

UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ



6th International Conference of the

ESREA Migration, Transnationalism and Racisms Network

Navigating Uncertainty: Migration and Anti-Democratic Challenges Today

University of Graz, Austria

22-23 May, 2025

Call for Abstracts

The ESREA Migration, Transnationalism and Racisms Network is pleased to announce its upcoming conference titled *Navigating Uncertainty: Migration and Anti-Democratic Challenges Today*. The conference will be held on 22-23 May 2025, at the Department of Educational Science, University of Graz, Austria.

Migration is a defining issue of the 21st century, and forced migration continues to be a prominent pattern, with millions displaced due to war, persecution, climate change, and other reasons (UNHCR, 2023, *Global Trends Report: Forced Displacement in 2022*). At the same time, migrants' participation in society takes place in a world that is itself characterized by increasing complexity, uncertainty, and fluidity. This complexity is further heightened by the rise of anti-democratic tendencies, including populism and racism, which can create hostile environments for newcomers and for society in general. Uncertainties and hopelessness are used by right-wing populist groups to channel people's fears and dissatisfaction for their own purposes. It often goes along with the normalization of racist discourses. With international security shaken by the invasion against Ukraine, the anti-democratic politics pursued by the Russian Federation regime (disinformation, support for far-right and far-left movements, manipulation of postcolonial discourse, and further military threats) become a transnational challenge for adult education and social movements that target racism and other forms of injustice. Many other tensions and conflicts between authoritarian and democratic forces throughout the globe, often cutting across North/South or West/East divisions, also contribute to the complexity and uncertainty in knowledge and public choices.

This conference focuses on the intersection of migration, anti-democratic trends, and the role of adult education in our uncertain times. It explores the difficulties and threats faced by migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and, more generally, civic societies opposing discrimination and racism. The conference aims at reflecting on how adult education can offer responses to those challenges.

Against the backdrop of migration, adult education can be seen as a catalyst for democratic participation, social change, and collective growth. Historically, it has played a pivotal role in facilitating transitions and overcoming crises amidst societal upheavals. This conference, however, seeks to move beyond framing migration as solely a crisis. We invite contributions that explore the transformative potential of migration for individuals and societies. There is a growing emphasis on approaches that empower migrants to share their voices and contribute to the development of more inclusive and better-informed societies.

We invite contributions that address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- experiences of migration (including forced migration, displacement, and resettlement) as challenges and opportunities in the context of adult education;
- transnationalism and diaspora communities as spaces of educational practice, identity negotiation, self-empowerment, and political participation;
- contributions of migrant and refugee communities to knowledge production, higher and popular education, research, and public debate;
- responses to (forced) migration as well as responses to racism and other forms of injustice: educational, civic, and policy contexts of solidarity building;
- anti-democratic tendencies and disinformation as challenges for adult education and learning: the role of educational institutions, social movements and other civic actors;
- the role of art, art-based activism, and cultural resistance in learning and public discourse on migration, refugees, racisms, and related issues.

Submission Guidelines

We welcome proposals for papers and other forms of presentation, workshops, and roundtable discussions. Abstracts should be no more than 300 words and must clearly outline the objectives, methodology, and significance of the proposed contribution.

Please submit your abstracts and bios via email to esrea.migration@uni-graz.at with the subject line "Migration-Network Conference."

Submissions will undergo a peer-review process. The review of proposals will be based on the following criteria: relevance to the conference themes; clarity of the theoretical and conceptual framework; and, if the proposal is empirical, the coherence and clarity of its background, method, results, and implications.

Important dates

Abstract submission deadline: 15 November, 2024

Notification of acceptance: by 20 December, 2024

Conference: 22-23 May, 2025

Conference Fees (early bird)

ESREA member: 130 €

Non-member: 180 €

Student: 80 €

The conference fee includes conference materials, lunches and coffee breaks. The conference dinner (on 22 May) will be optional.

If the conference fee poses a barrier to your participation, please reach out to us via email. We may be able to allocate a small amount of funding to assist in such cases.

ESREA bursaries

3 bursaries for PhD students are available. To submit the application for a bursary, upon your abstract submission, please send along a separate file with the relevant information regarding your academic position and state your reasons for applying (e.g., lack of funding from your institution). Please note that the Secretary of ESREA will check that the students (or their institutions) are members of ESREA and whether they already were awarded a bursary recently.

About the ESREA Migration, Transnationalism and Racisms Network

The network creates a space to explore the role of adult education and learning in all its forms (formal and informal), and locations (community, workplace, institutional), in relation to migration, transnationalism and the new lines of exclusion and social hierarchies created. It encourages critical dialogue in this emerging field with the aim of developing new theoretical and methodological resources and understandings. The network will explore these themes through concepts such as belonging, democratic citizenship, anti-racism, community solidarity and activism; it will seek to challenge and problematize policy responses and 'othering' processes in relation to migration. The network also tries to open up a space for a (self-)critical reflection on migration research and its contribution to hegemonic discourses on migration.

About ESREA (European Society for Research on the Education of Adults)

ESREA's mission is to support the advancement of high quality research on the education and learning of adults in Europe by sustaining:

- co-operation among researchers, in the European context conceived in the broadest geographical terms;
- development of research and dissemination of results in all areas of adult and continuing education;
- training of early researchers and continuing professional development of researchers;
- relationships with other European organizations and the appropriate national organizations.

To find out more about ESREA please visit www.esrea.org

To apply for membership please visit www.esrea.org/about-us/membership

WEBSITE (coming soon): <https://esrea-migration-2025.uni-graz.at>

Sincerely,

Convenors of the ESREA Migration, Transnationalism and Racisms Network: Tetyana Hoggan-Kloubert, Angela Pilch Ortega, Annette Sprung, Marcin Starnawski.

Conference Organizing Committee

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