

## **Title**

Integration of Refugees in Portugal: Assessing Moral Duties and Integration Policies in the Context of European Values and Policies

## **Short summary**

Currently, the scope of the duties of reception and assistance to refugees is lively debated all over Europe. Portugal has recently developed and implemented an ambitious policy of integration of third country nationals, not refraining from giving assistance and reception to refugees in the context of the European relocation initiative. The government has nevertheless expressed some clear preferences as regards the origin of newcomers and the kind of integration it strives for. The proposal aims to contribute to the national and European debate by means of an empirically informed analysis of normative claims. To this effect, it considers the relevant philosophical literature, the normative claims raised in the national public sphere, and carries out an assessment of the policies of assistance and integration, in the belief that a relationship exists between duties and capacities of assistance.

## **Summary**

The right to asylum is lively debated all over Europe. The scope of the duties of assistance is discussed in the public sphere under difficult circumstances. The size of the migratory waves raises fears of cultural conflicts with newcomers; conceptions of national sovereignty that ascribe asymmetrical public duties to citizens and non-citizens aim to put a limit on universal moral duties; the costs of assistance, and the burden that the integration of an ever growing number of asylum-seekers implies, discourage even those who do in principle recognise a primacy of universal individual rights over state power.

Facing a continuous flow of asylum seekers traversing the Mediterranean, the European Union is discussing a reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) so as to live up to the potentially conflicting expectations of humanitarian aid and border control. Reform plans include a harmonization of the standards of assistance, a truly common asylum procedure, and a redistribution of the burdens of assistance among Member States.

Philosophers have best chances to give a significant contribution to the debate through a variety of analytical tools. They can rely on the rich literature on the philosophy of migrations seeking a "reflective equilibrium" between different and at times conflicting moral claims, such as universalism on the one hand, and the duties towards our fellow citizens that we take upon us, on the other. They can perform a normative scrutiny of the most common normative arguments that have currency in European public opinions, and give thus useful insights into the plausibility of claims raised in public debates. Last, but not least, they can enrich the well developed normative literature with an overdue empirically informed analysis of the specific dilemmas that face asylum policies in many European countries. Beyond the theoretical dilemma between

universalism and states sovereignty, a relationship can be assumed between duties and capacities of assistance. The proposal checks the hypothesis that such a relationship is not only one of mutual limitation: successful integration policies change the context to which normative arguments apply, and widen (or restrict) the scope of integration policies to the extent that states manage to turn the integration of third country nationals into a win-win game between newcomers and citizens in the medium to long term. The proposal checks the hypothesis that the Portuguese decades-long experience of integration of refugees indicates that practices of integration exert an influence on normative intuitions and claims and, recursively, on the practices they inform. The project therefore implements an empirically informed, and therefore interdisciplinary, analysis of assistance capacities so as to draw more general conclusions concerning our (performable) duties of assistance against the background of the European debate on the reform of CEAS.