



2023 NORDPLUS intensive course (5 ECTS);

## *Smart shrinking as a development approach for de-populating regions around the Baltic Sea*

April 29<sup>th</sup> – May 13<sup>th</sup> 2023, Lithuania & Latvia

We invite students from partner institutions to join the international intensive course on de-populating peripheries and “smart shrinking”. Students will have a unique opportunity to learn and actively engage for two weeks with experts, business and governmental stakeholders active in the field. During the course students will carry out their own empirical research project in international small groups and enjoy interactive excursions, but also local culture, environment, and cuisine. Finally, the course enables participants to establish international contacts and meet students and teachers from many countries!

### Course Background

Outmigration, loss of local services and ageing populations accompanied by an economic downturn are a harsh reality for many Nordic/Baltic rural regions and communities. While new growth is often aimed for in these places, realities in the Nordic context, but also elsewhere have so far rendered these re-growth approaches largely wishful thinking. The acceptance of these realities has infused alternative ways such as “smart shrinkage” to local development. It provides an approach that accepts de-population and employs it actively to create smaller but better living places. The course directly engages with this novel concept to assess its potentials, challenges but also its pitfalls when applied in a rural context in Lithuania and Latvia.



Course participants 2022 during excursion: shale oil mining site in Estonia



Expert lecture on the Estonian-Latvian border during excursion 2022

### Course outline

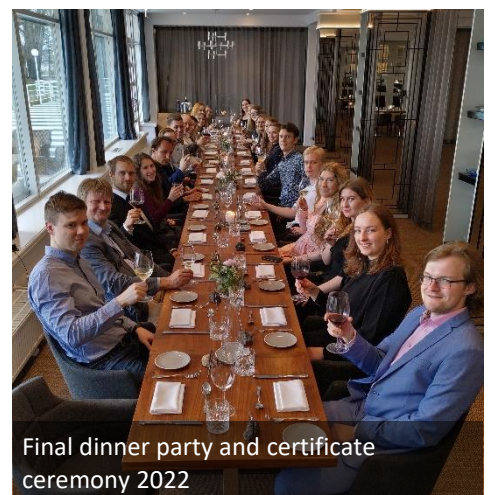
The course is a 14-day intensive course, with Vilnius, Lithuania, and Riga, Latvia as the two ‘home bases’. Main focus is on independent, group-based fieldwork in small shrinking localities in Lithuania and Latvia. Additionally, the course includes excursions, lectures and seminars with international scholars on topics such as de-population, smart shrinking, regional development and related research methods. During the course students work in international small groups to study shrinkage and smart shrinkage potentials in chosen case study localities in both countries. Each group prepares a case report and contributes to a comparative analysis.

### Organizational information

Participation in the course is for master level and final stage bachelor level students and is limited to 6 students per partner institution. All costs (including accommodation, travel expenses) are covered from the Nord+ project grant.

### Contact

For more information and participation requirements please contact Moritz Albrecht ([moritz.albrecht@uef.fi](mailto:moritz.albrecht@uef.fi))



Final dinner party and certificate ceremony 2022