

## SCIENCES PO CONTINUES ITS ENGAGEMENT FOR REFUGEES

**With the second cohort of the "Welcome Refugees" programme starting classes this semester, Sciences Po is continuing its engagement to promote access to higher education and the integration of refugee populations in France.**

### **A programme with several components in 2015-2016**

The 2015-2016 academic year was marked by the setup of a class of 16 refugees, aged between 20 and 40, from 6 different countries—Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Albania and Sudan—as part of a project led by student associations in conjunction with the Office of Academic Affairs. The students took courses in French and English from March to June 2016. Conversation workshops were organised with participation from Sciences Po staff, and those on the "Welcome Refugees" programme were paired with other students to help them acclimatise to French university and culture. Eight of them were able to attend both sessions of the Summer School in June and July, with 70 hours of French as a Foreign Language (FLE) per session.

In addition, Sciences Po signed an agreement in May 2016 with Kiron, an NGO that has established an online university to facilitate the return to higher education of refugees around the world. Sciences Po committed to providing free online courses for Kiron to use to put together diploma courses in the social sciences for their students.

### **The 2015-2016 cohort enrolls in Sciences Po's programmes for exchange students**

Seven students from the first cohort (four at the Undergraduate College and three at Master's level) are now enrolled in courses at Sciences Po in English and/or French in the social sciences and languages, in the same way as exchange students. This year will give them the opportunity to get used to Sciences Po's teaching methods, test their academic level and earn credits. The academic transcript from the year will facilitate the continuation of their studies at Sciences Po or another higher education institution. One student from the first cohort has been admitted to the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in anthropology. Over ten benefited from legal advice from the Law School Clinic MIGRATION.

### A new cohort of 20 refugee students this year

Building on the shared success of the first cohort, and in light of new demands, Sciences Po, in partnership with the association Wintegreat, is welcoming a new class this year of 20 refugee students from Syria, Iraq, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Kenya. These refugees or asylum seekers, aged from 21 to 36, have all had some higher education and have a good command of English. Some already had an occupation—dentist, graphic designer or engineer—before leaving their country of origin.

The new students will take 21 hours of classes per week for one semester, to refresh their French and English (French classes will be increased to 12 hours per week; the hours of English will depend on the students' levels), build up their cultural and historical references through dedicated courses, review their skills and redefine their plans for the future. They will be supported in this by a buddy, a coach and a mentor, each with specific roles, to redefine a career plan and put it into action as effectively as possible.

The history classes and the cultural reference classes, which aim to provide a better understanding of contemporary French society, politics and culture, will be taught on a voluntary basis by Sciences Po faculty. In particular, the head of Sciences Po's History Department, Pap N'Diaye, will offer a series of history classes designed for these students.

In addition, all Sciences Po activities are open to the refugee students. They have an auditor's card that entitles them to register for all the events organised by Sciences Po, the library, more than 60 sports classes and the Law School Clinic MIGRATIONS, which supports the refugees with legal advice and counsel.

Frédéric Mion, president of Sciences Po: *"Sciences Po is an outward-looking university committed to confronting the major global challenges of our time. The 'Welcome Refugees' programme is a great opportunity for the students we take in, but it is also an opportunity for our institution. All our communities—students, faculty and staff—are glad to be involved in supporting others and to give their time and energy to make this project work, for everyone's benefit. While the first initiative we launched last March proved a great success, we are now very excited to welcome this new class of students for an even more ambitious programme."*

#### **About Sciences Po**

Sciences Po is a selective research university of international standing based on the values of openness and excellence. Sciences Po's unique academic model combines expertise in human and social sciences, multidisciplinary and a professional grounding to educate professionals and citizens able to understand and transform society. Diversity is a key part of Sciences Po's identity. The student body is composed of 47 percent international students from 150 countries and, today, 27 percent of students receive a scholarship compared to 6 percent in 2000.

#### **About Wintegreat**

Wintegreat is a non-profit organisation that promotes the empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers through the recovery of stable living and working conditions, and defends the idea of a more open society where prospects exist and where everyone can express their potential. Wintegreat implements innovative,

free, and certificate-earning integration programmes in leading higher institutions in France and Europe, to enable participants to return to their course of study or find a job without a drop in status. Wintegreat has 300 volunteers and works with 100 students each year from over 15 countries. The organisation aims to develop programmes with 20 institutions in five countries by the end of 2017, so as to multiply its current social impact by five.

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