HISTORY OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION

# HIDDEN

IN EUROPEAN NATIONS

## COST ACTION CA21120

# NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2025

Maynooth University
National University of Ireland Maynooth

cost
EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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# HAPPY 3RD BIRTHDAY HIDDEN!

# A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR



It was a delight to welcome HIDDEN members and guests to my home university in May this year for the conference. The theme was 'The Past, Present and Future of Identity Documentation' and was held over two days (15th and 16th May). Featuring a keynote, plenary sessions with stakeholders, parallel panels with the latest research in the field, and a reading, this was a stimulating event that helped to strengthen the HIDDEN community as we look to our final year of work. Over fifty participants from nineteen different countries were in attendance – although as I noted in my opening remarks, many of us live and work in different countries than we were born in. The HIDDEN conference therefore had a global reach, again demonstrating the history (and power) of migration in academia and wider society.



The event was officially opened on behalf of the University by **Professor Rachel Msetfi**, Vice President for Research and Innovation at Maynooth University. A warm welcome was given to delegates by Prof Msetfi, who also revealed a personal connection to the topic of our network and how relevant this was to the world today. I was honoured to chair the keynote address by **writer and researcher Dagmar Hovestädt**, renowned for her work at the intersection of archives, transitional justice, and memory. Dagmar drew on her experience as the spokesperson for the Stasi archives in Germany, a role she held for ten years. She is also working now with the issue of archives and human rights in different geographical contexts. In discussing Syria, for example, her talk explored how identity documents can serve as both instruments of state control and essential resources for truth and reconciliation.



The first day included a special panel I convened to showcase a number of important voices in issues of identity, citizenship and migration. **Adam Labaran**, Vice President of Refugees Union in Portugal - UREP gave a paper on "A Paperless Identity: Living Between Borders and Bureaucracies", which drew upon his personal experiences as well as his advocacy work with UREP. **Dr. Zoë O'Reilly**, currently a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Geography in Maynooth University gave a paper on "Anti-colonial approaches to migration research" collaboration, ethics and care" which featured best practice approaches in conducting research with (instead of about) refugees and migrations. **Sirazul Islam** gave a paper on **"Participation with Purpose: The ENS Community Engagement Approach"** on the best practices approaches developed by the European Network on Statelessness that should be followed by any organisation or researcher wishing to engage with those experiencing statelessness. Finally in this panel, **Dr. Prince Okorie**, Diverse Youth Northern Ireland "**Empowering the Future: The Journey and Impact of Diverse Youth NI**" which spoke about the founding and work of this charity which centres Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic young people in their work. The feedback on this panel was overwhelmingly positive and was mentioned to me many times as a highlight by those present.



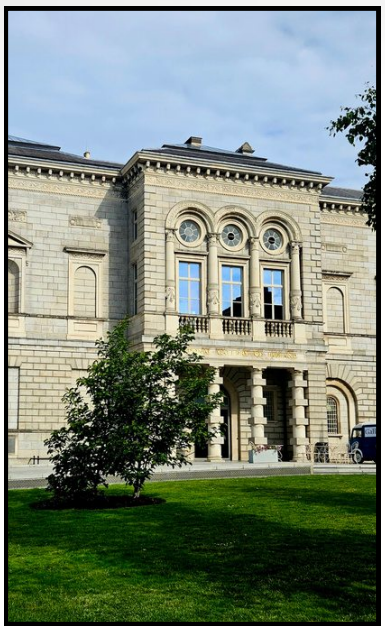


# A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR




Over the two days we had eight parallel panels which ranged in geographical and temporal specificity, all reflecting on some element of the past, present or future of identity documentation. Another highlight was a special reading by **Evgenii Shtorn** from the forthcoming English translation of his memoir in a presentation called **'Refugee Chronicles: Extracts on Friendship, Instrumentalisation and Loss'**. This reading reflected on his time living in a Direct Provision centre when first coming to Ireland, a difficult period but recounted by spotlighting the people, warmth and solidarity he experienced from fellow asylum seekers.

I am deeply thankful to everyone who gave a paper, chaired a session or helped in any way in making the conference such a success. As you finish reading this, please do not forget to engage with us on our different social media platforms which tells you about our work: Bluesky: @hiddencostaction.bsky.social; Facebook: Hidden COST Action ; Instagram: hiddencostaction; and on our Website here. The website contains information on all events we have had in Year 3 (and indeed before). I especially encourage you to join us on Linked In if you haven't already.



Our final event will be in September 2026 and held at the National Gallery of Ireland (more news to follow!). For the rest of Year 3, we had more stimulating events, including a collaborative event with the VOICES COST Action on gender equality and a training school focusing on issues for children and young people in accessing citizenship, hosted by Working Group 5 co-leader Dr Beatrice Scutaru in Barcelona. Our Year 3 ended with another collaboration, this time with the WeMoV COST Action to host a showing of their documentary In the Shadow. Women on the Move at the European Parliament HQ in Dublin. We have already had one event of Year 4, a workshop at DOMiD, the Dokumentationszentrum und Museum über die Migration in Deutschland in Cologne, a fantastic example of an archive built by and for migrants to reflect their stories and contributions. I am always very grateful to anyone who hosts a HIDDEN meeting, I know how much work it always takes.

Please keep in touch with your working group leaders for news of future events and make sure to contact them if you would like to host something. I end this note with renewed thanks to our funder COST. Without this support we would not have been able to found the lively and supportive community of researchers, activists, policy and community workers, each of whom bring important insights and expertise to the Action. We look forward to continuing this work as Year 4 progresses.

Wishing you all a safe and prosperous new year.

Jennifer

The third year of the HIDDEN COST Action was productive, with a broad programme of activities and strong collaborative engagement. Key events included the main conference, thematic workshops, research visits, conference attendance, training schools, and Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs), each supporting interdisciplinary exchange and capacity building. The year also saw the publication of numerous outputs, further consolidating the Action's scientific impact.

# MIGRANT ASPIRATIONS AND NEW MODELS OF CITIZENSHIP: A WORKSHOP

## 20 FEBRUARY 2025



Migration is reshaping European societies, with migrants' aspirations increasingly influencing the understanding and practice of citizenship. In addition to economic security, many migrants pursue political participation, social inclusion, and recognition of transnational identities that sustain connections to countries of origin while fostering belonging in host societies. In response, European states are adopting more flexible approaches to citizenship, such as reforms to naturalisation, residency-based rights, and local political participation. These developments occur amid rising nationalist sentiment, rendering citizenship a contested and evolving domain.

These themes were central to the interdisciplinary workshop "Migrant Aspirations and New Models of Citizenship," held on 20 February 2025 at the University of Glasgow. The event was co-sponsored by HIDDEN and the GAPs Horizon Europe project and organised by **Dr. Sergiu Gherghina** (University of Glasgow), **Prof. Michael J. Geary** (NTNU), and **Dr. Susan Rottmann** (Özyeğin University).

The workshop included ten presentations that examined citizenship and migration from diverse perspectives, such as legal status, political participation, and refugee experiences. Several contributions investigated how citizenship is acquired, experienced, and mobilised across borders. For instance, research on ancestral citizenship challenged binary interpretations that present it only as a strategic or emotional choice, instead emphasising the intersecting roles of identity, aspiration, and practical considerations. Additional papers explored how naturalised citizenship can become politically charged, particularly in contexts of war mobilisation, while others analysed transnational political engagement and emigrant voting practices.

Other presentations addressed the complexities of securing legal residence and navigating administrative systems, illustrating the everyday challenges migrants encounter in various national contexts. Comparative perspectives were integral to the discussions, with case studies covering countries including Canada, Germany, Turkey, Morocco, Italy, and Romania.

The workshop concluded with discussions on future collaboration and dissemination, including plans for a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal, provisionally scheduled for publication in early 2026. Overall, the event underscored the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue in understanding how migrant aspirations are reshaping citizenship in Europe and beyond, reaffirming HIDDEN's commitment to advancing research in this evolving field.

# ONE YEAR ON FROM THE EU'S ASYLUM AND MIGRATION PACT: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

## 10 APRIL 2025



On 10 April 2025, the University of East London hosted the international workshop **One Year on from the EU's Asylum and Migration Pact: Critical Reflections**. Organised by HIDDEN Working Group 3 (Accessing Citizenship), the event brought together academics, NGO representatives, practitioners, and activists from 12 countries to critically evaluate the forthcoming phase of EU asylum and migration policy.

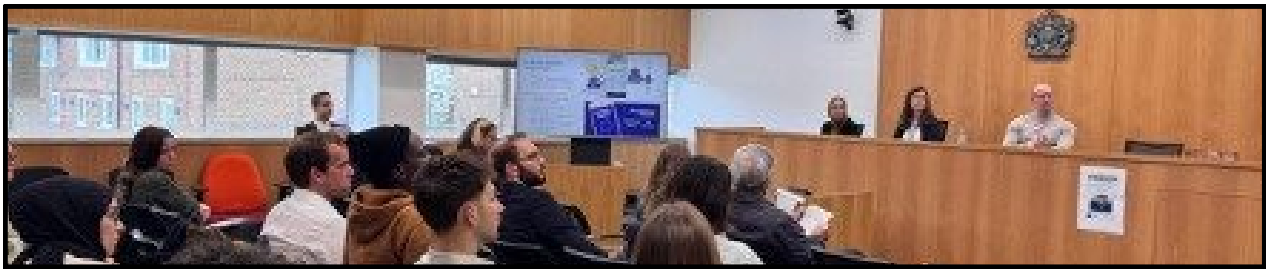
The workshop featured four thematic panels in which participants analysed the implications of the Pact for asylum management, solidarity, technological governance, externalisation, and the protection of fundamental rights. Discussions raised concerns that, although presented as a "fresh start", the Pact maintains structural features that may perpetuate persistent inequalities within the EU asylum system. The panels also addressed tensions between solidarity among Member States and solidarity with asylum seekers, highlighting the ongoing marginalisation of stateless persons and the proliferation of detention-like practices.

Multiple panels investigated the increasing influence of digitalisation and technology in migration governance. Speakers assessed data-driven systems, including EURODAC, screening procedures, and visa policies, cautioning that automation and risk profiling could intensify citizenship hierarchies and reinforce exclusion, while masking human rights concerns under the pretext of efficiency and control.

The workshop also examined developments beyond the EU's borders, analysing cooperation with third countries and the externalisation of asylum responsibilities. Contributors considered how informal arrangements, emergency frameworks, and experimental technologies may undermine refugee protection and perpetuate unequal power relations, resulting in tangible consequences for neighbouring regions.

Fundamental rights constituted a recurring theme throughout the event. Presentations addressed challenges concerning access to justice, legal representation, accountability mechanisms, and the protection of particularly vulnerable groups, including SOGIESC asylum seekers. Speakers critically examined whether current and proposed mechanisms adequately safeguard rights in practice, particularly given mounting pressures toward securitisation and control.

The workshop concluded with a forward-looking discussion on dissemination and impact. Participants underscored the necessity of reinforcing connections among academic research, policy debates, civil society, and migrant communities as the Pact transitions from adoption to implementation. The event reaffirmed HIDDEN's commitment to interdisciplinary, rights-based engagement and to advancing research, policy recommendations, and public dialogue that reach beyond academia.



# HIDDEN YEAR 3 CONFERENCE
# 15-16 MAY 2025











The HIDDEN COST Action Year 3 Conference brought together researchers, practitioners, and community stakeholders to examine the role of **identity documentation** in historical and contemporary contexts. Across two days, discussions explored how systems of documentation shape legal status, access to rights, state recognition, and individual belonging, while also reflecting the objectives of **UN Sustainable Development Goal 16.9**, which calls for legal identity for all by 2030. Contributors highlighted that, rather than simply enabling inclusion, identity documentation has often functioned as a mechanism of governance that can reproduce and entrench structural inequalities.

**Professor Rachel Msetfi**, Vice President for Research and Innovation at **Maynooth University**, opened the conference by reflecting on the challenges of obtaining identity documentation that accurately represents ethnicity. **Dr. Dagmar Hovestädt** delivered the keynote address, situating documentation as both an instrument of state power and a resource for accountability and reconciliation. Drawing on experiences with the Stasi archives in Germany and human rights documentation from Syria, the keynote established a foundation for critical engagement throughout the event.

The **HIDDEN Community Stakeholders Plenary emphasize**d lived experience and participatory approaches. **Adam Labaran** (Refugees Union in Portugal) discussed the challenges of living without legal documentation and the complexities of systems that both require and restrict identification. **Dr. Zoë O'Reilly** (Maynooth University) advocated for anti-colonial migration research rooted in ethics of care and collaboration. **Sirazul Islam** (European Network on Statelessness) addressed participatory policy-making that empowers stateless individuals to influence relevant agendas, while **Dr. Prince Okorie** (Diverse Youth Northern Ireland) underscored grassroots youth leadership and inclusion within minority communities.

Parallel panels examined identity documentation across diverse regions and historical periods. Presentations addressed documentation in colonial governance, refugee protection mechanisms such as the Nansen Passport, and the enduring effects of post-colonial documentation regimes in Asia and Africa.

# HIDDEN YEAR 3 CONFERENCE

Additional discussions addressed the political significance of passports, citizenship debates in multicultural societies, and the body as a site of identification, including biometric technologies and legal recognition through same-sex marriage. Presenters also analyzed artistic and conceptual resistance to bureaucratic control, proposing alternative frameworks for understanding identity.



On the second day, panels continued to examine the role of documentation in migration history and contemporary digital infrastructures. Presentations highlighted the historical use of documents as regulatory and narrative tools, the fragmentation of identity within emigrant communities, and the ethical challenges associated with algorithmic border controls and integrated digital identification systems.




The final sessions addressed citizenship law and archival records, including analyses of nationality regimes, debates regarding children's access to citizenship, and historical cases illustrating how bureaucratic uncertainty can undermine national belonging. Reflections on diplomatic and travel documents from Eastern Europe further demonstrated how documentation delineates boundaries and determines access to rights.



A shared conclusion emerged across all panels: identity documentation is not solely administrative, but also deeply political and personal. Questions regarding who is documented, by what means, and for what purposes reveal underlying power dynamics and sites of resistance. The conference further addressed the impact of misinformation in migration debates and underscored the importance of integrating personal testimony into research and policy development.



The programme included a reading from **Evgenii Shtorn's Refugee Chronicles**, providing a personal and emotional perspective on statelessness, resilience, and solidarity. Engagement extended beyond the conference venue through active participation on social media platforms using **#HIDDENconf2025**, thereby broadening the reach of the discussions.



HIDDEN expresses gratitude to **Dr. Jennifer Redmond** (Chair) and **Dr. Aisling Shalvey** (Vice Chair) for their leadership in organizing the conference, and to **Maynooth University** for hosting and supporting the event. As the Action continues through 2026, insights generated at this conference will inform ongoing research, policy engagement, and collaboration across the network.

# WORKSHOP AT IRISH CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS 31 JULY 2025




In summer 2025, a small group of researchers from COST Action **HIDDEN** visited the **Irish Centre for Human Rights (ICHR)** at the University of Galway. This visit was part of HIDDEN's networking and knowledge-exchange initiatives to foster collaboration between senior and early-career researchers in archives, ethics, and human rights.

The Irish Centre for Human Rights is an internationally recognised academic institution with expertise in human rights, peace and conflict, international criminal and humanitarian law, refugee and migration law, gender and human rights, and climate justice.

The visit began with a welcome from **Dr. Jennifer Redmond**, who presented the aims of the workshop and the objectives of the exchange. Subsequent discussions focused on developing collaborative projects, exchanging methodological approaches, and presenting new research aligned with HIDDEN Action's scientific objectives.

The visit was organised with the support of **Dr. Dagmar Hovestadt**, keynote speaker at the recent HIDDEN conference at Maynooth University and adjunct professor at the University of Galway. Hovestadt is currently collaborating with **Dr. Maeve O'Rourke** on research concerning archives, transitional justice, and the historical context of Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalen Laundries in Ireland. These discussions underscored significant challenges related to access to official records, institutional accountability, and the ethical considerations of archival research, particularly from the perspective of survivors.

During the first day, HIDDEN members were introduced to the doctoral research of **Mary Harney**, a PhD candidate at the ICHR supervised by Dr Maeve O'Rourke. Harney's research examines institutional abuse and archival access, drawing upon her lived experience as a survivor. She was recently invited to join an international advisory panel on best practices in truth recovery for survivors of human rights violations. Participants also discussed her contribution, "Testimony," in the edited volume *REDRESS: Ireland's Institutions and Transitional Justice* (UCD Press).

On the second day, **Shauna Mulligan**, a PhD student at the University of Galway, presented her research titled *"Policies and Practices of Slave Labour and Racism during the American Civil War in South Carolina, 1861–1865, and the Second World War in Estonia, 1941–1945."* Mulligan's doctoral research offers a comparative analysis of systems of unfree labour and racial policy at Robert Allston's Chicora Wood Plantation in South Carolina and Hans Aumeier's Klooga concentration camp in Nazi-occupied Estonia. The presentation prompted in-depth discussion and resource sharing among participants, highlighting the significance of comparative global history approaches within the HIDDEN network.

The visit enhanced cooperation between HIDDEN members and researchers at the Irish Centre for Human Rights, laying a foundation for future joint publications and networking activities. HIDDEN thanks the ICHR for hosting this productive exchange.

# GEOGRAPHY AS DESTINY: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS IN MIGRATION AND DOCUMENTATION IN ANATOLIA



On 22–23 May 2025, HIDDEN's Working Group 1 met in southern Türkiye, marking the Action's most geographically distant meeting to date. This location provided a valuable setting for examining migration and documentation in a context shaped by long-standing mobility, regional instability, and close links to Europe.

Türkiye's role as a host, transit, and sending country, together with its proximity to the Middle East and EU candidacy status, positions it at the center of diverse migration dynamics. These dynamics encompass both regular and irregular migration, as well as large-scale displacement. The meeting took place at Tarsus University in the city of Tarsus, located in the Mersin district, which is notable for its significant population of Syrians living under temporary protection and the pronounced social and administrative impacts of rapid migration.

The two-day meeting facilitated **open, evidence-based discussions** on migration and documentation. Presentations were delivered in a seminar format, which enabled in-depth debate among participants. Invited experts offered insights into Türkiye's migration regime and the role of **NGO-led solidarity initiatives.** HIDDEN members, together with staff and students from Tarsus University, participated in discussions addressing both current and emerging issues.

The event commenced with formal remarks by **Prof. Ali Özen**, Rector of Tarsus University, accompanied by **Vice-Rectors Prof. Osman Murat Özkendir** and **Prof. Tuğba Yolcu**, as well as **Prof. Ali Deran**, Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. **Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino**, Co-Lead of HIDDEN Working Group 1, also addressed the opening session. The programme was organised and coordinated by **Prof. Tuğba Aydın Halisoğlu**, Co-Lead of Working Group 1.

A key outcome of the meeting was the agreement among HIDDEN participants to develop a **collaborative paper** examining perceived hierarchies among immigrant nationalities in Türkiye. The group also committed to pursuing **future funding opportunities** to support ongoing research in this area. The meeting enhanced Working Group 1's comparative perspective and reinforced HIDDEN's commitment to addressing migration and documentation across diverse regional contexts.





# WORKSHOP AT THE STASI RECORDS ARCHIVE
## 21-22 AUGUST 2025












In August 2025, eight members of the HIDDEN COST Action from six countries convened in Berlin for a two-day workshop at the Stasi Records Archive, a site of significant historical and political importance in Germany's capital. The event was organized by **Dr. Dagmar Hovestadt**, former spokesperson for the Federal Commissioner for the Stasi Records.

The workshop commenced with an introduction to the former Ministry for State Security, now repurposed as a "**campus for democracy**" where state institutions and civil society organizations critically address the legacy of repression in East Germany. Participants visited two on-site archives: the Stasi Records Archive, which features a permanent exhibition on the history and content of the records, and the **archive of the Robert Havemann Society,** which preserves documents from East German dissident and resistance movements. These visits enabled in-depth discussions on the diversity of perspectives within secret police archives, the political and ethical complexities of opening such collections, and the use of forced migration and mobility as political instruments in divided Germany.

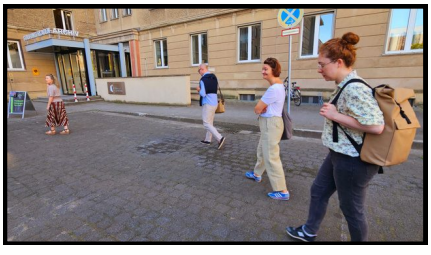
On the first day, participants also visited the newly opened **Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation**. The guided tour examined the expulsion of Germans from Eastern territories during and after the Second World War, situating these events within broader and contemporary debates on migration and displacement. The visit provided significant inspiration for the presentation and curatorial strategy of HIDDEN's final project at the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin.

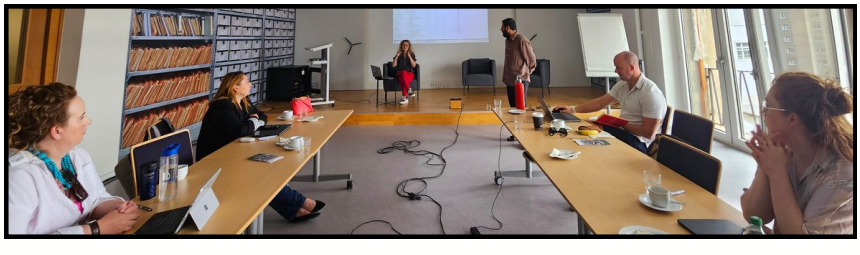
The second day focused on contemporary research and memory work. **Jonna Rock of the German Centre for Migration and Integration Research** presented the three-year project "Unmaking the Past, Making the Future: An Intergenerational Analysis of Ancestral Citizenship and Visions of Europe." Given the significant thematic overlap with HIDDEN, **Dr. Jennifer Redmond** proposed future exchanges and collaboration, an invitation that was well received.

In the afternoon, **Amer Matar, founder and co-director of the Prisons Museum,** delivered a presentation on the work of this Syrian NGO, which documents crimes committed in Syrian prisons to promote accountability and remembrance.

The Berlin workshop provided HIDDEN participants with essential insights into archives of repression, practices of remembrance, and the intersections among migration, citizenship, and memory, all of which are central themes within the Action's research agenda.

The HIDDEN COST Action extends its gratitude to all speakers, hosts, and participants who contributed to the success of the Berlin workshop. We offer particular thanks to Dr. Dagmar Hovestadt for her outstanding organization, dedication, and energy, and for curating a rich and insightful programme. Her preparation and the diversity of visits and discussions made this workshop a valuable and memorable contribution to the Action's activities.





# HIDDEN COST ACTION WORKSHOP: REFLECTING ON GENDER IN/EQUALITY IN THE ACADEMY 4-5 SEPTEMBER 2025



In September 2025, fourteen members of the HIDDEN COST Action representing seven countries gathered in Paris for a workshop hosted by the Centre Universitaire de Norvège à Paris (CUNP) at the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme. The event addressed gender and gender inequalities within the university sector, bringing together early career scholars from across the network.

The workshop pursued two primary objectives. The first was to support early career researchers in advancing selected works in progress, including journal articles, book proposals, and funding applications. The second objective was to gather expertise and feedback to inform the ongoing development of the HIDDEN Gender Equality Plan, consistent with the Action's commitment to equality and inclusion as core COST principles.

Developed in alignment with the Action's objectives, the workshop examined persistent structural, cultural, and institutional factors contributing to gender inequalities in academia. Although some progress has occurred, participants acknowledged that disparities persist in representation, pay, career progression, and access to leadership positions. Early-career scholars were encouraged to critically assess these challenges and consider strategies to foster a more inclusive academic environment, including the influence of national and European funding schemes.

The first day included two keynote presentations. **Dr. Jennifer Redmond** chaired the initial keynote, delivered by **Prof. Anne-Sophie Godfroy** (École Normale Supérieure), Chair of the recently concluded COST Action VOICES: Making Young Researchers' Voices Heard for Gender Equality. **Prof. Godfroy** addressed the design and implementation of Gender Equality Plans in COST Actions and broader research projects, drawing on interdisciplinary research. The second keynote, chaired by **Prof. Michael Geary**, was presented by **Prof. Valerie Heffernan** (Maynooth University), who examined gender equality considerations within EU funding schemes, informed by her experience as an evaluator and her involvement in the Mothernet project.

Participants engaged in a collective discussion to identify best practices across national, European, and international funding frameworks. Insights from these discussions will inform the finalization of the HIDDEN Gender Equality Plan and guide future Action practices, including leadership roles, grant allocation, and event participation. The remainder of the first day was devoted to presentations by early career researchers. Chaired by Prof. Michael Geary, the sessions featured workshop funding proposals, journal articles, and a book proposal, with contributions from **Dr. Zoe O'Reilly, April Maja Almaas, Dr. Pilar Luz Rodrigues, Evgeny Shtorn, and Dr. Aisling Shalvey.**

The second day began with the final keynote, chaired by **Dr. Beatrice Scutaru** (WG5 Co-Leader). **Dr. Concetta Russo** (Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi) presented on motherhood, identity, and academic careers, drawing from her research on early career researchers and neoliberal academic environments.

The concluding session, chaired by Vice Chair Dr. Aisling Shalvey, included additional works in progress presented by Dr. Beatrice Scutaru, **Dr. Lucy Pius Kyauke, Dr. Ibtisam Sadegh, and Dr. Andrea Berger,** followed by group feedback. The workshop concluded with collective revisions to the HIDDEN Gender Equality Policy Statement, which will be finalized in the coming months.

The organizers express their gratitude to **Dr. Marte Mangset**, Director of CUNP, and **M. Yann Hascoët** for their generous hospitality and support during the workshop.

# TRAINING SCHOOL ON CONTEMPORARY CITIZENSHIP CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



On 15–16 September 2025, HIDDEN Working Groups 3 and 5 organised a two-day Training School on Contemporary Citizenship Challenges for Children and Young People, hosted by the **Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona** in Spain. The event brought together early-career researchers and senior scholars to examine citizenship, identity, and protection through interdisciplinary and practice-oriented perspectives.

The first day addressed intercountry adoption, identity, and research involving refugee minors. **Prof. Yves Denéchère** (Université d'Angers) opened the training with a session on intercountry adoption in France, focusing on the risks and ethical challenges associated with researching illicit practices. Drawing on extensive expertise and the *AdoptRisk* project (2025–2029), he emphasised the academic and societal significance of understanding illegal adoption practices and contextualising personal adoption histories within a comprehensive historical framework. The session highlighted the pressures experienced by researchers in this sensitive field and the necessity for sustained institutional support.

**Dr. Elvira Loibl** (Maastricht University) delivered a second training session examining illegal intercountry adoptions in the European Union, with particular focus on the Dutch and German contexts. The session traced the evolution of intercountry adoption from a humanitarian initiative to its subsequent involvement in commercial and illegal activities. Drawing on comprehensive legal and empirical research, the training identified structural weaknesses in adoption systems, limitations of current international frameworks, and ongoing debates regarding state responsibility, reparations, and policy reform.

**Daniel Franco Sánchez** (Editorial Graviola) led a reflective session on the theme of identity and belonging. Through dialogue, literary references, and participatory exercises, participants examined identity as fluid, relational, and influenced by diverse cultural, personal, and national affiliations. The session promoted critical reflection on migrant identities and challenged reductive or binary conceptions of belonging.

**Dr. Cristina Santinho** (University of Lisbon) delivered the final session of Day 1, which focused on research with unaccompanied refugee minors in institutional settings. Employing creative and ethnographic methodologies, the training illuminated the lived experiences of refugee children and the challenges arising from bureaucratic procedures, documentation delays, and evolving political contexts. The session emphasised the urgency of recognising children's voices and ensuring effective protection structures within increasingly restrictive asylum environments.

The second day focused on statelessness and childhood. **Dr. Jesús Tolmo García** presented a training session on children without nationality in Europe, integrating academic research with professional experience in legal protection and advocacy. The session analysed international legal frameworks, complex case studies, and the significant consequences of a lack of documentation for children's rights and daily lives. Emphasis was placed on the necessity for coherent legal and policy responses that prioritise the best interests of the child.

The event strengthened interdisciplinary exchange within the HIDDEN network and advanced research, policy reflection, and collaboration on citizenship challenges affecting children and young people.

# IN THE SHADOW DOCUMENTARY SCREENING AND ROUNDTABLE ON WOMEN AND EUROPEAN MIGRATION

## 22 SEPTEMBER 2025

On 21 September, the HIDDEN COST Action commemorated the **International Day of Peace** with an evening event in Dublin, emphasizing the ongoing efforts necessary to foster peace through inclusion, dialogue, and respect for human dignity. Dr. Jennifer Redmond organized the event, and Prof. Michael J. Geary chaired the roundtable discussion featuring Seán Binder.

The event, held at the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland, featured a screening of ***In the Shadow. Women on the Move*****,** a documentary produced within the **WEMov COST Action**, which was chaired by **Dr. Marie Ruiz.** The film presents testimonies from migrant women and expert contributors, illustrating experiences shaped by family-based migration, war, sexual violence, discrimination against LGBTQI+ communities, and humanitarian engagement. These narratives underscore the interconnectedness of mobility, justice, gender equality, and peace.

Following the screening, a roundtable discussion facilitated deeper engagement with the film's central themes. Participants emphasized the inseparability of peace from the protection of human rights and the pursuit of gender equality and highlighted the significance of collaboration across COST Actions in addressing common societal challenges.

The event demonstrated HIDDEN's commitment to networking and collaboration with other COST Actions, particularly through its engagement with WEMov. These exchanges promote interdisciplinary dialogue, facilitate mutual learning, and expand the reach and impact of COST-supported research.

HIDDEN expresses gratitude to the **European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland** for hosting the event, to **Counsellor Janet Horner** for opening the evening on behalf of **the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and to Dr. Marie Ruiz** for sharing the In the Shadow documentary with HIDDEN.

Through this event, HIDDEN reaffirmed its commitment to advancing research on migration, gender, and human rights, and to fostering substantive collaborations across the COST community.



WOMEN ON THE MOVE TRAILER

# SHORT-TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS (STSM)

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) are a funding instrument within the COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) Actions framework to promote researcher mobility and exchange among member countries. They support collaboration and sharing of expertise through research. For further details, please visit the HIDDEN website. The STSMs included:

## STSM: "RED-VIENNA," A HUB FOR ILLEGAL POLITICAL MIGRATION, 1919-1938
## 15-22 JUNE 2025



Between 15 and 22 June 2025, a Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) entitled "'Red Vienna,' a hub for illegal political migration, 1919–1938 – Scientific Mission for a joint publication and archival research" was conducted in Austria. This STSM facilitated collaboration between two members of Working Group 2, "Documents as Proof, Documents as Past," within the COST Action HIDDEN. **Dr. Sigrid Wadauer** (University of Vienna) served as host to **Dr. Cristina Diac** (National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism – Romanian Academy).

The primary objectives of the mission were to advance preparation of a special journal issue co-edited by **Sigrid Wadauer and Beate Althammer**, with a contribution from Cristina Diac, and to conduct archival research on political migration from Eastern Europe during the interwar period. The STSM focused on forged identity documents, clandestine mobility, and how documentation shaped migrant identities, integrating migration studies with historical analysis of documents.

Cristina Diac prepared an article examining Romanian political refugees (communists) who crossed borders using forged identification documents, then expanded its scope to cover political migration more broadly in response to scholarly feedback. Collaborative discussions with the host researcher highlighted the importance of analyzing forged documents as material artifacts and in relation to their users.




Archival research focused on Vienna as a central hub for political migration between 1919 and 1934. Research activities at the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW), including consultation of the **Barry McLoughlin archive,** highlighted "Red Vienna" as a significant site of transnational political encounters. Further relevant sources were identified in the Austrian State Archive and at the University of Vienna.

In summary, the STSM reinforced collaboration within COST Action CA21120, supported progress toward a joint publication, and yielded valuable insights into archival strategies and research methodologies for the study of interwar political migration and documentation.



# SHORT*TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM)

## HISTORY OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION IN EUROPEAN NATIONS: CITIZENSHIP, NATIONALITY AND MIGRATION

### 14-24 AUGUST 2025




**Dr. Jaafar Alloul** conducted a research visit at the University of Malta, collaborating with **Prof. Dr. David E. Zammit and Dr. Ibtisam Sadegh** to investigate global transformations in citizenship and migration governance using Malta as a case study. Malta served as a microcosm for broader trends in liberal citizenship regimes, where citizenship is increasingly conditional, exclusive, and commodified. This shift occurs alongside the expansion of temporary labour schemes, investor citizenship, digital nomad programmes, and the rise of long-term "citizens-in-waiting."

Malta, with a population of fewer than 600,000 and nearly 30% foreign residents, depends on migrant labour and attracts affluent, mobile individuals. Using comparative insights from other small migration states, the research analyzed how Malta integrates circulatory migration, stratified residency pathways, and experimental citizenship policies. The study proceeded in three phases: initial consultations with University of Malta scholars; interviews with government officials, long-term residents, digital nomads, asylum and protection status holders, business migrants, former asylum caseworkers, and academic and social experts; and collaborative analysis of findings with Maltese colleagues.

Preliminary findings indicate several key trends. First, there is a rise in second-generation migrants and the gradual naturalisation of Third Country Nationals. Officials report that, although applications are legally permitted after five years, successful naturalisation often requires ten years or more and remains subject to significant discretion. Although Malta is expected to become more formally multi-ethnic, ministerial and bureaucratic discretion continues to influence outcomes. Second, citizenship acquisition is highly stratified: most naturalisations have historically occurred through investment-based schemes, in stark contrast to the experiences of refugees and other long-term residents who, despite meeting formal criteria, frequently encounter refusals or extended delays.




In summary, the visit underscored the hierarchical and evolving nature of Malta's citizenship regime, shaped by national discretion, European legal frameworks, and global policy developments. Although the findings are preliminary, they emphasize Malta's importance as a context for examining contemporary changes in citizenship, migration, and inequality, and establish a basis for future comparative research on citizenship regimes globally.

# CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

## CITIZENSHIP, LAW, AND THE MIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN PORTUGAL

### 8-11 JULY 2025




At the XIII Conference of the Portuguese Sociology Association, titled “Democracies on Trial: Risks and Uncertainties,” **Dr. Elizabeth Challinor** explored citizenship beyond its legal definition, conceptualizing it as a “guiding horizon” that shapes individuals’ perceptions of rights and belonging. Although human rights are universally promised, national citizenship continues to exert significant influence, rendering access to rights primarily contingent upon state intervention.

Empirical research in Portugal demonstrated this phenomenon through the “accordion effect” of law-making on the citizenship prospects of Lusophone migrants, wherein legal frameworks periodically expand and contract, alternately facilitating and restricting access to rights. This dynamic challenges the notion that rights are exclusively linked to formal citizenship and corresponds with Bloom’s (2019) concept of “noncitizenship,” which examines the practices and rationales underlying exclusion.

A case study from Lisbon further illustrated these dynamics. An undocumented Cape Verdean woman was compelled to choose between Article 88, a slow yet established regularisation pathway, and the CPLP Residence Certificate, a fast-track option introduced in 2021 for citizens of Portuguese-speaking countries and initially promoted as permitting Schengen travel. When official assertions regarding Schengen validity were later withdrawn and questioned by the EU, CPLP holders were left in legal uncertainty, facing mistrust despite holding valid documents in Portugal.

Conflicting information resulted in the Cape Verdean woman missing her appointment, whereas a Brazilian migrant opted for the slower but more predictable regularisation process. These decisions underscore profound mistrust in state institutions and demonstrate how the accordion effect compels migrants to make significant life choices within unstable legal contexts. This scenario exemplifies noncitizenship, wherein vulnerability arises not only from legal status but also from the state’s inability to fulfill promised rights. Related challenges were further examined in Mara Clemente’s presentation on Portugal’s “counter-trafficking anti-politics machine.

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# THE HIDDEN TOOLKIT TACKLING ETHICAL CONCERNS IN MIGRATION RESEARCH

A key outcome of HIDDEN's third year is the publication of the *HIDDEN Toolkit: Tackling Ethical Concerns in Migration Research*, which was officially released as an Open Access resource on 25 September 2025. This resource addresses the ethical challenges encountered in migration, citizenship, and displacement research, providing guidance informed by collective experience and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The toolkit results from extensive collaboration, shared learning, and sustained teamwork within the HIDDEN network. We extend our gratitude to the editors, **Dr. Ana Belén Martínez García, Dr. Anita Lunić, and Dr. Jennifer Redmond,** for their leadership, dedication, and careful stewardship of this significant achievement.

We anticipate that the HIDDEN Toolkit will continue to support and inspire researchers, practitioners, and learners, thereby enhancing ethical awareness and promoting responsible practice in migration research.

# EXTENSIVE AND UP-TO-DATE BIBLIOGRAPHY AND ARCHIVE MAP AVAILABLE ON THE HIDDEN WEBSITE

The HIDDEN website features an extensive, up-to-date bibliography and a dedicated **Archive Map**, offering valuable resources for researchers, practitioners, and students in related fields.

The **online bibliography** offers a comprehensive, regularly updated overview of key academic publications, research reports, and relevant grey literature. It reflects the current state of research and brings together a broad range of interdisciplinary perspectives, making it a reliable reference for both established and early-career researchers. The bibliography supports literature reviews, comparative research, and the development of new research questions.

The **Archive Map** highlights relevant archival collections across different countries and institutions. By showing where important archival sources can be found, the map supports historical and empirical research and helps users navigate diverse archival landscapes more efficiently.

Both resources are living tools that will expand and evolve through ongoing contributions from the research community. Users are encouraged to explore, use, and contribute to these resources to keep them inclusive, current, and responsive to new research developments.

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**Wishing you happy holidays**

**and**

**all the best in 2026.**

**We look forward to continued collaboration in the coming year.**