
2. The conference's session addressed.
3. A concise account of the empirical or theoretical methodological approach.
4. The main argument of the paper.

**Authors should submit their abstracts via email to [siriusconference@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:siriusconference@gcu.ac.uk) by 28 February 2019. They will be notified their paper's acceptance by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2019.**

**For queries related to sessions, please use the conference email indicated above, we will then pass your request to the pertinent session's chair.**

**The conference is free of charge.**

### **Important dates**

Opening of abstract submission – 11<sup>th</sup> December 2018

Submission of abstracts deadline – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Notification to authors – 30<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Deadline for conference registration for presenters (via email) – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019

Programme publication – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Full paper submission – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Pre-conference early career scholars' workshop – 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019

Conference opening – 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019