



MFJMCE

2022 FACULTY EU RESEARCH GRANT

Interview with grantee Dr. Steven D. Roper



Dr. Steven D. Roper is a Professor of Political Science at Florida Atlantic University. This year, he received the Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence Faculty EU Research grant for the development of his project. His proposal is entitled: “EU Assistance for Managing Ukrainian Refugees: The Case of Moldova.”

He was kind enough to answer a few questions about his research.

work in the 1990s centered on Romania and Moldova, but over the past two decades, I have worked in several countries in Europe, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East.

MFJMCE: In a few words, can you tell us what the focus of the research project for which you received this grant is?

Like many of us, I have been deeply impacted by the war in Ukraine. The unfolding human tragedy is a humanitarian crisis and regional/global governance concern. My research project focuses on the European Union border and refugee infrastructure and its ability to assist with Ukrainian refugee processing in Moldova. There are three separate EU-based institutions functioning on the Moldovan border tasked with assisting Ukrainian refugees while at the same time monitoring for various forms of smuggling. Therefore, this research project seeks to identify whether the developing EU border infrastructure in Moldova creates overlapping jurisdictions, operational problems, and integration challenges.

MFJMCE: How did the idea for this research come up?

In conversations with Moldovan colleagues, one of the concerns was the large influx of Ukrainian refugees and the ability of Moldovan state institutions to process the individuals. Moreover, refugee crises, like this one, also create conditions for human and material smuggling as the border becomes overwhelmed and porous. Therefore, the EU border monitoring and

MFJMCE: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I am Professor of Political Science at Florida Atlantic University. My work focuses on human rights, particularly human rights law and war crimes, and comparative constitutional design. My initial country

Countries neighbouring Ukraine

Country	Data Date	Individual refugees from Ukraine recorded across Europe	Refugees from Ukraine registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes	Border crossings from Ukraine*	Border crossings to Ukraine**
Russian Federation***	7/19/2022	1,745,800	Not applicable	1,745,800	Data not available
Poland	7/19/2022	1,234,718	1,234,718	4,787,154	2,751,289
Republic of Moldova	7/19/2022	86,240	Not applicable	541,323	171,803
Slovakia	7/19/2022	85,964	85,771	610,201	342,055
Romania	7/18/2022	84,527	45,530	870,241	528,256
Hungary	7/19/2022	26,932	26,932	995,637	Data not available
Belarus	7/19/2022	10,351	Not applicable	16,677	Data not available
Total		3,274,532	1,392,951	9,567,033	3,793,403

***The figure for individual refugees recorded in the country is an estimate as potential further movements or returns cannot be factored for the time being.



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Refugees from Ukraine waiting to cross the border

Photo credited to the UNHCR, UN Refugee Agency (photo shows IOM credit)

assistance programs are vital for refugees fleeing Ukrainian as well as Moldovan nationals coping with housing and caring for these refugees.

MFJMCE: Why do you think your research focus on the EU is of particular interest to American students?

In the United States (US), we have an ongoing debate over border and refugee issues. Therefore, for American students, this project allows them to think about these issues outside of the US and view more broadly the humanitarian and institutional capacity issues surrounding refugee crises. The challenges that the EU and member-states face on various issues (e.g., climate change, economic insecurity, immigration and the rule of law) are the same challenges that we face in the US.

MFJMCE: Where will your research take you in the future? Do you plan to continue developing this project, or do you have others in mind?

EU border policies and institutions has emerged over

the past decade as a serious EU-wide problem, particularly in member-states such as Greece and Italy but of course also in Central Europe in countries such as Hungary. This project fits into a broader debate how the EU protects refugees and works with member-states to ensure the principle of non-refoulement while balancing state interests in maintaining control over immigration policy.

MFJMCE: Do you have any last thoughts to share?

I want to thank the Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence for providing me a grant to assist in my research efforts and look forward to future collaboration with the Center. Issues of concern such as immigration and refugee policy facing the EU and member-states are incredibly relevant and important to south Florida.

By Christine I. Caly-Sanchez

► For Dr. Steven D. Roper's Bio, [click here](#)

