



## STRENGTHENING SOCIAL COHESION OF LOCAL, REFUGEE AND MIGRANT YOUNG PEOPLE

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### Abstract

Migration has been a part of human experience from the earliest days of civilization. Today cross-border movements are characterized by their diversity, as there are no typical characteristics, their legal statuses, and their circumstances and prospects. The millions of refugees worldwide live in a high - income countries, but the majority still are hosted by the low – and middle-income countries. Thought more than 90% of migrations in the world have taken place for employment purpose, youth including students chooses migration also for educational, administrative, social and cultural aspects. The European Union (EU) faces challenges that effects its persistence, including the revival of national populism in many EU members and studies have shown that individuals with immigration histories identify less strongly with Europe, such aspect must be taken into account, because the citizens and their identities are vital for European cohesion. Successful integration benefits both migrants and destination societies, but there are various triggers, which can effect affect the relations toward emigrants, like the pandemic or convivial attitude toward emigrants. Psychological and socio-cultural adaption of refugees are strongly influenced economic concerns, pre-migration expectations, religion and other factors. Settlement in a new country can be challenging process for refugees in general, and for unaccompanied minors in particular. Based on the current situation, a project on “Strengthening social cohesion and capacity of local, refugee and migrant young people by creating STEM/STEAM areas” funded by the Erasmus+ programme was developed with 6 partner institutions from Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Lithuania. The activities and workshops carried out during the project with the participants inspired the development of a research study. This article aims to research the aspects and possibilities to strengthen the social cohesion and capacity of local refugee and migrant young people. Quantitative research included respondents by country of origin from Asia: Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Afghanistan. Analysing the results the hypotheses were tested assuming the differences between opinion of men and women and between respondents grouped by age. The findings of this research can be used to minimize factors that undermine favourable levels of psychological and socio-cultural adaptation and promote factors that facilitate strengthening social cohesion and capacity of local, refugee and migrant young people.

Keywords: Social Cohesion, Integration, Adaptation, Migrant, Refugee, Young People.

### Introduction

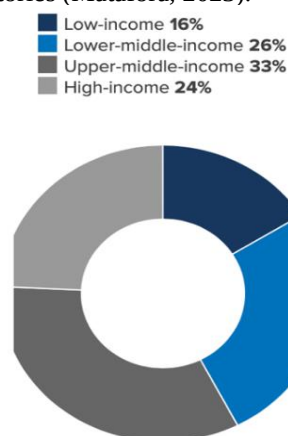
From the earliest days of civilization, 200.000 years ago, migration has been part of the human experience. Today cross-border movements are characterized by their diversity, as there are no typical characteristics, their legal statuses, and their circumstances and prospects. There are over 25 million refugees worldwide, around half are children, and the majority (84%) are hosted in low- and middle-income countries (Brown, Aoun, 2020).

The World Bank report in 2023, defined that about 40% (64 million economic migrants and 10 million refugees) live in a high- income countries that belong to the Organization for Economic cooperation and Development (OECD). But most of the refugees – 76% are hosted by low – and middle-income countries (Fig. 1.).

Global conflicts during the past decade have led to repeated major humanitarian protection crises in Europe: Syrian refugee crisis in 2015, Europe hosted around 2.3 million people, and today the ongoing war in Ukraine has resulted in more than 8 million Ukrainians seeking refuge (Bansak et al., 2023).

The European Union (EU) faces challenges that affects its persistence, including the revival of national populism in many EU members and studies have shown that individuals with immigration histories identify less

strongly with Europe than individuals without immigration histories (Matafora, 2023).



**Fig. 1.** Refugee hosting displacement by the country's incomes [UNHCR Global Trends, 2022]

Citizens and their identities are vital for European cohesion, so those who identify more strongly with Europe can be expected to feel greater solidarity with member states (Verhaegen, 2018). Most contributors to

the debate of immigration agree that it is important to educate immigrating youth in order to lay the foundations for their successful future (Alexander and Nurnberg, 2018).

## Literature Review

The definition of a “refugee” has changed across the years, until the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol that are the key legal documents defining the basis of UNHCR’s work. It is important to understand the difference between the refugees, asylum seekers and migrants since these differences do affect the main reason for people to migrate in the first place. For refugees the main reason of leaving the origin country is fleeing armed conflicts or persecution [European Youth Portal, 2023]. In violent conflicts, it is mostly the adolescents and youths – female and male who are conscripted into armed groups or targeted for sexual violence (Maguire, 2012; United Nations, 2019).

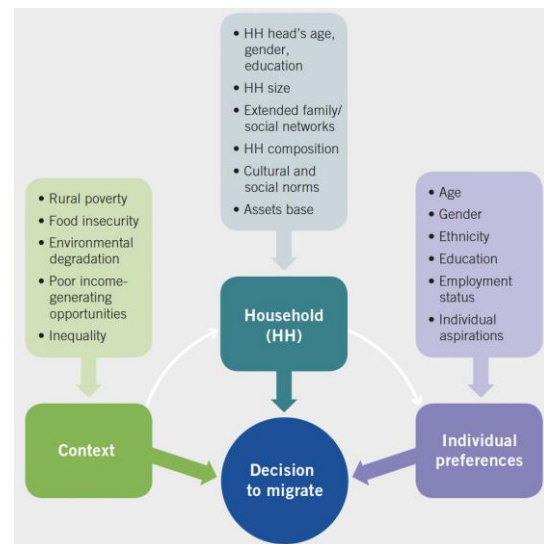
Asylum seekers are people who claim to be refugees but haven’t been recognized as such yet, and this means that not every asylum seeker will be recognized as a refugee. In 2018, EU countries granted protection to almost 333,400 asylum seekers [Eurostat, Asylum decisions in the EU, 2019]. For example, in England, the Red Cross supports people who were lawyers and teachers in their home countries: all keen to lend their skills [BritishRedCross, 2023].

Migrants on the other hand, generally choose to move because of a direct threat or persecution but mainly to improve their life: finding work, seeking better education, reuniting with family. And while the refugees are protected by international law, specifically the 1951 Refugee Convention, whereas national governments handle migrants under their own immigration laws and processes. But under international law, migrants have human rights by virtue of their humanity as international customary law and international human rights [Migration Data Portal, 2023].

United Nations have determined the distress migration of rural youth and defined analysis of the main factors determining the propensity of rural youth to migrate out of distress, at country, household, and individual level (Fig. 2.).

More than 90% of migrations in the world have taken place for employment purpose; migrants move either alone or with their families (Sultana and Fatima, 2017). The investigations also show that as a result family with migrants are in a better situation to acquire land and obtain education for their children (Noyori-Corbett and Moxley, 2016). Also, as a prime causes of movements, can be defined geographical conditions, civil war, hunger, epidemic diseases, population growth, insufficient resources (Gocke Uygur, 2020).

Sciences categorized the factors affecting migration of students as follows: economic, educational, administrative, professional, social, and cultural factors beside the phenomenon of globalization (NooriHekmat et al. 2009; Asadi et al. 2018).



**Fig. 2.** Determinants of distress migration of rural youth (Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations, 2016)

Settlement in a new country can be a challenging process for refugees in general, and for unaccompanied minors in particular. Minors face new laws, customs, education systems, cultural codes, etc., all without the support of parents or extended family. Having fled their home countries and endured challenging and traumatic experiences, on reaching safe havens, their relief may be short lived as they begin to grapple with the realities of settling in unfamiliar environments (Brook, Ottemöller, 2020). After arrival in the host country, refugees usually continue to face many challenges and they suggest that the impact of war and forced migration on mental health is compounded or alleviated by the post-migration resettlement context (Hornfeck et al. 2023; Hohne et al. 2020). According to the World Health Organization, mental health problems, such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and depression, are higher among refugee populations than the general population (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2018). Separation from the family in different locations pointed to the heavy emotional burden of learning for the families back in the country of the origin (Integration of young refugees in the EU, 2019). There are several studies about refugee children and adolescents which highlight the protective effect social support after resettlement for mental health and its importance for recovery after trauma (Hornfeck et al., 2023; Verelst et al. 2022).

Providing care and support to refugee youth and their families is a worldwide concern. Refugee youth may experience severe stressors during the pre-migratory, migratory, and post-migratory periods. In their home countries, war-exposed young people may witness or experience war atrocities, be deprived of food and water, and be separated from family members. They can experience other hardships including significant disruption of their daily lives, separation from loved ones, and disruption of schooling (Measham, Guzder et al., 2014).

Social cohesion and capacity of local emigrants is investigated in various scientific articles, analysing

practices, diverse processes and there many studies on social cohesion, but in non-European, refugee and local contexts remain limited (Ozcurumez and Hoxha, 2020).

Successful integration benefits both migrants and destination societies: migrants gain significantly through better outcomes in the labor market, as well as stronger society and destination countries benefit through migrant's stronger economic contributions and by avoiding the emergence of a marginalized population (Migrants, refugees, and societies, 2023). But there are various triggers, that can affect the relations towards emigrants, like it was investigated that after the pandemic, convivial attitudes toward Latin American migrants decreased (Castillo et al., 2023).

Findings of research revealed that psychological and socio-cultural adaptation of refugees are strongly influenced by economic concerns, pre-migration expectations, religion and perceptions of natives' expectations/ attitudes towards refugees. Economic concerns and uncertainty regarding duration of stay have a negative impact on refugees' acculturation, leading to delayed psychological and socio-cultural adaptation. Positive perceptions of natives' expectations/ attitudes towards refugees are perceived to increase motivation to seek social support, which promotes well-being and life satisfaction in the country. Yet, negative perceptions such as prejudice and discrimination, may pose a risk for psychological health and low socio-cultural adaptation. Religion can be considered a binding/ equalizing function subsuming refugee and native groups under a superordinate identity. Nonetheless, it also appears to generate social distance when perceived as a threat to the secular national identity (Şafak-Ayvazoglu, Kunuroglu et al., 2021).

Given the increasing use of low-intensity psychological interventions in humanitarian mental health and psychosocial support work, more attention is needed to strengthen the intersection between evidence-based interventions and cultural contextualisation. Undertaking the process of cultural adaptation ensures the appropriateness and acceptability of psychological interventions in these contexts (Akhtar, Engels et al., 2021). Children frequently experience significant stressors and barriers to healthy development during the refugee experience, including poverty, education interruptions, exposure to traumatic events, increased family and community violence, and child protection risks. These experiences contribute to a greatly increased risk for poor mental health. Host communities in low – and middle-income countries also face similar stressors, associated with living in adversity, and these stressors impact significantly on child and adolescent mental health (Brown, Aoun, 2020).

Good mental health may be a manifestation of resilience, post-traumatic growth, or both. Resilience is defined as the ability to maintain a stable, healthy psychological and physical functioning despite exposure to trauma (Measham, Guzder et al., 2014).

## Methodology

The data were collected via a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was developed in the January of 2023, after a comprehensive literature review and consultations with project partners *Gocmen Hakları Sosyal Uyum Derneği* (Turkey), *SOPRO - Solidariedade e Promoção ONGD* (Portugal), *Association of Human Rights Educators – AHEAD* (Spain), *Kyttaro Enallaktikon Anazitiseon Neaon - KEAN* (Greece), *Positiva Milano* (Italy) and *Mano Europa* (Lithuania). The final version of the questionnaire was finished in March of 2023. The quantitative research was conducted in March-July 2023. 110 respondents participated in the survey. These respondents were participants of the project “Strengthening social cohesion and capacity of local, refugee and migrant young people by creating STEM/STEAM areas”.

The results obtained during the research were processed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Description statistics as analytical process helps researchers to illustrate and sum up an observation. Moreover, this statistical technique is chosen by researchers because it helps researchers in establishing rationale that is associated with quantification. This statistical measurement is a preliminary phase of the quantitative research (Ali, 2020). Independent Samples Test, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, t-test for Equality of Means were using for testing the first hypothesis and ANOVA for testing the second hypothesis.

## Results of Empirical Research

Respondents distribution by age was sufficiently even: 46,36 percent of male and 53,64 percent of female. The age distribution is shown in Table 1.

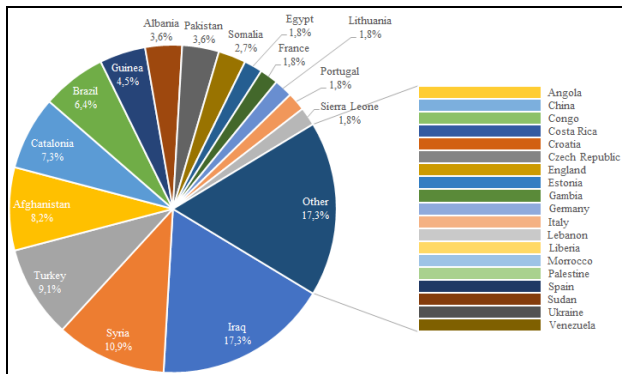
Distribution by age is presented in Table 1. The biggest part of respondents was 15-23 years old.

**Table 1.** Distribution of respondents by age

| Age of respondents | Percent |
|--------------------|---------|
| under 15 years     | 6.4     |
| 15-18 years        | 38.2    |
| 19-23 years        | 21.8    |
| 24-27 years        | 5.5     |
| 28-31 years        | 15.5    |
| over 31 years      | 12.7    |
| Total              | 100.0   |

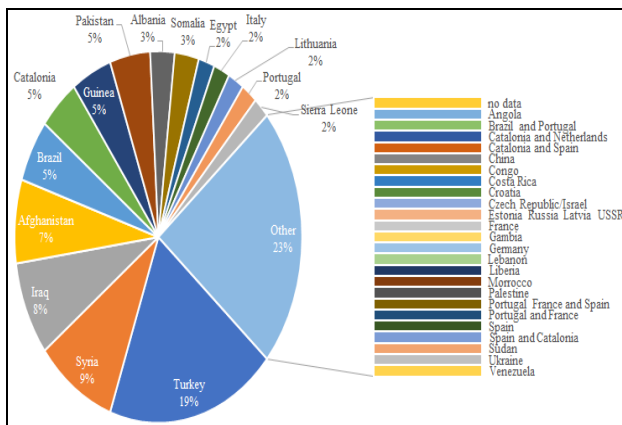
Source: Compiled by authors based on research findings

The largest groups of respondents by country of origin were from Asia: Iraq (17,3 percent), Syria (11 percent), Turkey (9,1 percent) and Afghanistan (8,2 percent). The results presented in Figure 3.



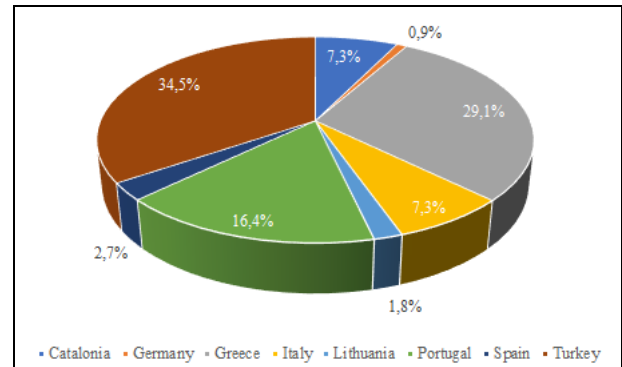
**Fig. 3.** Distribution of respondents by country of origin  
Source: Compiled by authors based on research findings

The largest groups of respondents by country of relatives (parents, grandparents) were from Asia too: Turkey (19,1 percent), Syria (9,1 percent), Iraq (8,2 percent) and Afghanistan (7,3 percent). The results presented in Figure 4.



**Fig. 4.** Distribution of respondents by country of relatives (parents, grandparents)  
Source: Compiled by authors based on research findings

The largest groups of respondents by country of residence were from Turkey (34,5 percent), Greece (29,1 percent) and Portugal (16,4 percent). The results presented in Figure 5.



**Fig. 5.** Distribution of respondents by country of residence  
Source: Compiled by authors based on research findings

Descriptive statistics of survey statements are presented in Appendix 1.

The evaluation of the statements presented in the survey is presented in Table 2. Each statement is assigned a number, which is used to test the proposed hypotheses in further analysis.

In particular, respondents strongly disagree (52,7 percent) or disagree (29,1 percent) with statement, that „I avoid to become friends with people from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)“. Also 47,3 percent of respondents strongly disagree and 30,9 percent disagree, that „I avoid activities with individuals from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)“. Most of the respondents respectively strongly disagree or disagree with statements, that „I generally do not feel comfortable being around members of other ethnic/diverse cultural groups“ (76,3 percent), „I often feel bad that I belong to the ethnic/diverse cultural group“ (74,5 percent), I feel uncomfortable to associate with people from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s) (72,7 percent) or „it turns me off to associate with people from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)“ (70 percent). 71,8 percent of respondents state, that „I usually do not feel comfortable around members of my own ethnic/diverse cultural group“ and „I feel unable to involve myself in activities with members of the other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)“. Respectively 68,2 percent and 65,4 percent of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that „I often feel confused about which ethnic/diverse cultural group I should identify myself with“ and „I do not spend much time with members of other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)“. But only a little more than half of the respondents, respectively 57,2 percent and 56,3 percent, state that „I feel very “confused” about my sense of ethnic membership“ and „I often feel “left out” when others around me talk about ethnic/diverse cultural identity issues“ (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Evaluation of the statements

| Statement for evaluation in the survey                                                                       | Evaluation of statements (percent) |          |                            |       |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
|                                                                                                              | strongly disagree                  | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | strongly agree |
| 1. The cultural traditions of my ethnic/diverse cultural group absolutely express me                         | 5,4                                | 10       | 25,5                       | 37,3  | 21,8           |
| 2. It turns me off to associate with people from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)                      | 42,7                               | 27,3     | 10,9                       | 9,1   | 10             |
| 3. I often feel bad that I belong to the ethnic/diverse cultural group                                       | 42,7                               | 31,8     | 10                         | 8,2   | 7,3            |
| 4. I usually go by the values of the overall culture where I live                                            | 5,5                                | 14,5     | 20                         | 46,4  | 13,6           |
| 5. The values of my ethnic/diverse cultural groups are important for my judgment about what I have to do     | 5,4                                | 15,5     | 23,6                       | 40    | 15,5           |
| 6. I avoid to become friends with people from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)                         | 52,7                               | 29,1     | 8,2                        | 5,5   | 4,5            |
| 7. I often feel lost about who I am as an ethnic/diverse cultural being                                      | 33,6                               | 33,6     | 18,2                       | 9,1   | 5,5            |
| 8. It is important for me to internalize the overall cultural values of country that I live                  | 5,5                                | 13,6     | 26,4                       | 31,8  | 22,7           |
| 9. I feel uncomfortable to associate with people from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)                 | 43,6                               | 29,1     | 14,5                       | 4,6   | 8,2            |
| 10. I feel very “confused” about my sense of ethnic membership                                               | 24,5                               | 32,7     | 20,9                       | 15,5  | 6,4            |
| 11. I generally identify strongly with the overall culture of country that I live                            | 8,2                                | 14,6     | 33,6                       | 30,9  | 12,7           |
| 12. I avoid activities with individuals from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)                          | 47,3                               | 30,9     | 4,5                        | 8,2   | 9,1            |
| 13. I often feel confused about which ethnic/diverse cultural group I should identify myself with            | 36,4                               | 31,8     | 17,3                       | 8,2   | 6,3            |
| 14. In general, belonging to my ethnic/diverse cultural group is an important part of my self-image          | 4,6                                | 12,7     | 18,2                       | 41,8  | 22,7           |
| 15. I generally do not feel comfortable being around members of other ethnic/diverse cultural groups         | 43,6                               | 32,7     | 8,2                        | 8,2   | 7,3            |
| 16. I often feel “left out” when others around me talk about ethnic/diverse cultural identity issues         | 24,5                               | 31,8     | 18,2                       | 16,4  | 9,1            |
| 17. It is important to me to identify closely with the overall culture of country that I live                | 6,3                                | 8,2      | 30                         | 35,5  | 20             |
| 18. The culture of country that I live absolutely expresses me                                               | 8,2                                | 10,9     | 31,8                       | 35,5  | 13,6           |
| 19. The values of my ethnic/diverse cultural groups determine my life                                        | 10,9                               | 30       | 24,5                       | 24,6  | 10             |
| 20. I do not spend much time with members of other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)                          | 31,8                               | 33,6     | 17,3                       | 14,6  | 2,7            |
| 21. I usually do not feel comfortable around members of my own ethnic/diverse cultural group                 | 32,7                               | 39,1     | 11,8                       | 10    | 6,4            |
| 22. I like keeping the traditions of the heritage of my ethnic/diverse cultural group                        | 4,5                                | 4,5      | 29,1                       | 35,5  | 26,4           |
| 23. It is important for me to be accepted by the overall culture where I live                                | 7,3                                | 5,4      | 19,1                       | 42,7  | 25,5           |
| 24. I feel unable to involve myself in activities with members of the other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s) | 39,1                               | 32,7     | 17,3                       | 5,4   | 5,5            |

Source: Compiled by authors based on SPSS results

As Table 2 shows, the biggest part of respondents strongly agree or agree, that „it is important for me to be accepted by the overall culture where I live“ (68,2 percent), but „I like keeping the traditions of the heritage of my ethnic/diverse cultural group“ (61,9 percent). 67,2 percent of respondents strongly disagree or disagree, that “I often feel lost about who I am as an ethnic/diverse cultural being“. 64,5 percent of respondents confirm by strongly agreeing (22,7 percent) and agreeing (41,8 percent), that „in general, belonging to my ethnic/diverse cultural group is an important part of my self-image“. 60 percent of respondents strongly agree or agree, that „I usually go by the values of the overall culture where I live“. 59,1 percent of respondents strongly agree or agree, that „The cultural traditions of my ethnic/diverse cultural group absolutely express me“. More than half, that is 55,5 percent strongly agree or agree, that „the values of my ethnic/diverse cultural groups are important for my judgment about what I have to do“ and „it is important to me to identify closely with the overall culture of country that I live“ and 54,5 percent of respondents state, that „it is important for me to internalize the overall cultural values of country that I live“. Almost half of respondents (49,1 percent) strongly agree and agree that “the culture of country that I live absolutely expresses me”. But an even smaller proportion of respondents (43,6 percent) strongly agree or agree that “I generally identify strongly with the overall culture of

country that I live” and even a third of respondents’ state, that they neither agree nor disagree. The most ambiguous was the statement that „the values of my ethnic/diverse cultural groups determine my life“: 40,9 percent of respondents strongly disagree or disagree, but 34,6 percent of respondents strongly agree or agree.

Analysing the results, the following hypotheses were tested:

H1: There are differences of opinion between men and women.

H2: There are differences of opinion between respondents grouped by age.

Testing the hypothesis H1, that there are differences of opinion between men and women, results are presenting in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Results for testing hypothesis H1

| Independent Samples Test              |                             |                                         |      |                              |         |                 |                 |                       |                                           |       |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------|
| The number of the evaluated statement |                             | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |      | t-test for Equality of Means |         |                 |                 |                       |                                           |       |
|                                       |                             | F                                       | Sig. | t                            | df      | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |       |
|                                       |                             |                                         |      |                              |         |                 |                 |                       | Lower                                     | Upper |
| 1                                     | Equal variances assumed     | .323                                    | .571 | .971                         | 108     | .334            | .205            | .211                  | -.213                                     | .623  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | .982                         | 107.990 | .328            | .205            | .208                  | -.208                                     | .618  |
| 2                                     | Equal variances assumed     | 1.943                                   | .166 | -.664                        | 108     | .508            | -.170           | .256                  | -.678                                     | .338  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -.674                        | 107.495 | .502            | -.170           | .252                  | -.671                                     | .330  |
| 3                                     | Equal variances assumed     | .184                                    | .669 | -1.437                       | 108     | .154            | -.337           | .235                  | -.802                                     | .128  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -1.450                       | 107.955 | .150            | -.337           | .232                  | -.798                                     | .124  |
| 4                                     | Equal variances assumed     | 12.820                                  | .001 | -.431                        | 108     | .667            | -.089           | .206                  | -.497                                     | .319  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -.443                        | 101.777 | .658            | -.089           | .200                  | -.486                                     | .308  |
| 5                                     | Equal variances assumed     | 12.609                                  | .001 | -1.811                       | 108     | .073            | -.376           | .208                  | -.787                                     | .036  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -1.862                       | 102.084 | .066            | -.376           | .202                  | -.776                                     | .025  |
| 6                                     | Equal variances assumed     | 16.645                                  | .000 | -3.510                       | 108     | .001            | -.702           | .200                  | -1.098                                    | -.306 |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -3.383                       | 77.192  | .001            | -.702           | .207                  | -1.115                                    | -.289 |
| 7                                     | Equal variances assumed     | .871                                    | .353 | -1.876                       | 108     | .063            | -.412           | .220                  | -.847                                     | .023  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -1.871                       | 104.554 | .064            | -.412           | .220                  | -.848                                     | .025  |
| 8                                     | Equal variances assumed     | 5.708                                   | .019 | -.350                        | 108     | .727            | -.077           | .220                  | -.514                                     | .359  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -.357                        | 106.669 | .722            | -.077           | .216                  | -.506                                     | .351  |
| 9                                     | Equal variances assumed     | 1.016                                   | .316 | -.726                        | 108     | .469            | -.171           | .236                  | -.638                                     | .296  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -.733                        | 107.937 | .465            | -.171           | .233                  | -.634                                     | .292  |
| 10                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 6.384                                   | .013 | 1.058                        | 108     | .292            | .243            | .230                  | -.212                                     | .698  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | 1.077                        | 106.856 | .284            | .243            | .225                  | -.204                                     | .690  |
| 11                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 10.408                                  | .002 | -1.384                       | 108     | .169            | -.293           | .212                  | -.713                                     | .127  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -1.431                       | 97.850  | .156            | -.293           | .205                  | -.700                                     | .113  |
| 12                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 3.117                                   | .080 | -2.659                       | 108     | .009            | -.641           | .241                  | -1.119                                    | -.163 |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -2.627                       | 98.622  | .010            | -.641           | .244                  | -1.125                                    | -.157 |
| 13                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 3.861                                   | .052 | -1.558                       | 108     | .122            | -.353           | .227                  | -.802                                     | .096  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -1.596                       | 104.084 | .113            | -.353           | .221                  | -.791                                     | .085  |
| 14                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 1.584                                   | .211 | .584                         | 108     | .561            | .124            | .212                  | -.296                                     | .543  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | .594                         | 107.183 | .554            | .124            | .208                  | -.289                                     | .536  |
| 15                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 3.293                                   | .072 | -1.028                       | 108     | .306            | -.242           | .235                  | -.708                                     | .224  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -1.046                       | 107.080 | .298            | -.242           | .231                  | -.700                                     | .216  |
| 16                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 15.867                                  | .000 | .651                         | 108     | .516            | .159            | .245                  | -.326                                     | .644  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | .669                         | 102.750 | .505            | .159            | .238                  | -.313                                     | .631  |
| 17                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 3.188                                   | .077 | -1.974                       | 108     | .051            | -.409           | .207                  | -.819                                     | .002  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -2.006                       | 107.425 | .047            | -.409           | .204                  | -.813                                     | -.005 |
| 18                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 12.113                                  | .001 | -1.199                       | 108     | .233            | -.253           | .211                  | -.671                                     | .165  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -1.239                       | 98.500  | .218            | -.253           | .204                  | -.658                                     | .152  |
| 19                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 6.814                                   | .010 | -1.923                       | 108     | .057            | -.428           | .223                  | -.869                                     | .013  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -1.965                       | 105.505 | .052            | -.428           | .218                  | -.860                                     | .004  |
| 20                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 1.369                                   | .245 | -1.085                       | 108     | .280            | -.234           | .216                  | -.662                                     | .194  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -1.092                       | 107.658 | .277            | -.234           | .215                  | -.660                                     | .191  |
| 21                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 2.251                                   | .136 | -.926                        | 108     | .357            | -.209           | .226                  | -.658                                     | .239  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -.944                        | 106.459 | .347            | -.209           | .222                  | -.649                                     | .230  |
| 22                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 7.198                                   | .008 | -.544                        | 108     | .587            | -.109           | .200                  | -.506                                     | .288  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -.559                        | 102.805 | .577            | -.109           | .195                  | -.496                                     | .278  |
| 23                                    | Equal variances assumed     | 10.046                                  | .002 | -1.446                       | 108     | .151            | -.309           | .214                  | -.732                                     | .115  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -1.482                       | 104.052 | .141            | -.309           | .208                  | -.722                                     | .104  |
| 24                                    | Equal variances assumed     | .041                                    | .840 | -1.222                       | 108     | .224            | -.264           | .216                  | -.692                                     | .164  |
|                                       | Equal variances not assumed |                                         |      | -1.224                       | 106.423 | .224            | -.264           | .216                  | -.691                                     | .163  |



ethnic/diverse cultural group(s);

➤ I often feel confused about which ethnic/diverse cultural group I should identify myself with;

➤ In general, belonging to my ethnic/diverse cultural group is an important part of my self-image;

➤ I do not spend much time with members of other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s);

➤ It is important for me to be accepted by the overall culture where I live;

➤ I feel unable to involve myself in activities with members of the other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s).

## Conclusions

Migration has been a part of human experience from the earliest days of civilization. There are over 25 million refugees worldwide, around half are children, and the majority (84%) are hosted in low- and middle-income countries. More than 90% of migrations in the world have taken place for employment purpose; migrants move either alone or with their families, also, as a prime causes of movements, can be defined geographical conditions, civil war, hunger, epidemic diseases, population growth, insufficient resources.

The European Union (EU) faces challenges that effects its persistence, including the revival of national populism in many EU members and studies have shown that individuals with immigration histories identify less strongly with Europe, such aspect must be taken into account, because the citizens and their identities are vital for European cohesion. Successful integration benefits both migrants and destination societies, but there are various triggers, which can effect affect the relations toward emigrants, like the pandemic or convivial attitude toward emigrants.

The survey shows that the biggest part of respondents (81,8 percent) does not avoid becoming friends with people from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s) or 78,2 percent of respondents do not avoid activities with individuals from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s). Both hypotheses that age and gender influence the difference in respondents' opinions were confirmed.

During the project “Strengthening social cohesion and capacity of local, refugee and migrant young people by creating STEM/STEAM areas” was an aspiration to increase the social cohesion and strengthen the resilience of young participants, consisting of immigrants, refugees and local groups, by revealing their skills in STEM/STEAM (Science, Robotic Technology, Art, Drama-theatre, Transform-Design-Play and Sports) and including them in social areas. The project put forward successful social cohesion practices like seminars and workshops to resource comprehensive social policies and to contribute to international literature. Workshops implemented during the project have contributed to raise awareness about multiple aspects of identity and the intersectionality of criteria that may lead to situations of privilege or discrimination in diverse hosting communities.

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### Appendix 1. Descriptive statistics of statements in the survey

| Statement in the survey                                                                                  | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| The cultural traditions of my ethnic/diverse cultural group absolutely express me                        | 110 | 1       | 5       | 3.60 | 1.102          |
| It turns me off to associate with people from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)                     | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.16 | 1.338          |
| I often feel bad that I belong to the ethnic/diverse cultural group                                      | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.05 | 1.233          |
| I usually go by the values of the overall culture where I live                                           | 110 | 1       | 5       | 3.48 | 1.073          |
| The values of my ethnic/diverse cultural groups are important for my judgment about what I have to do    | 110 | 1       | 5       | 3.45 | 1.097          |
| I avoid becoming friends with people from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)                         | 110 | 1       | 5       | 1.80 | 1.099          |
| I often feel lost about who I am as an ethnic/diverse cultural being                                     | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.19 | 1.161          |
| It is important for me to internalize the overall cultural values of country that I live                 | 110 | 1       | 5       | 3.53 | 1.147          |
| I feel uncomfortable to associate with people from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)                | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.05 | 1.230          |
| I feel very "confused" about my sense of ethnic membership                                               | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.46 | 1.202          |
| I generally identify strongly with the overall culture of country that I live                            | 110 | 1       | 5       | 3.25 | 1.112          |
| I avoid activities with individuals from other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)                          | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.01 | 1.296          |
| I often feel confused about which ethnic/diverse cultural group I should identify myself with            | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.16 | 1.193          |
| In general, belonging to my ethnic/diverse cultural group is an important part of my self-image          | 110 | 1       | 5       | 3.65 | 1.104          |
| I generally do not feel comfortable being around members of other ethnic/diverse cultural groups         | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.03 | 1.230          |
| I often feel "left out" when others around me talk about ethnic/diverse cultural identity issues         | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.54 | 1.276          |
| It is important to me to identify closely with the overall culture of country that I live                | 110 | 1       | 5       | 3.55 | 1.097          |
| The culture of country that I live absolutely expresses me                                               | 110 | 1       | 5       | 3.35 | 1.105          |
| The values of my ethnic/diverse cultural groups determine my life                                        | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.93 | 1.179          |
| I do not spend much time with members of other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s)                          | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.23 | 1.131          |
| I usually do not feel comfortable around members of my own ethnic/diverse cultural group                 | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.18 | 1.182          |
| I like keeping the traditions of the heritage of my ethnic/diverse cultural group                        | 110 | 1       | 5       | 3.75 | 1.044          |
| It is important for me to be accepted by the overall culture where I live                                | 110 | 1       | 5       | 3.74 | 1.123          |
| I feel unable to involve myself in activities with members of the other ethnic/diverse cultural group(s) | 110 | 1       | 5       | 2.05 | 1.132          |
| Valid N (listwise)                                                                                       | 110 |         |         |      |                |

Source: Compiled by authors based on SPSS results



**Appendix 2. Results for testing hypothesis H2**

| ANOVA                                 |                |                |     |             |       |      |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| The number of the evaluated statement |                | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
| 1                                     | Between Groups | 7.675          | 5   | 1.535       | 1.280 | .278 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 124.725        | 104 | 1.199       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 132.400        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 2                                     | Between Groups | 15.406         | 5   | 3.081       | 1.784 | .123 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 179.648        | 104 | 1.727       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 195.055        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 3                                     | Between Groups | 11.101         | 5   | 2.220       | 1.494 | .198 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 154.572        | 104 | 1.486       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 165.673        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 4                                     | Between Groups | 1.047          | 5   | .209        | .175  | .971 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 124.416        | 104 | 1.196       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 125.464        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 5                                     | Between Groups | 3.858          | 5   | .772        | .630  | .677 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 127.315        | 104 | 1.224       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 131.173        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 6                                     | Between Groups | 24.149         | 5   | 4.830       | 4.675 | .001 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 107.451        | 104 | 1.033       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 131.600        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 7                                     | Between Groups | 12.925         | 5   | 2.585       | 2.005 | .084 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 134.066        | 104 | 1.289       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 146.991        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 8                                     | Between Groups | 8.330          | 5   | 1.666       | 1.283 | .277 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 135.089        | 104 | 1.299       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 143.418        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 9                                     | Between Groups | 8.526          | 5   | 1.705       | 1.135 | .347 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 156.247        | 104 | 1.502       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 164.773        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 10                                    | Between Groups | 5.790          | 5   | 1.158       | .795  | .556 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 151.565        | 104 | 1.457       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 157.355        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 11                                    | Between Groups | 1.301          | 5   | .260        | .203  | .961 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 133.572        | 104 | 1.284       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 134.873        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 12                                    | Between Groups | 24.722         | 5   | 4.944       | 3.249 | .009 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 158.269        | 104 | 1.522       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 182.991        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 13                                    | Between Groups | 19.245         | 5   | 3.849       | 2.947 | .016 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 135.810        | 104 | 1.306       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 155.055        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 14                                    | Between Groups | 15.961         | 5   | 3.192       | 2.840 | .019 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 116.912        | 104 | 1.124       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 132.873        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 15                                    | Between Groups | 14.251         | 5   | 2.850       | 1.967 | .090 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 150.667        | 104 | 1.449       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 164.918        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 16                                    | Between Groups | 18.945         | 5   | 3.789       | 2.488 | .036 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 158.409        | 104 | 1.523       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 177.355        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 17                                    | Between Groups | 12.466         | 5   | 2.493       | 2.182 | .062 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 118.807        | 104 | 1.142       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 131.273        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 18                                    | Between Groups | 11.184         | 5   | 2.237       | 1.907 | .099 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 121.989        | 104 | 1.173       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 133.173        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 19                                    | Between Groups | 5.530          | 5   | 1.106       | .788  | .560 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 145.888        | 104 | 1.403       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 151.418        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 20                                    | Between Groups | 25.111         | 5   | 5.022       | 4.573 | .001 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 114.208        | 104 | 1.098       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 139.318        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 21                                    | Between Groups | 7.926          | 5   | 1.585       | 1.141 | .343 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 144.437        | 104 | 1.389       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 152.364        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 22                                    | Between Groups | 7.893          | 5   | 1.579       | 1.479 | .203 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 110.979        | 104 | 1.067       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 118.873        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 23                                    | Between Groups | 14.611         | 5   | 2.922       | 2.476 | .037 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 122.744        | 104 | 1.180       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 137.355        | 109 |             |       |      |
| 24                                    | Between Groups | 26.769         | 5   | 5.354       | 4.932 | .000 |
|                                       | Within Groups  | 112.903        | 104 | 1.086       |       |      |
|                                       | Total          | 139.673        | 109 |             |       |      |

Source: Compiled by authors based on SPSS results

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