

Excellence Programme

Over the past year, not one day might had gone by without the media paying close attention to the ongoing refugee crisis and also the direct and indirect consequences of immigration to Europe, more precisely to the European Union. This topic has found its ways to our daily conversations: as it surrounds us, it became inevitable to speak and think about it.

Thus, this year's topic of the Excellence Programme is *The Rights of Refugees*. The Programme was initially launched in 2011: with its help, the participating students – as parts of an international research group – get a great opportunity of working with such renowned organisations as Europeana, UNESCO, and this year the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Five Hungarian students of Pázmány Péter Catholic University and five Dutch students of Radboud University are working jointly on the internationally relevant topic of the rights of refugees. Having effective cooperation desires personal meetings as well, therefore, on the three working weeks organised until May, we will have the opportunity to expand our knowledge, and delve into the topic of integration of refugees.

During the first meeting, the Dutch group welcomed the Hungarian participants in Nijmegen and throughout the week we were thinking about the aims, themes and possible research methods of the project. This was a very intensive week since we got the chance to visit The Hague on the second day where we could present our ideas to René Bruin, representative of the UNHCR in the Netherlands. Due to this meeting we developed an even more precise concept about how we could help UNHCR with our work. The remaining days were spent with working on the framework of the project by giving more specified aims and objectives, and also defining the core values of our upcoming group work. In doing so, we have received great support from both our Hungarian and our Dutch supervisors, not only with the help of their professional knowledge, but also in the way of thought-provoking lectures given by them concerning the topic. After drafting the exact project plan for the next months, we got in touch with the Hungarian representatives of UNHCR via a video conference call, who also stated their expectations and preferences regarding our research directions.

By doing a project with such a high significance, we cannot only focus on the content of it, but also the formal requirements have to be satisfied in view of the fact that we have the chance to phrase and publish concrete recommendations at the end of the programme. Our hosts supported us in this as well by holding a training course about effective academic writing in English.

Needless to say, we also had the opportunity to explore Nijmegen and The Hague and organising joint programmes following our work. Because we also had a weekend during our stay, we had a day off on Sunday when we were able to rest, relax or have a trip in the country.

On our last day, we developed the schedule for the next months, defined the means of communication, created deadlines for our work, and we started to think about the location and agenda for our next meeting in November.

Thanks to the Excellence Programme, we can all experience the effectiveness of cooperation with our Dutch partners. Being able to have a possible impact on a new type of integration policy implemented by our countries and UNHCR, and to phrase our opinions and findings on such a relevant topic is truly fascinating to us and drives us to do our utmost to achieve a real impact.